

Office for Standards in Education

Talmud Torah Chinuch N'orim School

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School details

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

Talmud Torah Chinuch N'orim School is an independent day school for boys aged 3 year to 12 years, situated at the southern end of the predominantly Jewish area of Broughton Park in Salford. It is owned and maintained by a charitable trust and serves the strictly observant (haredi) Jewish community of north Manchester. It was established in 1955 in a conscious effort to re-establish the sort of orthodox Jewish education that had characterised the communities of central and eastern Europe prior to the Shoah (holocaust). It was established on clearly articulated principles to continue and to develop their educational tradition by providing children with a warm and vibrant religious upbringing. The school population includes pupils from several orthodox traditions, including boys from several different chassidic communities. The school provides education for children from a distinctive community. It charges no fees, but relies on voluntary contributions from parents and other sources, except in the early years where it receives funding for three and four years old.

At the time of the inspection the school had 224 pupils on roll, of whom 42 were part time. There were 102 pupils for whom English was not their first language; with few exceptions most of these children came from homes where Yiddish is the main language. Yiddish is the language of instruction for all aspects of the school's religious curriculum. The school has one pupil with a statement of special educational need, funded by Salford local education authority (LEA).

Summary of main findings

Talmud Torah Chinuch N'orim is a sound school which, within limits which are clearly defined, provides pupils with a good educational foundation on which they can build in succeeding years. Taken overall, the school provides pupils with the opportunity to develop good linguistic skills, particularly in the traditional languages of Jewish scholarship, develop a good understanding of numerical skills, and gain a good general knowledge of and insights into the surrounding non-Jewish community. It makes good use of limited resources, but in spite of continuous efforts to improve the accommodation by finding new premises, these remain barely adequate.

What the school does well

- it provides a secure environment in which pupils are happy and keen to learn and where they receive an education which accords with its stated religious aims;
- its very good teaching gives children opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the Jewish faith, while, at the same time, giving them insights into the history and traditions of the wider community;
- it is particularly good in giving pupils a sound knowledge of the traditional languages of Jewish religious scholarship;
- its provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and, as a result, they make good progress towards the early learning goals;
- it provides pupils with a good foundation for the secondary stage of their education, particularly by enabling them to make good progress in numeracy and by providing them with good models for spoken English;
- it fosters excellent behaviour and good relationships between pupils and provides them with good pastoral care; and
- o it makes good use of very limited resources.

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



- in regard to the Limmudei Chol strand of the curriculum, it must take steps to comply with all the regulations in section 1 of this report;
- ensure that the attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995;
- with regard to the suitability of premises and accommodation, as a matter of urgency, take steps to comply with all the regulations referred to in section 5 of this report;
- o ensure that classrooms are of appropriate size to allow effective teaching, and do

not compromise health and safety, having regard to the number, age and needs of pupils;

- o provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill;
- ensure that furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all pupils registered at the school;
- o ensure that there is appropriate flooring and that it is in good condition; and
- ensure that the school's complaints procedure matches each of the requirements in section 7 of this report.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school	

The quality of the curriculum

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In common with similar schools elsewhere, the overall curriculum is divided into two strands, Limmudei Kodesh and Limmudei Chol. The school is particularly successful in meeting its stated aims in regard to the Limmudei Kodesh (religious) strand of the curriculum. However, inconsistency in implementing the Limmudei Chol (secular) curriculum means that, with significant exceptions, it is less successful in meeting its stated aim of providing a carefully planned and comprehensive general education.

The aims of the Limmudei Kodesh strand are centred on the study of the Torah and the Talmud, with the intention that pupils should become fully observant and knowledgeable in the beliefs and texts of the Jewish faith, as well as being fluent speakers and writers of Yiddish. Between 75% and 80% of curriculum time is devoted to this strand of the curriculum. The Limmudei Chol strand reflects the desire of parents that their children should also receive a comprehensive general education. This strand of the curriculum centres on a core of English and mathematics, supplemented by topic work to cover such areas as science, geography and history. After the age of 12, almost all pupils transfer to the Jewish secondary school of their choice, and will eventually study at a yeshivah (institute of higher Tamudical study) in Britain or abroad.

The Limmudei Kodesh strand of the curriculum is one which follows a tradition that is centuries old and relies heavily on the scholarship of the teachers and on both an oral and a written tradition. There is, consequently, no written scheme of work. Although this strand of the curriculum is often referred to as "the religious strand", it contains subject matter relating to a wide range of experience, and the school has begun to analyse where `secular' topics occur. The school has brief but adequate schemes of work for the Limmudei Chol strand, and these provide teachers with appropriate aims and objectives. These are supported by suitable textbooks and worksheets for English, maths and general knowledge.

The school has a brief statement about meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The school is clear that it is a bilingual institution, and all its teachers are fluent in English and at least one other language, and this helps such pupils to gradually acquire their own fluency in English. The school uses a combination of different methods to effect this,

including withdrawal of individuals or small groups to help with conversation or reading. Most parents in Yiddish-speaking homes co-operate with the school by ensuring that there is some daily English conversation in the family.

The school has one pupil with a statement of special educational need, for whom funding is provided by the Borough of Salford. The statement has been reviewed and good provision is made for the pupil concerned.

The school subscribes to the view, shared by parents, that personal, social, and health education is the primary responsibility of parents within the family setting. However, the school is successful in reinforcing this by stressing the distinctive Jewish teachings in matters of human relationships. Studies of health, nutrition, and exercise feature in several of the general knowledge projects in different age groups.

Teaching takes place for five and a half days a week, including Sunday and Friday mornings. The school day is a very long one for the oldest pupils, who start the day at 9.00 am and continue until 6.00 pm, with time for breaks and lunchtime. This means that there is very little time for extracurricular activities. However, the school has a long tradition of organising visits and trips to places of interest in the area. At the time of the inspection the Year 2 pupils were busy constructing a timeline of past events and inventions and were eagerly preparing for a visit to a reconstructed Victorian street in Salford, while other groups had visited a local coal mine.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



Overall, the teaching of the Limmudei Kodesh strand of the curriculum is very good throughout the school, and only in a tiny minority of lessons were there any discernible weaknesses. In the Foundation Stage, the Limmudei Kodesh studies make a good contribution to pupils' learning: they engage in many activities which celebrate their own culture and enable them to develop a strong sense of their Yiddishkeit (Jewishness). This continues into Key Stages 1 and 2, and by the time they leave the school the pupils have laid a firm foundation for their secondary and further education. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils gain a good knowledge of the traditional languages of Jewish scholarship, and by the age of 12 they are fluent in Yiddish, which is the language in which the Limmudei Kodesh curriculum is delivered, read biblical Hebrew in three scripts (printed block, cursive, and Rashi), and have some familiarity with Aramaic. Teaching is particularly good in Key Stage 2, but throughout the school the rabbonim (rabbis) enjoy excellent relations with their pupils, and teach in a happy atmosphere. They by no means restrict themselves to subjects that might be considered as purely religious, but make references to a wide range of secular topics, including such diverse issues as the Vietnam war and current environmental concerns. In the very small number of Limmudei Kodesh lessons where there were weaknesses in the teaching, this was because there was less positive interaction with the pupils and the rabbonim taught in a more formal style.

Teaching and planning in the Limmudei Chol strand are very good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In the foundation stage the overall quality of the teaching is good. Staff provide good role models, show respect for pupils, and frequently promote their self-esteem, good behaviour and respect for others by giving them praise and encouragement. In consequence, their behaviour is very good: they share, take turns, are well-mannered, and learn the difference between right and wrong. Teachers are enthusiastic and make use of interesting planned activities. They succeed in maintaining the pupils' interest and involvement, and in stimulating their curiosity, imagination and creativity. They are happy and confident within the setting and show a lively enthusiasm for learning. Planned adult-led activities are used effectively and have a positive impact on the teaching and learning. However, the grouping of pupils and the deployment of staff and activities during the free-play sessions are not sufficiently thought out or organised to maximise the children's learning and focus the teaching.

Staff in the Foundation Stage are reasonably secure in their knowledge and understanding, and some of them have taken advantage of opportunities to update their skills and knowledge through in-service training. They have also benefited from positive support by the LEA's Early Years Consultant. The rabbonim who teach in the Foundation Stage make a significant contribution to the children's education, but they would also benefit from opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

The good foundation that is laid by the early years teaching is continued into Key Stage 1, and in Years 1 and 2 pupils make steady gains in their acquisition of skills in the English language, numeracy, and in their general knowledge. They make significant progress in their reading and writing of English and in their understanding of number.

In Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 the quality of planning, teaching and assessment is inconsistent. There is insufficient planning for individual lessons by some teachers. In some years there is a lack of challenging and exciting teaching. On occasion, teachers display a lack of confidence in their ability to cope with the demands of particular classes. Teachers use and demonstrate English well, but do not allow sufficient opportunity for pupils to talk together, or, for example, to work in pairs, as they do to great effect in Limmudei Kodesh lessons, and they do not make it clear to pupils what they have to learn by the end of the lesson, and they do not cater sufficiently for pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses. The teaching of mathematics is sound overall, but in some classes a lot of time is spent on mechanical manipulation of number, which provides knowledge of how to do things without necessarily giving pupils an understanding of why they are doing it.

The school has basic schemes of work to cover the whole period that the children are at the school, but in Years 3 to 7 there is a lack of the sort of careful overall planning that would help to ensure that pupils experience a systematic growth in knowledge and understanding. Much of the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is dependent on the strengths of individual teachers who organise themselves and their teaching with little reference to what has gone before, or what will come after. They choose which aspects of general knowledge to teach, and they are able to sustain the interest of the pupils because their knowledge is generally good in the areas that they have chosen. For example, some very good teaching was seen with a class who had constructed a large model of an imaginary English town and who, in doing so, had had to give careful consideration to questions to do with urban planning and environmental needs, as well as developing their mathematical and constructional skills. Similarly, in another class, pupils had undertaken a project to look at different forms of transport around the world. Together, the boys had put together an interesting wall display which combined technology and geography, and three boys had put together an interesting collection of stamps and mounted them on a map of the world to show how important transport is in a global setting. In the same class, pupils had developed a basic understanding of electrical circuits by constructing working models of traffic lights and lamps.

The school does not have in place an assessment framework for the whole school. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, often in class with the pupil beside them to receive immediate help. Teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils, and know them well, but comments in exercise books are rarely designed to help pupils improve, and teachers do not evaluate and record what has been learned systematically in order to plan future lessons more effectively, or relate attainment standards achieved to national standards.

The teaching of the Limmudei Chol curriculum is focused clearly on developing basic skills. Teachers are adept at making maximum use of limited resources and in explaining the inconsistencies of the English language within these lessons. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate. Pupils are mostly keen to learn, more so with the younger pupils than the older, and in the earlier lessons rather than those at the end of the day, when the boys are more tired.

By the time that pupils are preparing to leave the school and move on to secondary education they are achieving well in their number work, mainly as a consequence of clear explanations and much practice, and standards are around the national average. Standards in reading are below the average, but they nevertheless represent good achievement for the many boys with EAL. Bearing in mind the fact that most of them have no access to radio, television, or the secular press, their knowledge of the wider world is good.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

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 the subject matter taught is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils (paragraph 1(2)(b));
- ensure that lessons are well planned, effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used, and that class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c));
- ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and that they are used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f));
- ensure that there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and ensure that the information from such assessment is utilised so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)); and
- put in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).

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

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Talmud Torah Chinuch N'orim School caters very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of its pupils' education. It actively encourages kindness and co-operation amongst its pupils. It is committed to providing a welcoming and secure environment in which all of the pupils feel a sense of belonging, and it aims to instil in them a caring and responsible attitude towards other people, both within the school and the wider community. It also encourages the pupils to develop a sense of awareness and understanding of moral, social, and environmental issues. This is in keeping with the school's prospectus, which states that it devotes equal emphasis to the Mosaic laws that pertain to man's relationships with the Ha-shem (God) and those that pertain to his interactions with his fellow men.

Pupils are provided with incentives that enable them to develop their own self-knowledge. These include reward systems in each class and bi-yearly events that promote initiative and academic excellence in Kodesh studies. The pupils are given opportunities to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence through staff initiatives and as a result of the positive and happy atmosphere that pervades the school.

The religious ethos of the school enables the pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and encourages them to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour. Religious precepts and the prevalent aim of ensuring that the pupils become responsible citizens instil within them a respect for the law and a reasonable knowledge of public institutions and services in England. For example, in Year 7, pupils have had lessons which deal with how democracy works in Great Britain, and in Year 5 pupils have worked with their teacher to create a model of a typical small English town, in the course of which they have had to look at a range of environmental and cultural issues. It is a regular practice of the school to take pupils on trips into the surrounding area, and visits are made to the Peak District and other areas of interest. Such visits enable pupils to see a different environment from that which they are used to. The pupils are also given opportunities to assist the elderly and underprivileged within the local, strictly observant, Jewish community.

At different ages and at varying points throughout the school year, pupils are given an opportunity to acquire an appreciation of and a respect for other cultures and traditions. Pupils in the Foundation

Stage worked together on preparing challah (the bread used on Shabbos) and this was related the different types of bread from around the world. In Year 4, three boys put together a very good collection of stamps from many different countries sharing the common theme of transport, and this was done as part of a whole class project which resulted in a very interesting wall display in their classroom. This enabled pupils to look at aspects of world culture in a geographical context. Pupils are taught to appreciate members of the wider community who assist or serve the school and the Jewish community and are encouraged the express this appreciation in meaningful ways.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

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The school is genuinely concerned with the welfare, health and safety of its pupils and has established policies for the prevention of bullying, and for child protection, school trips and educational visits, health and safety and First Aid. Staff and parents are aware of the policies and they are integral to the school's structure. The school maintains a satisfactory level of fire safety as identified by its risk assessment and by a recent report from the fire authority. However, there are some aspects of the premises, both inside and outside, which pose safety risks and the school needs to be vigilant in order to be aware of potential risks around the school, such as small holes in the surface of the playground.

Good procedures are in place for dealing with pupils who may be taken ill. The headteacher keeps a comprehensive and complex list of parents and members of the extended families of pupils, so that, in the event of illness a pupil can be swiftly collected from the school and taken home.

Good behaviour is promoted amongst the pupils of the school through the school's behaviour policy. It keeps written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences. Pupils are adequately supervised in the classrooms and playgrounds.

The school maintains its admission register in accordance with the current regulations, but does not fulfil the requirements regarding the marking of the attendance registers. Two attendance registers are kept for each class, one for Limmudei Kodesh and one for Limmudei Chol. Those for the former are marked at the start of the day, but those for secular lessons are not always taken at the start of the afternoon session. Some teachers fail to complete the registers for several days, and there is no way of identifying from the register why a pupil is absent. Daily and weekly totals are not included, and occasionally the register is used for other purposes as; in instance it was being used as the teacher's mark book.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

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:

 maintain its attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school staff consists of 23 teachers, including the principal (menahel), and the headteacher. These are suitably qualified and experienced and provide expertise in either the Limmudei Kodesh or Limmudei Chol strands of the curriculum. All are graduates of Jewish institutions of higher education or have university or training college qualifications, but only four have recognised teaching certificates. One third have served at the school for 15 years or more, and the principal and headteacher have provided leadership for 30 years. This has helped to create a very stable educational tradition in the school. However, the school has, from time to time, had difficulty in recruiting staff, particularly for the Limmudei Chol strand. This has recently been exacerbated by the decision that, for religious reasons, the school will not employ women teachers beyond the Foundation Stage.

All of the teachers are Jewish, come from the local area, and are well known by the members of the community that its serves. Appropriate checks have been carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau. In addition, the school is supported by a small number of mothers who come in during the week to hear pupils read, and excellent specialist support is given to the pupil with SEN.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises consist of two Victorian semi-detached houses which were purchased in 1955 and subsequently knocked together to form one building. They have since been added to in a rather random manner. Although the school is now structurally sound, there have, in the past, been problems caused through penetration by rain, and in several places ceilings and walls have had to be repaired. The state of decoration varies, but in recent years there has been a rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration, and many of the classroom walls are now panelled in order to minimise damage. Floor coverings are usually good, but in a few places the carpet needs to be made secure, and in one area of solid flooring outside the nursery toilets, some tiles are cracked. The school is cleaned on a daily basis but lack of adequate storage space means that there are areas which are untidy. The school does not employ a caretaker and maintenance is often done on a voluntary basis.

The school follows the tradition of having separate classrooms for the teaching of Limmudei Kodesh and Limmudei Chol, so each year group makes use of two classrooms on a daily basis. These are adequate in number and there is a spare classroom that can be used for one-to-one teaching, as required. Most of the rooms are sufficiently large to accommodate the classes, but the Year 5 Limmudei Chol classroom does not have enough space to accommodate the class in reasonable comfort. This room also has to make constant use of artificial lighting because the natural light source is very limited. The school has very little specialist accommodation, but the basement area has been turned into a basic woodwork and design and technology room. Teachers make good use of display to brighten up the classrooms and corridors, including examples of pupils' work and the extensive use of photographs which record events of significance in the life of the school.

The school has an adequate number of toilets and washrooms for pupils and staff, but, in spite of every effort being made to keep them clean and hygienic, some of the boys' toilets are malodorous. There is no room that that can be used for pupils who are ill.

Around the school there is a large hard-surfaced playground which is a good asset. There is a wellused area with a good range of play equipment devoted to the needs of the younger pupils, and there are swings and other fixed-play equipment for the older pupils. The ground underneath this equipment has a movable soft-surfaced covering, but this needs to be lifted regularly and the surface underneath kept clear of gravel and other rubbish. There is insufficient of this covering underneath the swings. The playground at the front of the school has some steep steps with sharp concrete corners and this is a potential hazard. The whole outside area is rather bleak. Efforts to make it less so by creating a small garden and providing a water feature, have been frustrated by considerable vandalism from outside.

The management of the school is well aware that there are difficulties with the accommodation, and several unsuccessful efforts have been made to find new premises. Although the school makes good use of what it has, it needs to exercise constant vigilance to ensure that potential hazards are dealt with.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

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 classrooms are of an appropriate size to allow effective teaching, and do not compromise health and safety, having regard to the number, age and need of pupils (paragraph 5(j));
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(I));
- ensure that furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all pupils registered at the school (paragraph 5(r)); and
- ensure that there is appropriate flooring and that it is in good condition (paragraph 5(s)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

Parents are kept well informed of events in the school and of their children's progress, both orally and by means of written communication. As part of a close-knit and mutually supportive community, parents are welcomed into the school and involved in the children's education. The nursery staff complete termly progress reports for each child: these are shared with parents and include their own written comments and suggestions. Recently nursery staff have implemented and completed more detailed assessments of how children are developing, which show children's progress throughout the foundation stage, linked clearly to the early learning goals. Parents of pupils in other key stages also receive twice yearly reports on the work that their children have done in Limmudei Chol. These consist of brief notes which give parents a general view of progress, but often comments are purely about attitudes and give parents little indication of what standards are like, or about what pupils need to do to improve.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

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In practice, over many years, such concerns that parents have had have been dealt with successfully by the management on an informal basis. The school now has a written complaints policy that is available for parents and which meets the regulations which relate to the informal stages of the procedure. However, the requirements for formal, written complaints are not in place.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

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 its complaints procedure meets each of the requirements from paragraphs 7(e) to 7(k) in the regulations.

School details

Talmud Torah Chinuch N'orim School		
355/6007		
Primary		
Independent		
3 - 12		
Male		
Boys 182,	Girls ,	Total 182
Boys 42,	Girls ,	Total 42
Boys ,	Girls ,	Total 0
Boys 1,	Girls ,	Total 1
The school does not charge fees		
N/A		
11 Wellington Street East		
Salford		
M7 2AV		
N/A		
0161 792 9292/0873		
0161 792 4000		
Mrs Eva Margulies		
Rabbi B Waldm	an	
	355/6007 Primary Independent 3 - 12 Male Boys 182, Boys 42, Boys 42, Boys 1, The school doe N/A 11 Wellington S Salford M7 2AV N/A 0161 792 9292, 0161 792 4000 Mrs Eva Margu Rabbi B Waldm	355/6007 Primary Independent 3 - 12 Male Boys 182, Girls , Boys 42, Girls , Boys 42, Girls , Boys 1, Girls , The school does not charge fees N/A 11 Wellington Street East Salford M7 2AV N/A 0161 792 9292/0873 0161 792 4000

Lead Inspector: Dates of inspection: Dr Roy Long HMI (R) 21 - 24 June 2004

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