Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Menorah High School for Girls

105 Brook Road, London NW2 7BZ

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are very happy to be part of the thriving 'Menorah family'. Pupils rightly feel safe and well cared for. Pupils achieve exceptionally well because the school provides an ambitious and balanced curriculum which meets all statutory requirements.

Pupils realise the high expectations provided by highly dedicated staff. Parents and carers value the strong emphasis placed on personal development, as well as academic excellence. Published outcomes are consistently high, including in the popular sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make exceptional progress through the curriculum and play a full part in the life of the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they have exceptional attitudes to learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and courteous. Support for pupils' mental health and well-being is very strong. Pupils know there is always an adult to speak to if they have any concerns.

Pupils value their learning and relish the many opportunities the school provides. These include many creative and performance activities. Every pupil plays a role in the annual school production. Year 13 pupils talk about the residential visit to Poland as being one of the significant highlights of their school experience. Pupils believe in giving back to their local community and take part in a range of volunteering activities.

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

The school has embedded an ambitious and rich curriculum across all year groups. Staff are determined every pupil should succeed and develop an independent voice. The curriculum is carefully sequenced and provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to

apply their learning. For example, in history, pupils apply their knowledge about historical events such as the fight for women's votes to explore modern-day protests. They enjoy debating sensitive and thought-provoking issues.

The school has worked together to develop a clear and consistent approach to teaching. As a result, there is a shared understanding of how pupils learn which means they achieve their full potential. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. There is a thriving learning culture across the school. The school trains staff at all levels to develop professionally. Leaders are highly reflective. This supports their continuous drive for improvement. Since the previous inspection, the school has focused on ensuring pupils are able to work more independently. Pupils take great pride in their work. As a result, the quality of this work is often exceptional.

Adults provide frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit and build on prior learning. Teachers address misconceptions immediately and challenge pupils to respond in more depth. For example, in A-level mathematics, teachers insist that students check every stage of their working out when creating complex graphs. The curriculum in the sixth form is implemented exceptionally well.

From Year 7, pupils access an aspirational careers programme. They learn about seminary, university and vocational routes. Students in Year 12 take part in work experience. The school makes use of alumni, external speakers and careers events to ensure students have high-quality interactions with employers and higher education institutions. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school makes effective use of information to ensure pupils have the additional support they need. For example, weaker readers are quickly identified, and appropriate interventions are put in place to help them become confident and fluent readers. Teachers adapt their teaching expertly to ensure pupils can access the ambitious curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve very well from their starting points.

There is a broad and well-thought-out personal development programme. Sensitive subjects are taught in an age-appropriate way. Pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values, including why equality and tolerance are so important. They are articulate and respectful when discussing other faiths and cultures. The curriculum is enriched with a range of activities and visits. For example, pupils go to different museums or places of interest such as London Docklands or Hampton Court. All pupils in Year 9 take part in a teambuilding residential. Pupils enjoy these activities and can see how they make their learning relevant.

There is a strong focus on pupils attending school and being punctual. As a result, attendance is high. Leaders manage any issues with absence robustly, working with families and external agencies when necessary to get the right support in place.

Governors know their school very well. They are rightly proud of its inclusive ethos and strong outcomes. They have high expectations of leaders but are also conscious of the need for all staff to have a work–life balance. Leaders have put in place exemplary

practices to support flexible working. Staff are proud to work at Menorah High School and have a shared commitment to achieving the best outcomes and life chances for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2019.

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	142627
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10346004
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Landau
Headteacher	Esther Pearlman
Website	www.menorahhigh.com
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an orthodox Jewish religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in May 2018.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was 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 the headteacher and other senior staff.
- An inspector met with the members of the governing board and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and pupils in the Ofsted online surveys.

Inspection team

Susan Maguire, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Costa Dyer	Ofsted Inspector

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