



Menorah Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101341
Local Authority Barnet
Inspection number 286037
Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Gill Close HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Woodstock Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Golders Green
Age range of pupils	4–11		London NW11 9SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02084581276
Number on roll (school)	428	Fax number	02082092140
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jonathan Wolinsky
		Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Menczer
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Menorah Primary School serves the orthodox Jewish community. There are fewer than average pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and about a quarter is from other White backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Boys and girls are taught in separate classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Menorah Primary School is a good school in which achievement is good. Its pupils make good progress to reach exceptionally high standards, in particular in English and mathematics. They achieve satisfactorily in science. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in their learning due to the good quality of the teaching and support that they receive. Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, where it is strongest in Years 5 and 6. From the outset the school identifies pupils who need extra support and provides it to ensure that those with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress.

The school is a very warm and welcoming place where pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the high quality of care and support for their well-being and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place but the school recognises that some staff have not received appropriate child protection training. There is a happy and vibrant atmosphere in the Nursery where the curriculum closely reflects the children's cultural background and enables them to settle in quickly and make particularly good progress in their social skills. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and behave well.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' excellent attitudes to work, the good support from teaching assistants, frequent homework and parents' effective support contribute to the good learning. The good teaching meets pupils' needs well and encourages them to think. Nevertheless, there are occasions when teaching does not provide pupils with enough opportunity to tackle challenging work. Assessment is used well to monitor and support pupils' progress in some areas but does not enable consistently good progress by individuals or groups across subjects and years.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Provision is good in English and mathematics, and has improved since the last inspection in information and communication technology (ICT). The structure and monitoring of the curriculum do not ensure that all pupils receive entitlement to the full breadth of the National Curriculum each year.

Leadership and management are good. They lead to good progress. There has been an effective focus on recent areas of slightly lower progress to ensure it is good and self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Monitoring of lessons has led to improvements and the school recognises that this can be developed to a more rigorous system that underpins continued gradual improvement in teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve progress and attainment in science
- ensure entitlement to the full breadth within each subject of the National Curriculum
- track pupils' progress against targets to better inform intervention and evaluation of group performance annually and in the longer term
- monitor teaching more rigorously to secure its gradual further improvement and good challenge for all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children start in the Nursery with attainment that is above average, although their physical development is broadly average. Pupils make good progress in each key stage to reach exceptionally high standards overall. Their attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is very high, although not all targets were met in the tests in 2006. In that year, progress in science was satisfactory; in lessons seen during the inspection it was good. In recent years, standards have remained high with different subjects performing well; while achievement has risen in one it has fallen in another. Progress is strong in Years 5 and 6 although the school recognises that there is room for improvement in progress across the year groups, in particular for girls. From the outset the school identifies pupils who need extra support and provides it to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery where they make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and by the end of Key Stage 1 they reach well above average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is good in lessons. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school effectively builds on the strong support from home so that pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong, develop the skills needed to live together and show respect for other cultures. The school is diligent in promoting the pupils' health and safety, resulting in pupils feeling very safe and well cared for, and in trusting adults and their friends to look after them.

Pupils have a strong work ethic and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They really enjoy coming to school. Consequently attendance is good. One parent stated, 'If my children have to miss any time from school they cry'.

Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through activities such as charity work, recycling projects and participation in school events. Their understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for healthy living is good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities for physical education and sports, and would benefit from more of these within the curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, such as being house captains or members of the school council, which provides a good forum for pupils to express their views and gain experience of the democratic process. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move on from the Foundation Stage and through the high level of skills in English and mathematics that they achieve when they finish Year 6. These skills equip them very well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The combined impact of the teaching in classes and support groups is good, enabling the pupils to make good progress throughout the school, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are attentive in lessons and work hard, with boys often demonstrating particular keenness to answer questions. The good teaching is characterised by teachers having good subject knowledge, asking challenging questions that encourage pupils to think, maintaining a brisk pace and planning well for the needs of all the pupils in the class. It includes good team work with teaching assistants who make good contributions to support the learning of the pupils experiencing difficulties. On occasions, when assessment is not used as effectively in planning work and the teacher's initial introductions are over lengthy, the level of challenge and opportunity for independent work, particularly for the most able pupils, does not enable learning to be better than satisfactory. Frequent homework and effective support from parents contribute to the good learning taking place.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

This area is satisfactory. There is good provision for English and mathematics leading to exceptionally high standards. There has been improvement in the provision for ICT since the previous inspection with a new computer room and ICT scheme of work, but the provision for science has not enabled standards to be as good as they could be. The structure and monitoring of curriculum provision do not ensure that all pupils receive entitlement to the full range within and across subjects in the National Curriculum each year. Progression is not defined well enough and there are some imbalances in provision for the parallel girls' and boys' classes. The school provides a sound range of after school enrichment opportunities; even so, too few pupils have sufficient opportunity for two hours of physical education every week. When they start school in the Nursery, the curriculum builds well on the children's experiences at home and in the community and consequently helps them to settle in quickly and gain in confidence. The early identification and subsequent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a strength which enables these pupils to make good progress and develop well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, support and guidance. There is a high quality of care and support for pupils' personal needs and development that leads to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Staff show their strong commitment to pupils' well-being and safety throughout their daily work, and the school collaborates well with others to promote it. Health and safety procedures are good. Arrangements for

safeguarding pupils are in place. The school needs to ensure that all staff receive appropriate child protection training.

Academic support and guidance contribute to pupils' good overall progress. Assessment is used particularly well to monitor and support progress in some areas, for example in the Nursery and for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Its use does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress across all year groups and subjects. Appropriate systems for assessing progress and setting targets have been introduced. The school recognises the need to extend these to give a clearer evaluation of the progress of each pupil and of gender groups of pupils both annually and in the longer term.

Pupils are well supported in making the transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear vision for delivering high standards of personal development and academic achievement. The school is successfully building teams with a focus on improving performance which have already made an impact. Areas of weaker progress in English and mathematics in previous years have each been addressed effectively. However, slow progress has been made in improving science.

Monitoring of lessons leads to helpful areas for development and consequent improvement in teaching which the school recognises can be built on to deliver more effective support for continued improvement. Self-evaluation is honest in identifying appropriate strengths and weaknesses, and has led to accurate overall judgements. It has been contributed to soundly by the core subject co-ordinators in the middle management team. The focus on the foundation subjects and the monitoring of provision has not been strong enough to ensure pupils' entitlement to good quality provision across the full breadth of the National Curriculum. Staff are proud of the school and work together well to ensure its effective day-to-day operation. They use the school's systems flexibly to meet pupils' needs but this sometimes leads to inconsistencies.

Improvements in the points raised at the last inspection on provision for ICT and boys' behaviour, together with the successful addressing of areas of weak progress and continued high standards, demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement. The school knows that there is some further improvement to be made in science and in physical education.

Parents speak very highly of the school and consider that it is well led and managed; they cite examples of the school's speedy and efficient response to their concerns. They offer constructive views when requested and the school is looking at ways of benefiting further from their views.

Governors offer strong support for the school and work very closely with the headteacher on major developments.

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
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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 welcoming us so warmly to your school and for telling us about it.

We found that your school is a good school. You make good progress and reach very high standards. You do better in English and mathematics than you do in science. We have asked the school to help you make better progress in science.

You really enjoy coming to school. Your teachers look after you very well and make sure that you are safe. You behave well and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The school is good at helping those of you who need extra support.

You have an excellent attitude to learning and work hard. Teaching in lessons and the extra support you receive are good. In some lessons, we would like you to have more challenge to think hard and more time to do your own work. We have asked teachers to check your progress against your targets all the way through school to help you reach even higher standards.

We think you have a good range of work in English and mathematics but we think you need more opportunities in other subjects.

We hope that our visit will help your school become even better. You can help too by thinking hard in science and other subjects and by checking your progress in lessons. We wish you continued success and happiness in school.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close HMI