



Gateshead Jewish Primary School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	390/6004
Unique Reference Number	108416
Inspection number	296813
Inspection dates	27-28 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Mrs Sandra Teacher AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 5-10	Published 23 March 2007	Reference no. 296813
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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

Gateshead Jewish Primary School was established in 1953 as an independent Jewish school for boys and girls aged from 6 to 11 years. There are now 448 pupils on roll. It serves the strictly orthodox Jewish community in Gateshead and is tailor-made for their specific religious and educational needs. In accordance with the religious ethos of the school, boys and girls are taught separately on different sites. There are two leadership teams supporting and overlapping where necessary. The school is guided by the principles of *Torah* (Jewish law) and rooted in an ethos of *Torah* values. The school aims to help pupils be successful, to have a sense of self worth and to take pride in their heritage. The school was previously inspected in 2001 and this is the school's first published inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are right to be so. Gateshead Primary School provides an education that is satisfactory overall with many good and outstanding features. The pupils are very happy at the school. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Care and welfare are outstanding. Pupils feel safe and comfortable as they know each other and the staff well, and more particularly, as their parents are close by, they share lunch with them daily. The *Kodesh* (Jewish studies) curriculum is excellent, work is of a high standard and pupils make good progress. In *Chol* (secular studies) their progress is satisfactory. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with much that is good, teaching across the 24 classes is inconsistent, and aspects of assessment are underdeveloped. The school meets almost all of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. The *Kodesh* curriculum is outstanding. It is broad and balanced and ensures that pupils gain the necessary skills upon which to build as they progress in their Jewish religious education and future lives as observant Jews. From Year 1 to Year 4, 60% of the timetable is devoted to *Kodesh* and it increases to over 70% for boys in Years 5 and 6.

The focus of the *Kodesh* curriculum is on the study of the Bible, the *Talmud* (oral law) and Codes of Law, and pupils quickly gain the skills to read, translate and comprehend the sacred texts. There is a clearly written curriculum policy and this is supported by appropriate schemes of work. This enables the majority of pupils to achieve high standards in all areas of their Jewish studies. More able pupils are set challenging work appropriate to their needs and excellent support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. In keeping with the usual practice in orthodox Jewish schools, a number of *Chol* subjects are taught through the *Kodesh* curriculum. These include history and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).

The *Chol* curriculum is good. It is suitably broad and balanced with particular emphasis given to numeracy and literacy. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, whilst progress in numeracy and literacy is better than in other subjects. There are some good examples of integration between the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula, particularly in PSHCE. A lesson on healthy eating was linked to the forthcoming Jewish festival of Purim when a special festive meal is eaten. In addition, integration with art and design and design and technology is evident in the excellent displays around the school. Due to the school's religious ethos, the use of the internet is prohibited. There is limited use of other devices including calculators, cameras and CD players. Extra-curricular activities in sport, music and an after school club enrich the curriculum.

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The best teaching was seen in the *Kodesh* lessons where it is good overall. Some outstanding teaching was observed in both boy's and girl's departments. The relationship between staff and pupils is excellent. Pupils' response to the teachers' high expectations is outstanding, particularly with regard to *middos* (good character traits including behaviour and respect). They display remarkable respect towards their teachers and visitors and they stand up immediately when an adult enters their classroom. Most teachers are extremely secure in their subject knowledge and are very successful in imbuing pupils with a love of Judaism. All teachers, including the non-Jewish staff, demonstrate their full understanding of, and respect for, the orthodox ethos of the school and they are excellent role models for the pupils.

In the best lessons, the planning clearly identifies what pupils are to learn and this is communicated to them. Good questioning techniques are employed which encourage pupils to think for themselves and they make good progress. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of the lessons is slower and there is insufficient challenge so that pupils are not sufficiently stimulated and engaged.

Assessment is satisfactory and takes place regularly throughout the school in accordance with the school's written procedures. However, the information it provides about pupils' progress is not used consistently to aid future planning.

The quality of marking of pupils' written work varies and in the best practice, helpful and evaluative comments are given to inform pupils what they must do to improve in the future.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school helps pupils to develop into mature young people able to think for themselves. Pupils have plenty to say, with much that is worth listening to. The teachers are very successful in fostering pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes towards learning, particularly in regard to *Torah* study. In discussion with the girls, they said, 'The best thing about this school is the way the teachers have time to listen'.

Tefilloh (prayer) makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development through allowing pupils the opportunity for reflection and 'to have their own space'. The school places a strong emphasis on celebrating pupils' efforts through attractive displays of their work. The project programme celebrates their achievements with excellent inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The headteachers and staff set high expectations of behaviour which all pupils meet successfully; behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors and very supportive of one another. They form a cohesive family group and the older pupils act as very good role models for the younger ones. Attendance is very good.

Discussion times and well chosen stories help pupils to understand their responsibilities to others and to the broader community. Pupils help both old and young by supporting, not only the elderly but also busy mothers. Each pupil can play a major role in the life of the school, for example helping to organise fundraising events for those in need by collecting 'pennies', or participating in the drama shows.

Cultural development is good. Pupils study in two different languages, both English and Hebrew. They acquire a secure base in Jewish teachings and as a result, are confident in their religious identity and appreciate being educated in a Jewish school. There are opportunities to learn about other cultures through work in art, history, geography and for example, looking at stories from the African continent. Pupils work closely with the non-Jewish staff and the local Gateshead community, such as the police and fire services.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Robust policies and procedures have been established to ensure that the pupils are well looked after and kept safe. Staff are dedicated and committed and undertake all the necessary training to keep up to date, particularly in regard to child protection. Pupils and parents are encouraged to enjoy healthy lifestyles and pupils produced their own road safety book, published by the local authority. The school is an inclusive community in which all feel safe and valued. Pupils make strong friendships and they are clearly happy. No pupil is left out, and particular sensitivity is shown to friends who may have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Risk assessment procedures are undertaken by a professional company which provides a fully comprehensive service. Fire safety has a high priority. All checks are rigorous and the school works very closely with the local fire brigade.

There are several trained First Aiders at the school who follow the clearly written First Aid policy. Well-stocked First Aid boxes are located where needed. Accidents are carefully recorded and there are four members of the *Hazola* (trained paramedics) on site. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to regulations. The school takes seriously its duty with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has made thoughtful improvements to the provision.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school is at the heart of the local Jewish community and the governing body meets regularly. At present, although the school has requested Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff, a full response has not yet been received. Appropriate checks on staff prior to employment as regards their identity, medical fitness and references are not fully in place.

School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies split-site premises and boys and girls are taught separately. Following a recent fire on the boy's site, the building has been refurbished and much money, time and effort has been spent to establish an attractive learning environment with stimulating displays of work. The girl's site situated 300 yards away, is a former local authority primary school. An attractive feature is the central garden which pupils from the gardening club work hard to maintain. Both departments have a hall for physical activities, assemblies and shows. Outside facilities are adequate for play and sport, and pupils engage in an environmental project to sort out the litter. A new library is

being planned but at present pupils use classroom libraries. Maintenance and decorations are satisfactory with appropriate furnishings. The premises are well used for extended services, after school activities and clubs, and promote community cohesion for all the Jewish families.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Much useful information, which includes an expression of the school's aims and ethos, is contained in the prospectus and handbook for parents and prospective parents. A list of all staff and other policies are available on request. More than 200 questionnaires were received from parents prior to the inspection and they overwhelmingly support the work of the school. One response was signed, 'Mr and Mrs Grateful Parents'.

Parents receive biannual reports. However, these do not give them a full picture of how well their child is achieving in all subjects areas and what needs to be improved. All necessary information and documentation was provided for the inspectors.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has revised the complaints policy and it meets all of the regulations. Parents and prospective parents will be advised of this. There have been no formal complaints from parents in the last 12 months.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff complete CRB checks (paragraph 4(b))
- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff that appropriate checks are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history and all references (paragraph 4(c)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- formalise documentation as regards policies and schemes of work, with particular regard to PSHCE
- utilise best practice in teaching and assessment to ensure consistency throughout the school
- ensure written reports to parents contain more detailed information about their child's progress in all subject areas.

School details

Name of school	Gateshead Jewish Primary School		
DfES number	390/6004		
Unique reference number	108416		
Type of school	Jewish		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1953		
Age range of pupils	6-11		
Gender of pupils	mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 225	Girls: 223	Total: 448
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 4	Total: 4
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2392		
Telephone number	01914772154		
Fax number	01914900842		
Email address	info@gjps.org.uk		
Headteachers	Rabbi Hammond and Rabbi Spitzer		
Proprietor	Committee of Gateshead Jewish Primary School		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Sandra Teacher AI		
Dates of inspection	27-28 February 2007		