



Ruth Lunzer Lubavitch Jewish Girls Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134639
Local Authority Hackney
Inspection number 282626
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	107-115 Stamford Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		N16 5RP
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	020 8800 0022
Number on roll (school)	143	Fax number	020 8809 7324
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs H Lew
		Headteacher	Ms F Sudak
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	12–13 September 2006	282626

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

All pupils are from Orthodox Jewish background. The school is distinctive in many ways; it upholds the Lubavitch tradition, a world-wide way of life that combines traditional Jewish values with pupils' personal development and the National Curriculum. Because of its unique features, it attracts pupils from a wide geographical area beyond London. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is extremely low as most parents choose not to claim this entitlement. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is low. Almost one-third speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school received voluntary aided status in April 2004 under the Learning Trust. The accommodation is undergoing refurbishment and a planned Children's Centre will open in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The good leadership and management of the headteacher have helped to establish a strong foundation for the school accelerating improvement. The school's self-evaluation of its work since it became voluntary aided is accurate. As a result, its capacity to improve is good. The supportive governing body, staff and parents make significant contributions to the school as a place that is renowned in the community and beyond. There is a strong sense of school and community and parents rightly entrust their children to the school; they feel that it prepares them well for the future. However, the communication links between the school and parents require strengthening. Parents do not always attend consultation meetings and the school is still considering how best to involve and communicate with them. The pupils are proud of their school; they know that the secular and Kodesh curriculum are unique and they are happy to attend. Pupils' personal development and well-being are strengths of the school's care for them, a point, which they mentioned repeatedly as being very important to them. Nevertheless, although the school is planning to introduce a school council, pupils are not yet given the sorts of significant responsibilities of which they are capable.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 helps the pupils to make good progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3–6 but their rate of progress is slower in mathematics because the work is not always demanding. Standards are usually better in science because teachers combine a good mix of theory and practical activities that underpin cultural and religious practices. This helps the pupils to remember concepts. For example, children in the Foundation Stage understand why some foods are prohibited and cannot be mixed with others. There is focused support for pupils with learning difficulties and the pupils have benefited from individualised support. However, the more able pupils do not all make good progress because planning does not always meet their needs and the quality of teaching across the school is not yet consistently good and challenging.

The senior team has an accurate picture of the school, but as a new school, it is still in the process of establishing policies and procedures. Consequently, the LA and headteacher take a leading role in monitoring teaching rather than all senior staff. Procedures for monitoring performance are not firmly in place. The governing body fulfil its duties satisfactorily but the methods used to hold the school to account are not yet rigorous enough. Assessment information is used well to evaluate performance in some subjects and is an emerging strength. However, pupils are not given targets to guide their learning. Constant improvement and the desire to do better are important to the school's plans, but at this point in its development, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to enable all pupils to make good or better academic progress.

- Raise standards in Key Stage 2 particularly for the more able pupils in English and mathematics.
- Establish clear management structures and systems for the senior staff and governors to ensure that they can fulfil their monitoring roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Make better use of assessment to set targets for pupils to evaluate their work and identify how well they are doing.
- Work closely with parents to improve communication and partnership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage: many reach standards that exceed the goals expected of five-year-olds, particularly in their mathematical and personal, and social development. Over the last two years, at Key Stage 1, most pupils achieved what is expected for their age ages in English and mathematics. While the 2004 results were good in both key stages, last year's Years 2 and 6 pupils achieved broadly average standards. Nevertheless, in both key stages, the pupils performed better in English than in mathematics. The fluctuation in results, particularly in mathematics, reflects the ability of the cohorts and the difficulties the school experienced with staffing and developing systems to support pupils in the first year of opening. In the 2006 unvalidated national tests, there was a significant improvement in pupils' performance in Year 2. The results exceeded the local authority's (LA) and the previous year's results. The school did not achieve its targets for Key Stage 2 and although pupils achieved well in science, the English and mathematics results were below the previous years. The dip in results was expected but because of effective support for the high proportion of pupils with EAL or LDD, the cohort made satisfactory or better progress from a low base.

Most of the pupils in all classes make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in lessons, including those who have LDD and those learning EAL. The school has successfully introduced various initiatives to improve the progress of these pupils as well as the more able, many of whom did not achieve the higher levels because not enough is always demanded of them. The current profile of pupils and the school's analytical use of data to monitor performance indicate that the school is on course to reach its future challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and in particular, their spiritual and moral development are exceptionally good because the practices enshrined in the Jewish belief system underpin their learning and behaviour towards each other, staff and visitors. The girls are confident and thrive in a learning environment, which values their cultural and linguistic heritages; nevertheless, their experience of other cultures is not extensive. The older girls behave maturely and relate well to other people.

Records show that there are minor incidents of misbehaviour but pupils are confident that the teachers deal with them quickly and effectively. Attendance, at 97% for the last two years is above the national average for primary schools in England. The pupils' high level of attendance is linked to their enjoyment of attending the school whether in lessons or during playtime. At this stage of the school's development, there are too few opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility or contribute to its work. However, they make good contributions to the community through charity work. Although pupils were reluctant to accept the school's decision to introduce healthier snacks, they understand the importance of healthy eating even when criticising the options available at lunchtime. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring the basic skills and personal qualities needed to ensure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good features. The pupils take their work seriously; they often vie with each other to take part in feedback, and take pride in their work. Relationships in class between girls and staff are positive with girls responding well to instructions. The teachers often give sufficient time to listen carefully to pupils' response and this increases their learning, as independent thinking is encouraged. The best lessons are characterised by effective use of time, rapidly fired questions and interesting practical starter activities to generate discussion and review previous work. In these lessons, learning objectives are clear, and pupils know and understand what they are learning. The teachers' convey good subject knowledge in a lively manner and use well-selected resources to match pupils' ability. They review lessons carefully and challenge pupils to explain the skills learnt. In the satisfactory lessons, although work is set for different ability groups, there is insufficient focus on stretching the more able pupils to reach higher levels in the national tests. Most teaching assistants promote good behaviour and supervise pupils well but there is scope for developing their role to challenge pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is continuously improving. For example, currently, the school is reassessing the units of work, resources and assessment procedures for information and communication technology. The secular curriculum is carefully planned to complement the Kodesh curriculum, which covers the fundamentals of Jewish life. This dual approach to covering the National Curriculum meets requirements and suits the cultural, religious and academic needs of the pupils. The secular curriculum, which is taught in the afternoon, places appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy, citizenship and personal, social and health education. The extended school day ensures that there is full coverage of other subjects in the national curriculum. The school has established useful links with a partner school to share and

develop good practice. A number of activities enrich pupils' learning; however, the extended day and the distance that pupils have to travel restrict participation. The school pays good attention to promoting pupil's well-being and health and is working towards gaining Healthy School status.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. The school's ethos has a significant impact on pupils' well-being with all pupils feeling safe and secure in the caring environment created by the school. There is emphasis on embedding the assessment procedures, which has some exceptionally good features. For instance, teachers used the detailed systems for tracking and analysing pupils' progress in mathematics and English to identify gaps in learning before providing individualised support. The analytical use of data and test papers is leading to significant improvements in pupils' academic achievements. Although pupils receive good support, they do not know their academic targets. The absence of targets means that pupils are not fully involved in assessing their learning.

Child protection and risk assessment procedures are fully met and there are good systems to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Pupils whose first language is not English receive good support from staff who speak their first language.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The good leadership and management skills of the interim headteacher have been used well to drive improvement and stabilise the school after a very difficult start in the first year of opening. Within a short time, the headteacher, the third since the school opened, has worked closely with the Learning Trust (Hackney LA) and the senior team to establish a firm foundation on which to develop the school. For example, in one year, she has put into place key policy documents as well as personnel issues on staffing, their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, there is now coherent assessment system; the provision for pupils with LDD is established and procedures are in place to monitor teaching and learning and the curriculum. As a result, the school though still embedding procedures, knows what is required to make its current practices better and is in a good position to plan for improvement, in particular, raising academic standards and achievement. Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully managed to reclaim and maintain the reputation of the school in the community. Parents are happy with provision and say 'they are prepared to make the sacrifice' to attend the school which does not compromise their Jewish faith. Nevertheless, the school recognises that it needs to do more to improve its communication and partnership work with parents.

The teachers are committed to the Lubavitch vision. The teamwork between the Kodesh and secular teachers has meant that first; the ethos of the school is sustained., second,

the headteacher ensures that all are focused on raising standards and third, the drive for change is gathering momentum. The senior team ably supports the headteacher; however, most are inexperienced.

A high priority is therefore given to providing appropriate professional development for all staff. At this stage, performance management is not fully in place. There is regular monitoring and evaluation, but the senior team is not yet involved. The governing body is supportive and shares the vision but are still sharpening their skills to hold the school to account. The use of data to evaluate performance is an emerging strength. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the school development plan correctly identifies the next steps.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping me with finding out so much information about your school. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you. You and your parents are happy and proud of your school. Some of you who live a long way from the school do not mind the journey because you enjoy attending it. The school is very special in helping you to learn about your culture, religion and different subjects. These are the best things that I found about your school:

- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school was remarkably good. You enjoy learning, take pride in your work and know why healthy eating is important.
- The teachers look after you very well and give you good support if you need it.
- The teachers are good at checking how well you are learning.
- Some of you reach good standards in your work before you go in to Year 3.
- Some of the teaching is interesting and I agree with you that lessons are exciting when the teachers use ICT, role-play, group work and games to involve you.
- All of the adults who work with you know the right things they need to do to make your school even better.

These things could be better:

- Your school is still quite new and it needs to continue to work out how to sort out some of the different things that the teachers and governors need to do to make the school even better
- Some of you could improve your results and you have ideas to share with your teachers on what makes teaching exciting and helps you to learn well.
- You said that work is sometimes too easy in mathematics and you would like more homework. I agree with you. I have asked the teachers to give you targets, as this will help you to know how well you are doing.

I feel that your school will continue to improve and I wish you all the best.

Carmen Rodney HMI

Lead Inspector