# Inspection of Leeds Menorah School

399 Street Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 6HQ

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| Inspection dates: | 9 to 11 July 2024 |

| **Overall effectiveness** | **Good** |
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| The quality of education | **Good** |
| Behaviour and attitudes | **Good** |
| Personal development | **Good** |
| Leadership and management | **Good** |
| Early years provision | **Good** |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |
| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | **Yes** |

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school with a big heart. It is friendly and welcoming. There are positive and supportive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are proud of their school. The proprietor's aspiration for pupils to thrive and feel 'loved and valued' is palpable.

Leaders want the absolute best for all pupils. The ambitious curriculum encompasses Kodesh studies as well as a broad range of other subjects. The religious ethos is woven through the curriculum. Pupils experience personalised learning in a nurturing environment.

From the early years, children are enthusiastic learners who enjoy school. Pupils attend well. They are respectful and polite. Bullying is not tolerated. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare but when they do occur, staff act swiftly to address them. Pupils feel safe here. They are confident to talk to trusted adults if they are worried.

Pupils relish the opportunities to engage in whole-school enterprise events where they apply their learning and raise money for local charities. They enjoy performing and taking part in outdoor education activities. Visiting speakers, including local councillors, enhance pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils appreciate the 'Menorah mentors', who provide them with support for their academic success and emotional well-being.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders at all levels have taken purposeful steps to improve the school. They have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. The safety and welfare of pupils and the whole-school community is an ongoing and high priority. Leaders have redesigned the school's curriculum. It is well sequenced from the early years to Year 6. Careful thought is given to what pupils need to learn and when.

The content for curriculum subjects is clearly identified. These subjects are supported by suitable schemes of work. Themes of learning support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and link to the religious values of the school. Pupils build their knowledge and skills logically. It is clear for teachers what content pupils should learn in different curriculum subjects.

Most pupils who currently attend the school are in the early years. Leaders make sure that children make a positive start to their school life. The early years curriculum is rich with opportunities for children to develop their learning and practise and apply their skills. The school has developed the outdoor early years area into a focused learning environment. Children now enjoy opportunities to climb and scramble up the new slope. They investigate bugs, create dens and explore the wooded area. They like watching the water flow and nature develop.

Classes are small. Pupils often experience one-to-one or small group teaching. Staff have a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do in different curriculum subjects. They know pupils very well. They check frequently what pupils can remember. For example, in reading and physical education (PE), teachers use their ongoing assessments to precisely plan pupils' next steps. However, assessment of pupils' mathematical reasoning is not as effective. Pupils find it difficult to explain how they solve problems. This hinders their ability to solve problems of increasing complexity.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to make sure that pupils can achieve their best. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from learning that is tailored to their individual needs. Specific resources and extra teaching help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Reading is high priority for all pupils. Leaders have implemented a suitable phonics programme. Phonics is taught well. Communication and language skills are taught from the start of the Nursery Year. Children develop their early reading skills well. Pupils read books that match their reading ability. They are avid readers. They read every day in English and in Hebrew. Staff in the early years immerse children in a variety of stories, poetry and nursery rhymes. Pupils read a range of texts. They discuss religious stories. They use their faith and religious teachings to help them to make connections with their learning in the wider curriculum and to reflect on their understanding of the wider world.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. The school has consulted with parents and teaches an age-appropriate relationships education curriculum as part of the PSHE offer. The school has chosen not to teach about some of the protected characteristics. However, leaders are clear about their duty to actively promote respect for others. Pupils learn how to live healthy lives and create positive friendships. They develop their understanding of risks to their safety and how to deal with them, including from online bullying. They develop character traits, such as sportsmanship, and learn the value of teamwork. Enrichment and community activities, trips and other experiences help to support pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy organising and leading performances for whole-school events and assemblies. They take part in debates about pertinent issues, including human rights. They experience activities within school, such as olive pressing. They make Matzah wafers and Latkes with the baker who comes into school from the local bakery. They appreciate the joy of giving and helping others through their charity fundraising and enterprise days where they also develop their economic understanding. However, this academic year, enrichment experiences for pupils have been limited due to ongoing safety concerns. This has significantly restricted opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and experience life outside their local Jewish community. The school is looking forward to providing these opportunities again when it is safe to do so.

Leaders consider the workload and welfare of staff. Staff speak highly of the 'circle of support' around them in school. They are proud to work here. Parents are

typically positive about the school. They appreciate the work of staff and support of leaders.

The proprietor and governors care deeply about the school. They have a thorough understanding of the community it serves. They ensure that the school meets the independent school standards. They carry out frequent checks on the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. The school's safeguarding policy, which reflects the latest guidance, is available on the school's website. The proprietor has made sure that the school consistently complies with the Equality Act 2010 and that practices do not amount to unlawful discrimination. 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)

- Opportunities for pupils to experience activities in the wider community are few. This limits pupils' ability to extend their learning in real-life situations, to apply their social skills or to broaden their understanding of the wider world. The school should strengthen the curriculum to provide opportunities and experiences that support pupils to broaden their social awareness and skills so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- In mathematics, the school does not teach pupils to discuss and describe their thinking in sufficient depth when problem-solving. This means that pupils find it difficult to clarify their reasoning and apply their thinking to solve more complex problems. The school should ensure that pupils learn how to explain their thinking to help them to solve mathematical challenges of increasing complexity, confidently and effectively.

## 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

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| **Unique reference number** | 108110 |
| **DfE registration number** | 383/6099 |
| **Local authority** | Leeds |
| **Inspection number** | 10321494 |
| **Type of school** | Other independent school |
| **School category** | Independent school |
| **Age range of pupils** | 2 to 11 |
| **Gender of pupils** | Mixed |
| **Number of pupils on the school roll** | 13 |
| **Number of part-time pupils** | 0 |
| **Proprietor** | Ethel Refson |
| **Chair** | Eli Pink |
| **Headteacher** | Chaim Bell |
| **Annual fees (day pupils)** | £5,500 |
| **Telephone number** | 0113 269 7709 |
| **Website** | www.leedsmenorahschool.org |
| **Email address** | office@leedsmenorahschool.org |
| **Dates of previous inspection** | 19 July to 29 September 2022 |

## Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection took place in July and September 2022. A material change to increase the age range from two to 11 was approved by the DfE in April 2024.
- The school is registered to admit 55 pupils.
- There are currently no pupils in Year 1 or Year 6.
- The school does not use any providers of alternative education.
- There are no pupils on the school's roll with an education, health and care plan.

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

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor, the headteacher, the designated leaders for safeguarding, the HR manager, the leader for early years and curriculum leaders who are also teachers. Inspectors also met with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair, and held a telephone discussion with a school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, communication and language, mathematics and PE. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector scrutinised leaders' planning for the curriculum in PSHE, art, history, geography and history and looked at samples of pupils' work for these subjects.
- The lead inspector toured the school site with the proprietor and the HR manager.
- 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. Checks were made on staff training and safeguarding procedures.

- Inspectors checked the implementation of risk assessment and health and safety policies, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, pupils and staff. An inspector met with some parents informally at the end of the school day.

## Inspection team

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|---|---|
| Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Christine Durand | Ofsted Inspector |

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