



Clore Shalom School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131456
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 293758
Inspection dates 6–7 November 2006
Reporting inspector Martin Beale

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hugo Gryn Way
School category	Voluntary aided		Shenley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Hertfordshire WD7 9BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923 855631
Number on roll (school)	236	Fax number	01923 853722
Number on roll (day care)	24	Chair	Mrs Irene Blaston
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs Irene Kay
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		
Date of previous day care inspection	18 November 2004		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	6–7 November 2006	293758

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors one of whom undertook a child care inspection.

Description of the school

Clore Shalom is a Jewish voluntary-aided primary school of average size with a part-time Nursery. All but a very few pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Free school meal entitlement is very low. Attainment on entry fluctuates but is generally above average. The school provides part time child care in the 'Little Doves' pre-school for a maximum of 24 children. All the children attend the school's nursery class in the morning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection supports the school's view that its effectiveness is good. Seven years on from the school's opening it is popular, successful and serves the traditions of its community well. This is largely because of the determination of the headteacher, senior staff and governors to make Clore Shalom School as successful as possible. Staff turnover and recruitment difficulties have not made it an easy seven years, but this problem has been tackled head-on by developing staff and training and nurturing several teachers who have now become an integral part of its success.

The school has several outstanding features. The visitor is immediately impressed by the happy and harmonious environment, the well looked-after buildings and the polite and articulate pupils. It is an interesting place in which to learn because of the outstanding curriculum that enriches and broadens the pupils' experiences while promoting very well both their academic and personal development. The clear vision that has been hammered out over the last few years is fully supported by staff and parents. The school is proud of its own culture and traditions, and is outward looking and respectful of others. Judaism is at the heart of the school but it is also very successful at emphasising diversity and an understanding of others.

Staff and governors have developed a highly effective partnership with parents, who support all that the school does. The care, guidance and support provided are outstanding. Pupils thrive in the safe, caring and happy atmosphere where everyone is valued and encouraged to do their best. This communal sense of well-being is reflected in the harmonious relationships that prevail, in the pupils' behaviour and in their very positive attitudes towards school and learning. Their personal development is outstanding and is based firmly on highly effective promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

The youngest children make an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of high quality teaching that is underpinned by a very rich curriculum and a strong appreciation of how young children learn and flourish. This start is built on well in the main school through good teaching. Teachers are becoming more adept in their use of new technology, but in general do not use information and communication technology (ICT) sufficiently to promote learning. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Achievement is good and standards are high by the time the pupils leave Year 6, particularly in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their teachers know them well and set appropriately challenging targets. These pupils are given excellent support in class, where the learning support assistants play a crucial role, and in the group room, where the calm and purposeful atmosphere is very conducive to learning.

Strong and highly effective leadership and management have resulted in the school dealing purposefully with shortcomings identified at the last inspection and progressing well. Planning is firmly based on rigorous but slightly modest self-evaluation that accurately identifies where strengths lie and where improvements can be made. This

places the school in a strong position to improve further, particularly with its drive to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the action to improve learning by making greater use of ICT in the classroom, improving questioning techniques and developing pupils' enquiry skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The youngest children make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that very nearly all meet nationally expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils also make good progress across Years 1 to 6. Challenging targets are set which they meet and often exceed. Virtually all pupils reach and very many exceed nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Any variations in standards from year to year reflect the differing profiles of each cohort. Test results in 2006 were very high for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, reversing the fall in 2005, although they were slightly lower in mathematics than in English and science. There has been considerable progress in improving the pupils' writing and attention is now being paid, with some success, to developing investigative and enquiry skills in mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school, attend regularly and participate with much enthusiasm in the activities provided both in and out of lessons. The development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. It is very successfully promoted through, amongst other things, assemblies, such as the Havdalah assembly on Monday mornings which ends with the traditional 'Shavuah Tov' ('Have a good week, everybody'). Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to behave safely and deal with risks. They are very aware of how to stay healthy, especially through eating well and being physically active, although some pupils are reluctant to make healthy food choices. Pupils make a considerable contribution to the life of both the school and the community. They readily take advantage of very many opportunities to help others and the school, by engaging in practical activities, associated with the 'Magic Duster' programme.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and enables pupils to learn well. Teachers are starting to empower the pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning by placing this at the heart of their lessons and adopting more creative teaching methods, including promoting enquiry skills. Many teachers use questions well and encourage pupils to consider their responses carefully, although occasionally in some classrooms teaching dominates too much with the result that pupils become passive and their learning slows. Lessons are planned carefully and work pitched well to meet the identified needs of all pupils. Support staff are very effective, both in helping individuals in class and also when leading small group sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The needs and interests of pupils are met very well by the broad and balanced curriculum which is greatly enhanced by an expanding range of activities, including sports, music and various clubs. Appropriate programmes successfully challenge the more able pupils. Many other highly enriching activities, including educational visits to local places of cultural interest, widen pupils' opportunities to develop their social awareness. The school's Jewish ethos leads to the study of Judaism and Modern Hebrew, and this is augmented by the study of the major world faiths and the art and music of a wide range of cultures, reflecting the diversity of the world in which they are growing up. For example, the school promoted a special 'Moroccan day' when pupils enjoyed participating in a range of activities which reflected aspects of that country. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for their next stage of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Very high levels of staff commitment and competence promote the health, safety and well-being of all pupils very effectively. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust, clear and adhered to. Pupils and their parents and carers overwhelmingly feel that the school provides a safe environment. Teachers have a very clear understanding of the pastoral and developmental needs of the pupils and respond positively to them. The systematic use of assessment information ensures that pupils' progress is tracked, with extra help given whenever necessary. Individual targets, set with pupils and shared with parents, ensure that all are clear about what is needed for each pupil to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and highly effective senior team have skilfully led the school since its opening, with excellent support from a committed, knowledgeable and well led governing body. Action to bring about improvements in the performance of all staff is promoted by carefully targeted guidance and training based on thorough monitoring of their work. The leadership of key aspects and core subjects is in strong hands. Other teachers have less leadership experience, but their skills are developing with support from senior staff. Governors know the school very well through their visits. They are fully involved in planning for its improvement, which involves all with a stake in the school. Parental contributions considerably enhance the funding available, which is used very well to meet the main priorities of maintaining a secure, well-resourced school with high staffing levels and providing a stimulating curriculum. The school secures good value for money.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 2

Day care in the 'Little Doves' is good with outstanding features. All the children thoroughly enjoy their play and they achieve outstandingly well. They are occupied well throughout the session and show high levels of interest and concentration in what they do. The staff, who nurture the children well, show a good understanding of how children play and learn. Children are able to make choices from the stimulating and challenging activities such as books, puzzles, creative activities, construction and small world play. In addition a good range of activities and opportunities is provided in the outside area. Children enjoy climbing, riding bikes and using large construction apparatus helping their large muscle development and control. Relationships with the children are excellent and staff promote both their welfare and well-being effectively. They listen and respond to the children's needs with sensitivity and encourage them to focus well. Children respond very well to the attention they receive for their efforts as they explore and play happily. They are confident and secure because the staff ensure that there is a very positive atmosphere of calm and purpose which helps the children to thrive when playing both individually and in small groups.

Levels of care are good and the generally well-maintained setting provides a safe and secure environment protecting children from harm appropriately. However, the routines for ensuring that toilets are maintained to a high level of hygiene are not sufficiently robust and can lead to children using toilets where the risk of infection is increased. Staff work closely with parents. They discuss each child's needs and ensure that all children are treated as individuals and their thoughts valued. Organisation is good. All required documentation is in place and effectively contributes to the children's enjoyment and well-being. The pre-school has shown good improvement since the last inspection. The accident log is now confidential and there are appropriate arrangements for enabling children to rest. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

- Ensure that the facilities are checked regularly in order to maintain the highest standards of hygiene and to prevent the spread of infection.

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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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	2
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	2
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Clore Shalom School, Hugo Gryn Way, Shenley, Hertfordshire, WD7 9BL

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. You were all very kind, helpful to us and showed how proud you are of your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn. There are many aspects of your school that we liked. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

You make good progress during your time at the school. Most of you achieve and many of you exceed the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school. You enjoy school, work hard, attend regularly and behave sensibly. The care and support you receive is outstanding and you benefit from a very wide range of interesting activities both in and out of the classroom. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a considerable contribution to the life of the school and the community.

We are very pleased to see how your teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. There are some areas where we all agree that improvements could be made. More use needs to be made of computers and projectors to help you to learn and teachers need to make sure that you all have plenty of opportunity to investigate and experiment. We are sure you and your teachers will work hard to make this all happen.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector