

Beis Trana School

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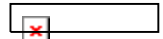
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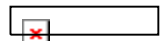
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Introduction and summary

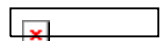


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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.

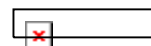
Information about the school



Beis Trana Girls School is an independent day school for girls aged 3 - 12 years. It caters solely for girls of the strictly orthodox Jewish community living in the Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington and Tottenham areas of the boroughs of Hackney and Haringey. The families are from a variety of social and economic backgrounds and most are affiliated to the Square Chassidic movement, the headquarters of which are in New York. The main language spoken at home is Yiddish but most pupils are bi-lingual. No pupil has access to radio, television or national newspapers in her home.

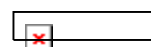
The school was established in 1995 and moved into its present premises in 1997. In September 2004, due to increasing rolls, it acquired additional premises approximately one mile away to accommodate the reception, nursery and Year 7 pupils. The school is due to move shortly into new premises and will then meet on one site. At the time of the inspection, there were 137 pupils on roll, of whom 118 were of compulsory school age and 19 were of below compulsory school age. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN).

Summary of main findings



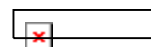
Beis Trana School is founded on the principles of strict adherence to Jewish law and ethics. It has created a warm environment characterised by its dedicated staff and happy pupils. Most parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school. Equal time is devoted to the two strands of the curriculum. The Kodesh (religious) strand is broad and balanced and reflects the ethos of the school. Further development of the Chol (secular) curriculum is now required. The quality of the Kodesh teaching is mostly good throughout the school and the Chol teaching is good in the nursery. This good practice must now extend to encompass the whole school. The quality of the premises and accommodation is poor and there are shortcomings in the implementation of certain aspects of the health and safety of pupils.

What the school does well



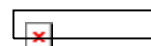
- it is very good at teaching Torah values;
- the quality of teaching in the Kodesh strand is mostly good.
- provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school;
- it benefits from the strong commitment of its staff; and
- there is a happy and friendly atmosphere.

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



- address all the issues relating to the curriculum, teaching and assessment identified in section 1 of this report;
- rectify all the health and safety issues identified in section 3;
- ensure that the appropriate staff checks are carried out as detailed in section 4;
- improve the aspects of the premises recorded in section 5;
- provide parents with details of the name and address of the chair of governors; and
- improve procedures for handling complaints as detailed in section 7.

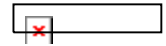
What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



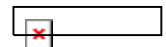
In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

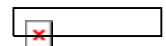
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The curriculum meets some of the requirements of the regulations. The school is developing schemes of work, but currently there is insufficient documentation in place to ensure full coverage of the curriculum and progression and continuity of the pupils' learning in many Chol subjects. Mathematics and English are taught throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and all other Chol subjects are taught only in some year groups.

The Kodesh curriculum is broad and well balanced. Kodesh is taught all morning each day. The day starts with davening (prayers). In the nursery and reception classes, the focus is on the weekly sidrah (Torah reading), Sabbath, festivals, the Jewish home and middos (Jewish values). Pupils in the reception class are taught Hebrew letters in readiness for the teaching of reading in Year 1. This culminates in a special ceremony at which the pupils receive their own siddur (prayer book) at the end of Year 1. When reading is fluent, pupils progress to the study of Chumash (Torah texts). The firm foundation established in the early years is built upon as the pupils advance from year to year. Further subjects are introduced which include Jewish history, Rashi (Biblical commentary), comprehension of davening and dinim (Jewish law). Pupils are taught to write in Hebrew script letters to a highly proficient level.

There is detailed, long-term planning in the Kodesh curriculum showing how each subject is built upon each year from the nursery onwards. There are also very clear weekly and daily plans showing exactly what is taught in each subject. As a result, good standards are achieved that meet the stated aims of the school.

The Chol curriculum for the Foundation Stage is appropriate and meets the recommendations for pupils under five. It is well planned around the six areas of learning. There is a strong emphasis on structured activities, experimentation, exploration and the development of personal, social and emotional development.

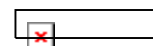
Currently the school does not have a written curriculum statement supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. The school has commenced the process of producing written documentation to support the secular curriculum and has now produced weekly and daily plans. Documents from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) support the teaching in Year 7 and QCA guidelines are used to develop the curriculum in the lower years. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is incorporated into the teaching, but it is not yet supported by schemes of work. Mathematics and English are taught daily and science now covers some of the units of the National

Curriculum. There is no provision for information and communication technology (ICT). There is some evidence of history and geography being taught, but these subjects need further development in order for them to be more effective. Physical education (PE) is timetabled weekly for each year group. Art and design feature in the curriculum and good examples of pupils' work were observed around the school. Music is taught through the medium of singing.

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

The school provides a number of good extra-curricular activities. These include a visit to a matzah bakery, a wax workshop where the pupils produced their own candles and a healthy eating week. There are also special ongoing activities such as the *berochos* (blessings) project linked to the Jewish months of the year. The school also organises play schemes for pupils during some school holidays.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



During the inspection 22 lessons were observed across the Kodesh and Chol curriculum. Of these, 16 were satisfactory or good, with the remaining six being unsatisfactory.

The best lessons seen were in the Kodesh department. The teachers display secure subject knowledge and have a clear understanding of what they expect of their pupils. The pace of the lessons is brisk and there is clear evidence of progress being made. Pupils show enthusiasm for each of the subjects taught and are eager to participate and volunteer information. Teachers use a variety of strategies to keep pupils on task and display particular skills in the art of telling stories. They create opportunities to emphasise Jewish values and they encourage pupils to behave well and act responsibly.

In the Chol curriculum the quality of teaching in the nursery is consistently good. Teachers have a secure understanding of what the pupils need to achieve. Their planning is effectively linked to cover the six areas of learning outlined in the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed learning. Pupils' natural curiosity is encouraged to develop and they quickly become independent young people who are keen to learn. Careful explanations and a sense of fun characterise the nursery curriculum.

Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on helping pupils develop skills in literacy and numeracy, and an appropriate emphasis on teaching phonics. Nevertheless, most of the Chol teaching in the rest of the school is unsatisfactory, and teachers have low expectations. Lessons are mostly teacher-directed with too few opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and try different ways of problem-solving. This impedes their progress to become independent learners. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson the teacher conducted an interesting experiment, but then dictated the answers to questions on a worksheet rather than afford pupils the opportunity to investigate the answers for themselves. On other occasions, mundane tasks such as colouring outline drawings constrain the learning of those capable of higher attainment. There is often insufficient challenge in lessons with teachers relying heavily on the use of worksheets. There is little evidence of differentiation and this prevents pupils from reaching standards commensurate with their abilities. In some of the unsatisfactory lessons, time is not managed well and the pace is slow and the work repetitive. As a result, little new knowledge is gained.

In the Foundation Stage, assessment is taking place but the Foundation Stage Profiles are not being used. The school has an assessment, recording and reporting policy. This involves teachers maintaining records of test results and awarding marks on a weekly basis for behaviour, participation and performance. However, the assessments are not utilised in a way that enables pupils to make consistent progress over time. Most of the marking of pupils' work is carried out

conscientiously. However, it does not inform older pupils sufficiently of what they need to do to improve. The school reports that pupils from Years 2 and 6 have been entered for national tests and that most Year 6 pupils achieved Level 4. No evidence was available to inspectors regarding Key Stage 1 results.

Teachers have had some opportunity for professional development in recent years but not all are aware of current developments in teaching and the curriculum. All members of staff in the main school are seminary trained; in the nursery, the matron and three teachers are appropriately qualified. The school has provided some in-service training and is planning more in the future.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

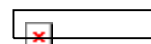
No.

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 curriculum document is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2));
- ensure that the teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 1(3)(a));
- ensure that the teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual and creative efforts and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 1(3)(b));
- ensure that lessons are planned well, and effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used, and that time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c));
- ensure that assessment is used to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)); and
- ensure that teachers provide education which enables all pupils within a class to make progress (paragraph 1(5)).

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 and the spiritual and moral teaching is a strength of the school.

The school aims `to provide a sound education within a warm, informal environment with an emphasis on modesty, sincerity and strict adherence to Jewish law and ethics'. It does much to achieve this aim. Great emphasis is placed on the teaching of middos and how they are applied to everyday life. Pupils are imbued with a love of and respect for the Torah and its teachings. Opportunities are given to appreciate the importance of Torah values through the study of appropriate Biblical and Talmudic texts, and through project activities relating to specific middos themes. These are reinforced regularly during davening, grace before and after meals and through the religious ethos that permeates the school. Through discussion of Jewish law and ethics, pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Throughout the school, teachers ensure that the girls' moral sense can grow through well-planned activities, and there are extensive opportunities for them to learn how to respond to others with kindness and consideration. As a result, the school is a calm and well-ordered community that is characterised by friendliness and mutual concern.

The social development of pupils is good. Year 6 pupils are all given responsibilities around the school. As prefects they have various responsibilities including acting as assembly and stair monitors. There is an award system in place to encourage good behaviour and for demonstrating

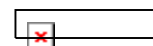
the Torah values taught. Pupils are made aware of public institutions by visiting various places of interest. For example, Year 7 pupils visited the Thames Barrier. An annual visit to the Ragged School Museum is organised for Year 6 pupils to support their history lessons. Year 3 pupils are taken to see famous London landmarks including Buckingham Palace.

The promotion of pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own culture in depth and are taught to consider and respect other cultures. For example, Year 7 pupils have learned about apartheid in South Africa and have been encouraged to consider the importance of showing tolerance towards others.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school fails to meet a number of important requirements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. The anti-bullying policy makes plain the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour and how staff should deal with any issues of bullying. Child protection procedures are in place, and there is a named protection officer.

The behaviour policy sets out clear guidelines on how behaviour is managed throughout the school. Pupils are well behaved and courteous. They stand up when adults visit their classroom and show respect. The school keeps a sanction book, but it is rare for it to be needed.

Although the school has a written policy on the health and safety of the pupils on educational visits, it does not have regard to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance which requires a risk assessment to be carried out.

Pupils are not supervised at all times. They start to arrive at school approximately 30 minutes before the commencement of the school day. They go into their classrooms or the playground and are unsupervised until their teachers arrive. During wet breaks, supervision is undertaken by Year 6 pupils without the presence of an adult.

The school has a log book in which they record fire drills. Two fire drills have taken place in the main building but none in the additional premises. The school received a report from the local fire authority in March 2003 confirming that the building meets the required standards and stating that a fire risk assessment must be made. At the time of the inspection, this had not been undertaken. A previous inspection report indicates that the attic room is unsafe for pupils and that it was only to be used for storage. However, the room is now used regularly for remedial teaching. In some washrooms, cleaning materials are stored within reach of the pupils. The fire exit in the additional building is unsafe due to the collection of leaves and rubbish strewn at the exit and on the stairs leading away from the building.

There is a clear policy on First Aid and teachers are aware of what to do and to whom to go if necessary. A qualified First Aider is always present on both sites and all accidents are recorded appropriately.

The admission register is kept correctly and up-to-date. However, the attendance registers are at times completed in pencil rather than ink and do not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences.

The school has not yet written a draft accessibility plan in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act

(DDA).

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:

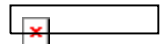
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance: 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' (paragraph 3(2)(c));
- have regard to the DfES guidance: 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers' (paragraph 3(4));
- ensure that the school has a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, and by any report from the Fire Authority (paragraph 3(5));
- ensure that school staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils (paragraph 3(7));and
- ensure that the attendance registers are completed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school is owned by Beis Trana Girls School Ltd. The trustees meet on a regular basis and are active in making decisions that guide the school's development. The school has established procedures for the recruitment of staff. However, these do not fully meet current requirements. For example, no member of staff has been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to ensure their suitability to work with children, nor have appropriate checks been carried out to confirm medical fitness.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

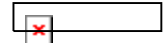
No.

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 prior to the confirmation of their appointment, staff at the school have been subject to a check with the CRB (paragraph 4(b)); and
- ensure that prior to confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their medical fitness (paragraph 4(c)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The premises and accommodation are poor. The school currently occupies two sites, a mile apart. In the annexe, there is sufficient space in the reception and nursery classes, conditions are cramped for Year 7 pupils to the extent that the inspector had to observe the lesson seated outside the classroom. The lighting in the nursery and reception classes is unsatisfactory. This particularly affects those pupils who are seated in the corners of the rooms. There is no designated toilet for staff.

The condition of the main premises is poor. It is severely overcrowded and in urgent need of repair and re-decoration. The flooring is poor in some areas and presents a safety hazard. It is to the credit of the teachers that they have enhanced the classrooms to the best of their ability with appropriate pictures and posters. The number of toilets and hand basins for pupils is adequate although some are in poor condition. The hot water in the upstairs washbasin is too hot to be used safely. Year 4 pupils are accommodated in a cabin at the rear of the playground area. There are no toilet facilities there and the pupils must walk through the playground in order to use the toilets in the main building. This is unsatisfactory, particularly in inclement weather. There is no designated room specifically for pupils who are sick and the staff room is used for this purpose, but the room has no washbasin. The playground area is far too small for the number of pupils to play safely.

The school is aware of the significant weaknesses of its present accommodation and is looking forward to moving very shortly to its new premises.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

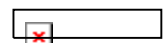
No.

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 water supply meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(a));
- ensure that classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, and do not compromise health or safety having regard to the number, age and needs (including any special needs) of pupils (paragraph 5(j));
- ensure that there are sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k));
- ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l));
- ensure that the lighting in the classrooms is satisfactory in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(p));
- ensure there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 5(q));
- ensure that the flooring is appropriate and in good condition (paragraph 5(s)); and
- improve the arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides an appropriate range of information to parents and other partners by means of letters and notes. Information regarding the name and address of the chair of governors is not available and this needs to be provided.

Weekly newsletters are sent which record what pupils have learned during the week. These are of very high quality, especially in the nursery. There are two curriculum evenings per year during which parents meet their children's teacher to discuss progress. Written reports are sent to parents twice a year. The Kodesh reports are informative but there is some inconsistency in the quality of information contained in the Chol reports. The senior management team intends to standardise the format for report writing in the future. Nearly 90% of parents who responded to the questionnaire considered that they were well informed about their children's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

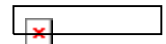
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

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

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

- provide parents with details of the name and address of the chair of governors (paragraph 6(2)(c)).

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



The school meets most of the requirements of the regulations. The school has a written complaints policy but does not state clear time scales for the management of complaints. In the event of a hearing, the school currently appoints one mediator who is acceptable to both parties. The regulations require that a panel of at least three independent people be appointed. A copy of the findings should be given to all parties involved.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

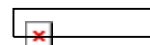
The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

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

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

- ensure that the complaints procedure sets out clear time scales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c));
- ensure that in the event of parents not being satisfied with the response to a written complaint, there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f)); and
- ensure that the complaints procedure stipulates that a copy of any findings and recommendations made by the panel be given to the complainant, proprietors and headteacher, and, where relevant, the person complained about (paragraph 7(i)).

School details



Name of school:	Beis Trana School
DfES ref number:	204/6400
Type of school:	Jewish Girls' Nursery and Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3-12 years
Gender of pupils:	Female
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Total 137
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Total 2
Annual fees (day pupils):	Voluntary Contributions
Address of school:	21 Northfield Road London N16 5RL
Telephone number:	020 8800 7650
Fax number:	020 7502 0196
Headteachers:	Mrs M Shmaya, Mrs E Hirsch, Mrs Y Frank
Proprietor:	Beis Trana Girls School Ltd
Lead Inspector:	Rev Michael Binstock
Dates of inspection:	15 - 18 November 2004

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