



Office for Standards
in Education

Manchester Junior Girls' School

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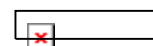
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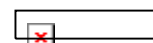
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Introduction and summary

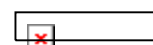


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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



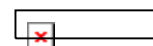
Manchester Junior Girls' School (Beis Chinuch Chareidi Lebonos) is an orthodox Jewish school founded in 1993 to serve the needs of the growing local orthodox Jewish community. The school has developed from five pupils in 1993 to 182 full-time and 18 part-time pupils in July 2004. The girls all come from English-speaking strictly observant Jewish families. Ten pupils have been identified as having special educational needs from the nursery, reception class and the main school. No pupil has a statement of special education need.

Curriculum provision is divided into two strands, **Limmudei Kodesh** (religious studies) and **Limmudei Chol** (secular studies). The ethos of the school centres round *Torah* (written and oral laws of the Old Testament) values. The focus of the education has two dimensions: firstly, the development of good *middos* (desirable characteristics) together with a commitment to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in line with orthodox Jewish tradition and, secondly, the

acquisition of knowledge and skills to equip the girls for their future education and for life as good citizens.

The programme of secular studies prepares the girls for national tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, as well as giving a broad general knowledge.

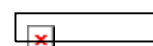
Summary of main findings



Manchester Junior Girls' School is an effective school. It has a positive ethos of dedication and commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pastoral care is a very strong feature of the school. Staff provide good role models for the pupils and show care for pupils' welfare and well-being. Parents are very supportive of the school and particularly appreciate its family values.

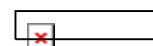
The *Kodesh* curriculum is a strength of the school. The pupils attain high standards. The secular strand of the curriculum is developing steadily and pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. However, policies and schemes of work for all subjects are not yet fully in place and implemented. There is good teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 in both strands of the curriculum. Teaching for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. The effective practice found in planning for the range of pupils' abilities in the *Kodesh* curriculum needs to be further developed in the secular curriculum. The school has made significant progress recently in terms of the development of curricular provision and in improving the premises and accommodation. It has made considerable efforts to meet the requirements of the new legislation and is well placed to continue its development.

What the school does well



- teaching is good overall. Subject knowledge and teaching methods in the *Kodesh* curriculum are very good. Classes are well managed and teachers' relationships with pupils are good;
- pupils attain high standards and make very good progress in the *Kodesh* curriculum. Overall, pupils make good progress over time and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science;
- the pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their learning; and
- the headteacher has instigated curricular changes which reflect a clear overview for the further development of the school.

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



- support the secular curriculum policy with appropriate plans and effectively implemented schemes of work;
- provide appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils' personal, social and health education;
- take the aptitudes and needs of all pupils into account when planning lessons;

- maintain the attendance registers in accordance with current regulations;
- carry out appropriate checks for the appointment of all staff; and
- ensure that there are sufficient washroom facilities in the temporary accommodation provided for the nursery.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

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1. The quality of education provided by the school

☐

The quality of the curriculum

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The curriculum meets most of the requirements of the regulations. The school is developing schemes of work but currently there is not enough documentation in place to ensure full coverage of the curriculum and the progression and continuity of pupils' learning in many secular subjects. Details of the curricular provision are provided for parents in the prospectus.

The *Kodesh* curriculum is broad and well balanced. *Kodesh* is taught all morning every day including Sundays. Each day starts with a full davening (prayers) session which includes, in the higher classes, the reading of Tehillim. The curriculum consists of reading for the youngest children and when this is fluent, Chumash, the learning of the Old Testament. Sidrah, Jewish History, culture, religious practice and general knowledge form most of the curriculum. Personal, social and health education is incorporated into the *Kodesh* teaching, but is not yet supported by a written curriculum or schemes of work. Pupils are taught to write firstly block and then script letters. The head of the department checks long and medium-term planning, evaluates its effectiveness and meets regularly with all *Kodesh* staff to ensure the curriculum is implemented fully and well. This results in a department that is well-organised, well-managed and in turn, results in high academic standards that meet the stated aims of the school.

The secular curriculum for the Foundation Stage is appropriate and meets the recommendations for pupils under five. Planning is thorough. Pupils experience a wide range of interesting, practical activities which provide a firm foundation for future learning.

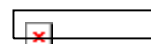
The headteacher is developing the secular curriculum and the school now follows a published scheme of work in mathematics. A new English scheme has been formulated, to begin in September, which has regard for the National Curriculum. Science now covers some, though not all, units of the National Curriculum. There is no provision for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). History and geography are taught but as yet lack sufficiently detailed schemes of work for teaching and learning to be fully effective. There is limited planning for design and technology or art. Design and technology is not taught as a separate subject, although there is some provided for in art activities. Music consists of singing lessons, but not always on a regular basis. The school follows a commercial scheme for physical education (PE). There is one PE lesson for each year group every week.

The time allocated to secular studies is used well, with a lesson in mathematics and English in each class each day. Although the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is part-time, pupils

with special educational needs are clearly identified and provided for. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for meeting their needs.

The school provides a number of extra-curricular activities. There are two or three outings for each year group during the school year. There are also special monthly assemblies or workshops, some of which are topical to the new Jewish month such as Matzah (unleavened bread) baking in Nissan (the first Jewish month) and making paper flowers in Sivan (the third Jewish month). Others may be a Brochos (a short grace) quiz. All pupils are involved in an end of year poetry recital.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



Overall, the quality of teaching is good and often very good in the *Kodesh* lessons. Teaching was good or better in thirteen out of the twenty-four lessons observed. No unsatisfactory teaching or serious weaknesses were seen. All of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire state that the standard of teaching is good. It enables their children to settle in well and make good progress over time. Their views are supported by inspection evidence.

The very good teaching in the *Kodesh* curriculum is characterised by exemplary subject knowledge and good planning which ensures that work is usually matched to the range of the pupils' ability. Rashi (Hebrew reading) is taught very well in Key Stage 2. English, mathematics and science are taught thoroughly and enable the pupils to achieve above average standards by the end of Year 6. Regular topic work is interesting and the teachers make good use of visits and artefacts to stimulate the pupils' interest. In Key Stage 1, however, where science, history and geography are taught through topics, the acquisition of the knowledge and understanding required for these subjects sometimes lacks consistency and learning can be piecemeal. In a significant number of lessons in both key stages, teachers do not share the learning objective for the lesson with the pupils, either orally or by writing it on the white board. The quality of marking is variable and although there is a policy for marking it is not always adhered to.

The headteacher has recently produced a policy with useful guidelines for staff to help with teaching in mixed-ability classes. This document is not yet fully implemented. Planning for lessons in the secular curriculum does not always detail how the teacher will provide for the wide range of pupils' ability. Higher attaining pupils are usually provided with extension work when the class task is completed. Sometimes it is not necessary for these pupils to complete the class task and they could be further challenged from the start of the lesson. Valuable support is offered individually to less able pupils by teachers and assistants. The support is handled sensitively and is appreciated by pupils. Appropriate specialist teaching is provided for science and art in Key Stage 2.

Teaching in the nursery and reception class is good. Although neither group are in ideal premises, the staff enhance and use the space well and the displays and arrangement of activities, such as the well-laid out role play area stimulate the pupils' interest. Planning for both age groups is good and details appropriate provision for the six areas of learning recommended for this age range.

Resources are adequate overall and, for example, just meet the requirements for science. Teachers use resources effectively to enhance their lessons. Lessons start and finish on time and most teachers maintain a brisk pace during the lesson.

Throughout the school, positive relationships abound. Although the number of part-time teachers is high, there is an atmosphere of teamwork and purpose. The good relationships in lessons enable the pupils to feel confident to ask for help when necessary and to know that support will be forthcoming.

Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The pupils in Years 2 and 6 take national tests while those

in Years 3, 4 and 5 take the optional national assessments. The school has just introduced documentation to record the pupils' grades in each test taken. This will enable staff to track individual pupils' progress over time. The pupils undertake mathematics assessments at the end of each unit. All teachers keep careful records of the pupils' achievements in spelling, multiplication tables, phonic skills and dictation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

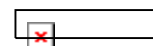
No.

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:

- *support the secular curriculum policy with appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2));*
- *provide appropriate plans and schemes of work for personal, social and health education (paragraph 1(2)(f));and*
- *take into account the aptitudes and needs of all pupils when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d)).*

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



The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. To successfully meet its aims within its distinctive ethos, the school places important emphasis on the overall development of pupils and their place within the religious community to which they belong. There is a positive concern for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strong feature of the provision and the displays on walls in the corridors depict spiritual and moral teaching which supports this effectively.

Central to the school's purpose is handing on to pupils the knowledge and understanding of their Jewish spiritual heritage. Mainly through their *Kodesh* lessons, but also through the whole ethos of the school, pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Throughout the school, teachers ensure that pupils' moral sense grows and that they learn how to respond to others with kindness and consideration. Teachers are fair and caring and the positive moral model they set is one of the key reasons why pupils are happy at the school. As a result, the school is a well-ordered community. Teachers treat pupils with respect and pupils grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour in and around the school is good, as is behaviour in classes. Relationships between pupils and their peers and between pupils and their teachers are positive. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility. Each class has its own monitors and Year 6 pupils have specific responsibilities amongst the younger children. The vast majority of parents agree that the school helps their children to become more mature and take on responsibility.

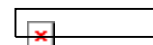
Younger children learn about 'People at Work' and all pupils have an opportunity to visit local places of interest when they go on school trips. Citizenship is briefly taught within the *Kodesh* curriculum.

The school teaches its own culture very well indeed. However, although their policy states: "*While not teaching other religions, children are given the opportunity to explore and acknowledge the similarities and differences between other cultures and religions*" only limited evidence was found of this. The school should assist pupils to acquire a greater appreciation of and respect for other cultures, although it is understood that the school has made some headway with this requirement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school takes its responsibilities seriously and has a range of policies which clearly set out the principles and procedures guiding the health and safety of pupils. These fulfil all requirements.

The policy on bullying includes clear guidelines which would be implemented should the occasion arise. The headteacher has designated responsibility for child protection and will be trained shortly. She in turn will train staff so that this policy will continue to be implemented correctly.

The school has clear guidelines and procedures for safety on out-of-school visits. Every venue is visited by at least one and often more members of staff before taking pupils on an outing. Risk assessments are carried out informally and the school should now put these in writing.

The behaviour policy is implemented fully and is effective. Pupils are encouraged to behave well by the many reward systems used in class. These promote the good behaviour observed in and around the school. Pupils are courteous. They stand up and greet politely guests who visit their classrooms. Most pupils listen attentively to staff in lessons. Although the school keeps a sanction book there has never been an occasion for it to be used.

The school is checked regularly to ensure that it is safe from any hazards; for example there are finger guards on all doors in the new classroom block and appropriate fire evacuation procedures are in place. Fire drills are held each term and the evacuation time is logged systematically. Fire risk assessments are in order and the latest letter from the fire officer shows that standards are satisfactory.

A qualified First Aider is on the premises whenever the pupils are on site. All accidents are recorded appropriately. There is a clear policy on First Aid, teachers are aware of what to do and to whom to go to if there is an accident.

Supervision of pupils throughout the school day is properly managed and staffing levels are appropriate at all times. The admission register is kept correctly and up-to-date. However, the attendance registers do not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences. The registers are not always completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 having produced a statement outlining its current position in relation to the requirements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most, but not all, of the requirements.

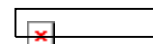
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

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

- *ensure that attendance registers are completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and that they distinguish between authorised and unauthorised*

absences for all day pupils of compulsory school age (paragraph 3(9)).

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



All staff have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. The school has only recently produced appropriate forms to check the necessary information required for all staff appointments. Staff currently teaching at the school have not completed medical checks. From September 2004, the new appointment forms contain a medical questionnaire.

All teachers have suitable qualifications and most attend in-service training once or twice a year. A difficulty that the school encounters with promoting professional development is the very high turnover of staff. Some in-service training is planned for the end of this term on the use of mathematical equipment and class management. It will be provided by a local education authority.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

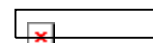
The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

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:

- *carry out the appropriate checks prior to the appointment of all staff (paragraph 4c)).*

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is situated in two very different buildings, but the premises are suitable for purpose. The original Victorian building houses the reception class, office, headteacher's room and dining room. It is in a poor state of maintenance and decorative order. Plans are in place to thoroughly renovate this building. The reception class has the use of two rooms which are fit for purpose. Washroom facilities in the original building are satisfactory for staff and pupils. The nursery is currently in temporary premises until the building work is finished. There are insufficient toilets in these premises for the number of nursery pupils who attend each morning. The reception class will join the nursery when the building works begin, but use the first floor with its own washroom facilities.

The new building, opened in September 2003 at the rear of the premises, caters for pupils in Years 1 to 6. It is of very good quality and the accommodation is excellent. The classrooms are bright, spacious and airy. Each class is furnished to a high standard. There is access for disabled pupils by means of a ramp to the ground floor and suitable washroom facilities are available. Washroom facilities for both staff and pupils fully meet requirements. There are four smaller rooms which are used for individual teaching sessions and to store resources. Windows have limited openings for pupils' safety. Facilities for sick pupils are adequate; when necessary, they sit with an adult in the office, close by a washroom, until collected by a parent.

The area for outdoor play is satisfactory. There is sufficient space for the number of pupils on roll. The rear playground is also used for physical education. The climbing frame for the youngest

children is set on a soft surface. There is no hall for assemblies or physical education, although this provision is included in the building plans. Weekly assemblies are held in the dining room in the old building.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets 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:

- *provide sufficient washroom facilities for the nursery in the temporary premises (paragraph 5k)).*

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

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The quality of information for parents fully meets the regulations. The school prospectus is informative and gives an accurate image of the school with all the required details for parents and prospective parents. It also informs parents of the documentation that they can request to see.

The large majority of parents feel well informed about the progress their children make. There are two curriculum evenings each year during which parents meet their children's teacher to discuss progress. A newsletter is sent out to parents at the end of each term. It records activities and events that took place during the term. It also includes reminders to parents on various issues such as uniform and lunches. There is one written report at the end of each academic year. Teachers report on the progress of pupils, stating clearly what each can do and secular teachers often add targets for development, a useful practice *Kodesh* staff could emulate.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

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The complaints procedure meets all the requirements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details

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Name of school:	Manchester Junior Girls' School		
DfES ref number:	355/6027		
Type of school:	Day school		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years		
Gender of pupils:	Female		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys ,	Girls 182,	Total 182
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys ,	Girls 18,	Total 18
Annual fees (day pupils):	£2,280		
Address of school:	64, Upper Park Road Salford Manchester M74 4JA		
Telephone number:	0161 740 0566		
Headteacher:	Mrs Esther Lieberman		
Proprietor:	Rabbi Aryeh Ehrentreu		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Cecile Corfield		
Dates of inspection:	5 - 8 July 2004		

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