



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Kerem School

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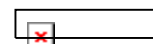
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### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY



#### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Kerem is an independent co-educational day school for children aged 4 to 11 in the Hampstead Garden Suburb area of the London Borough of Barnet. It was established in 1948 and serves the Jewish community of north London. It has a clearly stated religious and educational philosophy and, in its guide for parents about its ethos, defines itself as a modern Orthodox school. Admission to the school is open to any child who is recognised as Jewish by the Chief Rabbi or who is accepted by the Chief Rabbi as suitable for education at the school. It draws pupils from a variety of backgrounds but expects all parents to support its commonly agreed practices and values.

The school is accommodated in premises which it shares with the Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue and at the time of the inspection it had 169 pupils on roll. None of these had statements of special educational need, but the school had identified 23 pupils as being in need of special help.

## Summary of main findings

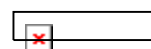
### What the school does well:

- it provides a good quality of education and delivers a broad and balanced curriculum which fulfils the schools stated religious and secular aims;
- it is characterised by a warm and friendly family atmosphere and provides a sound ethos which enables pupils to develop an awareness of their own Jewish identity and of the cultural diversity which surrounds them; the shared premises with the synagogue support and enhance the Jewish ethos of the school;
- teaching and learning are good overall, and pupils make good progress over time and are well prepared for the next stage of their education;
- assessment and recording are good, teachers have a thorough knowledge of their pupils, and procedures for individual target setting are very good;
- provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good; and
- there is very good provision for children with special educational needs.

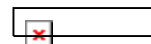
### What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:

- it should ensure that registers indicate the reasons for absence by displaying the codings provided in the school's policy document;
- it should provide a statement on its intentions with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002; and
- it should provide parents with information regarding particulars of the school's policy on, and arrangements for, exclusion, and particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION.



## 1. The quality of education provided by the school



### The quality of the curriculum

Kerem is a good school. It fulfils its aim, which is described in the school prospectus, of providing "a broad, stimulating and intensive secular and Jewish education, linked to the needs of each child, within a caring, structured and purposeful environment". Within the school, pupils are taught a commitment to traditional Judaism and its values, together with a love of Israel.

The school offers its pupils a broad and balanced curriculum. In common with other orthodox Jewish schools the curriculum has two strands, Limmudei Kodesh and Limmudei Chol. Limmudei Kodesh (Jewish Studies), teaches pupils to read and understand sacred texts in the original Hebrew, and to gain knowledge of the Jewish faith and life. Limmudei Chol (secular studies) includes most subjects of the National Curriculum and provides pupils with opportunities to gain experience in language, mathematics, science, technology, human and social education, physical education, and the aesthetic and creative areas of learning. Ivrit (Modern Hebrew) is taught as a second language. The school has a clearly written curriculum policy which is supported by good schemes of work. Teachers produce clear lesson plans which assist them to deliver the curriculum effectively.

### The quality of teaching and assessment

During their time in the school, inspectors observed 28 lessons, or parts of lessons, in all year groups and across most subject areas of the curriculum. In addition, they saw curriculum enrichment activities, participated in worship and assemblies, and talked extensively to staff, helpers and pupils. They were grateful for the courtesy and professional attitude with which the teachers responded to their questions and comments. Only in one lesson was the quality of teaching and learning unsatisfactory; in all the other lessons, the strengths outweighed the weaknesses and led to productive learning.

Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and in many lessons good links are established with other subjects. A consistent feature of the best lessons was thorough planning, with good, detailed lesson plans. These show clear aims and objectives which are communicated to the pupils at the start of the lesson, together with a clear explanation of the tasks to be undertaken. Lessons are well paced, and teachers usually make good use of the time available, though some lessons are prone to unpunctual starts. Planned activities are challenging and realistic, and there is effective use of questioning. Pupils respond well to the challenging teaching; they become very involved in their lessons and are often able to work well in pairs or small groups. They make good progress, are confident in asking questions and seeking help, and develop a good range of study skills which enable them to become independent learners.

The teaching is supported by a good range of resources, and these are well used. Pupils are encouraged to make use of Information and Communication Technology and develop their skills, but the school is aware that it needs to extend the availability of computers beyond the ICT room to classrooms.

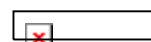
Assessment and recording procedures are good, and teachers show a good knowledge of the different levels of ability among the pupils they are teaching. They are aware of the importance of matching tasks to individual needs, including providing appropriate support for pupils with individual special needs and extension work for more able pupils: there is effective support for those pupils,

mostly Ivrit speakers, who have English as an additional language. As a result, all children are enabled to make good progress, increase their knowledge and understanding, and develop their learning skills.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



Kerem School is a safe and secure community which is characterised by a strong family atmosphere. It has a clearly defined and well articulated religious basis which is expressed throughout the school and which forms the basis for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It seeks to encourage children to develop an enthusiasm for an Orthodox way of life, recognise their strong personal link with Jewish learning, and promote a strong sense of Jewish identity, a love of Israel, and a caring attitude to all Jews. At the same time, it seeks to enable pupils to play a full part in society at large and to feel confident in the modern secular world. It is very successful in achieving these aims.

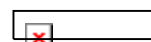
Central to the ethos of the school is a respect for both religious and civil law, and this enables pupils to learn the difference between right and wrong and to apply this in their relationships with each other. There is a well structured programme of Limmudei Kodesh, which helps pupils to understand their Jewish religious, social and cultural heritage, and which challenges them to reflect on moral issues, and this is reinforced by daily prayers and a regular pattern of assemblies. Through these lessons, pupils learn about their responsibilities to the faith community to which they belong. There is also an effective programme of personal, social and health education, which is partly delivered through Limmudei Kodesh and partly through discrete lessons, and which includes teaching about citizenship. This helps pupils to learn about public institutions and services in England and about the range of different cultures found in contemporary society. The school has a clear statement about racial equality.

Throughout the school, pupils are given opportunities to exercise responsibility appropriate to their age. Senior pupils act as prefects and help in the maintenance of good order in the school. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is largely good, although there are isolated examples of unsatisfactory behaviour, sometimes involving older boys who do not exercise sufficient thought when moving around the building.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



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Overall, the school's provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good. There are clearly detailed policies and procedures in place for the management of behaviour, and appropriate strategies for dealing with bullying. If there are any incidents that warrant discussion with parents and staff, these are recorded by the head teacher.

All staff have had recent training on child protection matters and suitable procedures are firmly in place. The pupils' safety is given appropriate attention and staff are aware of the need for strict observance of the policy for safety on out of school visits. A thorough risk assessment of the building has been undertaken and the health and safety policy is comprehensive. Fire drills are held each term. Evacuation times and any difficulties are noted carefully and rectified quickly. A fire risk assessment took place in April 2003, and this, together with fire evacuation procedures, has been approved by the local fire authorities.

All staff have had first aid training and hold valid certificates, and three members of staff have had further intensive training. An accident book is completed in an appropriate way after any pupil has received first aid. The school displays clear procedures, complete with photographs, for those pupils with serious allergies, and their treatments are easily accessible. Each teacher keeps detailed records of all pupils with medical or other conditions. Appropriate provision is made within the school for pupils who are ill and who cannot be collected quickly by parents or carers. A wheelchair is available, if required.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are individual action plans for those pupils who require extra support, and these are reviewed each term by the special needs co-ordinator, the class teacher, and the child's parents. However, for some identified pupils, more specific and measurable short term targets would be appropriate.

Supervision of pupils as they move around the school and go out at break times is satisfactory; however, some older pupils do not always behave sensibly on the stairs. The playground is overcrowded at morning and afternoon breaks and this can lead to minor bumps as the pupils move around.

The school provides good pastoral support for families in time of difficulty, such as illness or bereavement. This support is closely linked to the provision for the pupils' personal development, which is a strong feature of the school.

The admission register is maintained correctly, but some attendance registers do not always indicate reasons for absences in accordance with the school's policy and statutory arrangements. If parents have not contacted the school at the start of an absence, the class teacher will telephone for details on the second or third day.

The school does not yet fulfil requirements for the Disability Discrimination Act, but the head teacher has provided the governors with sufficient information to enable them to produce a three year statement in the near future.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

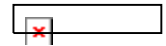
*The school meets most, but not all, of the requirements for registration, and there are two matters to which it must give attention.*

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that registers indicate the reasons for absence by displaying the codings provided in the schools policy (Paragraph 3.9);*
- *provide a statement on its intentions with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.*

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**



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Kerem School, together with its feeder nursery school, Kerem House, form the Kerem Schools, a company limited by guarantee. The company is a registered charitable trust. There is a governing body, which is very supportive of the work of the school, and, with the school bursar, manages the school finances. Spending priorities are, however, determined by the head teacher.

The staff are all appropriately qualified and they bring a wide range of expertise to the school. They benefit from good opportunities for continuing professional development. There is a useful staff handbook which is provided for supply teachers and new staff. The head teacher is a well-qualified and experienced teacher who has completed the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers, and has been trained as a consultant leader by the National College for School Leadership. In addition, she maintains close and fruitful contact with similar schools within the Jewish educational community as Chair of the Association of Headteachers of Jewish Schools.

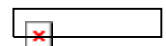
The school is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), and there are thorough systems for ensuring that all new staff appointments are subject to CRB clearance at an enhanced level. Longer serving members of staff have received List 99 clearances.

There are clear and effective procedures for checking the identity, previous employment history, qualifications, medical fitness and character of new appointments, and this information is used in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



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Overall, the school's premises and accommodation are good and are suitable for their purpose. The school is located in the first and second floor of the educational annexe of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, and this enables it to make good use of the synagogue and its facilities. Weekday activities in the synagogue do not impinge on the pupils' education or safety. Security is effective, and a guard at the school gate ensures that persons and vehicles visiting the school are checked. All external doors have coded locks, and emergency exits are clearly signed and easily accessible.

The building is in a good state of repair and decoration. The classrooms are generally of reasonable size, although some of the rooms in Key Stage 2 are only just adequate for current numbers. All classrooms and corridors have attractive displays of pupils' work. The building is warm, clean and tidy. There are sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the number of staff and the pupils on roll. Fixtures and fittings, both in classrooms and around the school, are suitable for the primary age range, although some of the wooden desks for older pupils impinge on the space available in classrooms.

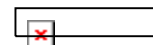
Recent improvements have provided three spacious inter-connecting rooms on the third floor. These are used for physical education, assemblies, and music. At present, the library is housed in the large dining area, but the school is seeking approval from the synagogue to move the extensive library collection into the ICT suite. The ICT suite is not in full-time use, but is used by all classes throughout the week. There are no other specialist facilities.

The playground at the rear of the school is small, but attractive, with seating and some play equipment for the younger pupils. There is seating beneath the trees to provide shade in the summer months, and a discrete garden area for Year 6 pupils. However, the compact size of the area leads to overcrowding at playtimes, although this is alleviated at lunch times by pupils eating in three sittings. Sports activities take place in a field which is adjacent to the school, although the school does not own it.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The school provides a good range of information for parents and prospective parents. There is a prospectus which sets out the basic principles of the school's provision, details of the curriculum, and a statement of the school's ethos. It includes particulars of the school's policies on, and arrangements for, admissions and discipline, but omits those for exclusion. The school has not excluded a pupil during the last five years. The school has 14 pupils for whom English is an additional language, but the prospectus does not contain particulars of educational and welfare provision for them.

Further information is made available at the request of parents. This includes curriculum documents and policies relating to child protection and health and safety. The behaviour policy contains statements on how the school deals with bullying, the promotion of good behaviour, and the sanctions adopted if pupils misbehave. A new complaints procedure has just been published. On request, all pupils and prospective parents receive the results of tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, and by pupils at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, and science.

The school provides an annual written report to parents on the progress and attainment of the children in each subject, and these contain suggestions on what they can do to improve. The quality of these reports is good. All parents of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 receive the results of tests taken at the end of the year, and parents of children in other years can also request the results of tests that their children have taken. Such information is provided at a meeting with parents, together with an explanation and an analysis of the scores. At the end of the summer term meetings are arranged for the parents of all pupils in Year 5 so that test scores, and their implications for transfer to

secondary schools, can be discussed in detail, together with appropriate targets. In addition, parents can approach teachers at any convenient time in order to discuss their children's progress.

Before the inspection, questionnaires were sent out to parents inviting them to express their views on the school. Responses were largely positive. In particular, parents were pleased with the teaching, the staff's expectations of children, the way in which pupils are helped to settle in when joining the school, and the progress they make. However, a substantial minority of the parents who responded did not feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. A similar number were concerned about behaviour.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

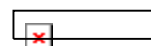
*Although the school complies with most of the regulations concerning the quality of information for parents, there are two areas requiring attention.*

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply full with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the school should provide parents with information regarding:*

- *particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for exclusions (Paragraph 6.2c); and*
- *particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (Paragraph 6.2f).*

## **7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**

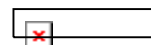


A small minority of parents indicated in the parents' questionnaire that they were unsure about the procedure for making a complaint to the school. The school has recently published a new procedure, which is available to all parents and prospective parents on request, and is an insert in the school prospectus. This procedure is fully in line with the new regulations.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **SCHOOL DETAILS**



Name of school: Kerem School  
Type of school: Day school



Status:	Independent
DfES ref no:	302/6068
Age range of pupils:	4-10
Number on roll	169
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Fees:	£5100 - £5300 per annum
Address of school:	Norrice Lea London N2 0RE
Telephone number:	020 8455 0909
Fax number:	020 8209 0726
E-mail address:	admin@kerem.org.uk
Headteacher:	Mrs R Goulden
Proprietor:	Kerem Schools
Dates of Inspector:	10-13 November 2003
Reporting Inspector	Dr Roy Long

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