



JFS School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133724
LEA Brent LEA
Inspection number 282347
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006
Reporting inspector Gill Close

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary	School address	The Mall
School category	Voluntary aided		Kenton
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Harrow HA3 9TE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02082063100
Number on roll	1880	Fax number	02082063101
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Russell Kett
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Dame Ruth Robins

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

JFS is a large voluntary-aided Jewish comprehensive school which is part way through a five-year expansion programme. It has 500 students in the sixth form. In September 2002 it relocated to the London Borough of Brent, into purpose-built premises. Since September 2004 it has held specialist school status for humanities, which involves outreach work with schools and the community. Students come from a wide geographical area in and around London. They reflect the full range of socio-economic backgrounds; one tenth are eligible for free schools meals. Ten percent of students have learning difficulties or disabilities. For five percent of students, English is not their first language but none are at an early stage of acquiring it.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school evaluates its effectiveness as good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. Inspectors judge it to be outstanding both overall and in the sixth form. Through the school's strong ethos of care and achievement, its highly committed staff enable students to make outstanding progress overall in both their learning and personal development. The outstanding care, support and guidance and excellent curriculum help students reach exceptionally high standards, enjoy school very much and become well prepared for their future life.

The headteacher and school leaders provide outstanding leadership in setting a clear direction for the school. Year leaders manage their own highly efficient systems for monitoring and enhancing students' progress and personal and social development. Nevertheless, the school recognises that despite this excellent provision its central systems for assessing and recording progress do not always support the identification of underachievement of individuals or groups in relation to their targets as well as they might.

Teaching and learning are good. Learning and progress are stronger than teaching because of the excellent attitude to learning that the school helps students to develop, the outstanding care and support, and the involvement of parents. In some lessons students' individual needs are not supported as well as they might be to maximise their progress. Monitoring of lessons takes place regularly but does not focus sharply enough on students' learning or lead to systematic improvement in teaching. There is much outstanding or good practice in teaching, assessment, care and support but the way it is shared means that some students do not benefit from it consistently.

The school provides good equality of opportunity and discrimination is tackled rigorously. Nonetheless, some groups of learners are not making the outstanding progress that others are. The use of resources to achieve value for money is good. Facilities for learning are excellent although deployment of support varies in its effectiveness.

The school has used the first year of its specialist humanities school status successfully to form effective links with a number of feeder primary schools and to provide literacy support for local homeless people.

Since the previous inspection, standards have improved at all key stages. Although some inconsistencies in management remain, the use of tutorial time and the provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved greatly. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school judges the effectiveness of the sixth form as outstanding. Evidence from inspection supports this view. Students' excellent attitude to work helps them to make outstanding progress. Exceptional care, guidance and support in addition to good

teaching enable them to reach high standards. Students demonstrate excellent personal development, for example many support and mentor younger students and help their local Jewish community very effectively. The sixth form offers a choice of academic and vocational courses that meets the needs of its students and prepares them for life particularly well. Most participate in the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities that include sports, music, drama and art.

What the school should do to improve further

- Systematically improve teaching to enable all students to maximise progress in lessons, through the effective monitoring of learning of individuals and groups, and sharing of good practice.
- Ensure that central assessment and recording systems reliably support the identification of any underachievement of individuals and groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students join the school with a spread of attainment which is above average overall. By the end of Key Stage 4 they make outstanding progress to reach exceptionally high standards. Progress is stronger during Key Stage 4 than it is in Key Stage 3. Students with statements of special educational need also make outstanding progress, but the school has rightly identified that other students with learning difficulties and disabilities make only good progress, as do students for whom English is not their first language. Students in the sixth form also make exceptionally good progress overall and in a range of academic and vocational subjects.

In the first year of its specialist school status, GCSE targets were met in English and religious education, but just missed in geography.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of students at the school are outstanding. Students benefit from the strong focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are immensely proud of the school and share its commitment to developing thoughtful, tolerant, responsible and caring citizens. As a result, they have extremely high regard for each others' dignity and safety, and behave well. Their sense of community and co-operation are outstanding and they participate eagerly in a rich range of cultural activities. They very much enjoy school and all the opportunities it offers. This is shown in their well above average attendance, their involvement in many extra-curricular activities and their extremely positive attitudes to learning.

Students understand particularly well how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They participate very effectively in a range of physical activities both during lessons and through the stimulating clubs which take place in the outstanding facilities. They make an impressive contribution to the school and the wider Jewish community. This helps them become responsible and caring young people and prepares them very well for their future life.

The elected school council is very active in supporting the school leadership to make decisions. Year 11 students and sixth formers contribute very effectively to the welfare of younger students through buddying and mentoring schemes. They confidently acknowledge that this helps their own development as much as the younger students.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching and learning are good. Students' learning and progress are stronger than teaching because of their excellent attitude to learning, the outstanding care and support that they receive and the close involvement of parents. The very good relationships between teachers and students enhance students' confidence and motivation. Students work hard and do their homework conscientiously; they find teachers very helpful when they approach them for extra assistance outside lessons. Students also learn well from a broad range of other activities run by staff and older students, including homework clubs and tailored support and revision sessions. They report that 'some teachers give up their lunchtime to help you catch up'.

In lessons, teaching quality is inconsistent. The best teaching is lively and inspiring. Teachers use very good subject knowledge, set high expectations of all learners, and involve students in effective peer and self assessment against clearly identified learning outcomes. Individual needs are clearly recognized, planned for and supported.

Teachers know their students well. However, students' individual needs are not consistently considered by all teachers and learning resources are not always best deployed to maximize student progress. As a result some students are not supported or challenged as well as they might be in all of their lessons. Sometimes this is because the teaching gives students too little time to work on their own or in groups, is too structured to allow students to develop independent learning and thinking skills, or does not make it clear how students can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The school offers a broad range of courses to meet most needs. Citizenship studies and personal and social education, delivered through Jewish studies, provide an outstanding core that helps students develop a concern for others and make significant contributions to their community. Students are enabled to develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills and self-confidence to underpin their future economic well-being. The careers education for all students and the residential experience available for Year 9 students is exemplary. Vocational subject options are limited, but include popular and successful courses in the sixth form. Provision for lower attaining students is restricted in the sixth form, but in the main school they benefit from a good course in study skills for working life and short work placements.

Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection enabling students to reach higher standards; students are entered for GCSE or Key Skills qualifications but ICT is still not used well in some subjects. Students make very good use of the access to ICT, books and support in the excellent learning resources centre, and the wide range of activities that support their progress and well-being. The outstanding range of extra-curricular activities in sports, music, drama and art has a large take-up, and promotes students' healthy living and creativity very effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of students are outstanding and at the heart of the work of the school. From their very first day, students are welcomed and cared for by the whole school community. The use of tutorial time has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It now promotes very well each student's academic progress and social and personal well-being. In particular, the fortnightly individual meetings with form tutors set targets and follow them up carefully through each student's planner. Students who need help with their learning, behaviour or personal development are given support and targets that are monitored and reviewed regularly.

The school provides well-informed individual advice and guidance to help students make choices regarding examination courses and going on to further or higher education or into careers.

Parents wholeheartedly support the care which the school provides for students and play a full part in supporting their children's progress. For example, the school makes very good use of planners to communicate between students, teachers, form tutors and parents about progress that is outstanding or not good enough. As one student commented, 'the whole point of JFS is helping you to improve'.

The school works closely with specialist agencies to provide outstanding support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. It provides excellent support for students who are vulnerable. The mentoring programme is exceptional.

Good arrangements for the protection of students are in place and understood by all members of staff. Potential risks to students are carefully assessed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that the leadership and management are good. The headteacher and other leaders within the school provide outstanding leadership in setting a clear vision and direction. They promote very successfully high standards of care, guidance and achievement within a strong Jewish ethos.

School management is good. There are strengths in the way that the school evaluates its own performance. It knows itself well and has identified correctly the key priorities for improvement. Senior leaders work closely with subject leaders to observe lessons. However, this observation does not focus sufficiently on learning and lacks the rigour

to lead to systematic improvement in teaching at an individual, departmental and whole school level. Year leaders manage their own highly efficient systems for monitoring and improving students' progress, as do some subject departments, although the school recognises that its central assessment and recording system does not always provide information that shows reliably and clearly any underachievement by individuals or groups in relation to their targets. The outstanding and good practice in teaching, assessment, care and support within the school is not shared systematically so some students do not benefit from it consistently. The school's planning is coherent and links well to departmental planning and the results of the school's self-evaluation procedures. Students' views are represented effectively through the school council but the views of stakeholders are not systematically sought.

Governors are highly effective. They are well informed about, and contribute well to, the school's strategic direction and monitor and evaluate its work very effectively. They are supportive yet provide a strong challenge to the school to improve its performance and provision. As at the time of the previous inspection there is voluntary worship but no compulsory act of collective worship for students whose parents have not withdrawn them.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Students

We recently visited your school to inspect it. Thank you for welcoming us to the school and telling us about it. We found that your school is outstanding. Its strong caring environment and highly committed staff enable you to make excellent progress overall and develop outstanding personal qualities. You enjoy school very much and work extremely hard. You support each other particularly well, for example through buddying and mentoring.

Individual tutorials, the wide range of support provided and your parents' involvement help you very well to make progress with your work and personal development. However, the central records the school keeps do not always show clearly if any of you are not on track to meet your targets. The outstanding curriculum, extra-curricular activities and facilities prepare you well for your future and help you to make a significant contribution to the community. Teaching and learning are good but lessons do not always take everyone's individual needs into account well enough to make sure you all do as well as you could.

Your headteacher and other senior staff provide outstanding leadership. They set a clear direction for the school and have guided its improvement since the last inspection. We have asked the school to focus on the following two areas to make it even better: * improving teaching to help everyone make maximum progress in lessons; * ensuring that central records show clearly where students are not on track to meet their targets. You can help by thinking about your progress in lessons and towards your targets and speaking to your teachers about it. The inspectors wish you every success at school.

Yours sincerely,

Gill Close

HMI