



Kisharon Day School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 302/6085
Unique Reference Number 101386
Inspection number 296832
Inspection dates 9-10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Redpath HMI

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 6 - 17 | Published 02 February 2007 | Reference no. 296832 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2007

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.

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

Kisharon School is a small day special school which provides education for Jewish pupils who have severe learning difficulties (SLD). The school occupies two floors of a former ballet school and is located in an area of north west London which has a significant Jewish community. It was established in 1976 and is approved by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) to admit up to 28 pupils aged between 4 and 19 years. Currently 17 pupils are on roll and there are approximately twice as many boys as girls in attendance. All pupils have a statement of special educational need (SEN) and their places are funded by their local authorities. In recent years the school has admitted pupils with more complex needs and the characteristics of the school have changed since the last inspection in 2001.

The school seeks to provide a supportive environment where pupils are encouraged to become independent learners and to reach their potential, both academically and socially. The school also views Judaism as a way of life which *'needs to be woven into all school activities.'*

Evaluation of the school

Kisharon School is successful in meeting its primary aims. It provides a caring environment where pupils become increasingly self-confident and enjoy coming to school. The school's distinctive religious character is very successful in promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their learning difficulties and disabilities. Provision for pupils' welfare is satisfactory although it does not meet all the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from a suitable range of experiences, which takes close account of the National Curriculum. There is an appropriate balance between the academic curriculum and activities which promote the school's distinctive religious ethos. The morning begins with Davening (prayer), whilst Limmudei Kodesh (Jewish studies) is taught twice each day. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' communication skills

through the use of signing, symbols and pictures; although some of this practice is not yet established consistently across the school.

Curriculum planning is satisfactory and generally based on a recognised scheme for pupils with SLD. In some classes there are pupils of widely differing age, for example in the girls' class ages range from Year 4 to Year 11. This imposes a strain on teachers' planning which is currently adequate, but needs extending to ensure pupils study different topics as they move up the school. The headteacher and staff are aware that some subjects require more detailed planning, particularly for pupils with more complex needs, and have identified the next steps for improvement. Older students follow an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course which focuses on developing independence and preparation for leaving school.

Speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists provide a good level of support which helps to ensure that the requirements of pupils' statements of SEN are met in full. Aspects of the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) are included in Limmudei Kodesh and also when other topics are taught, such as 'feeling good' and 'making choices'. Pupils have good opportunities for physical exercise through the provision of weekly swimming and physical education (PE) sessions. Visits in the community are used effectively to support the curriculum, for example to shops, a library and local schools. Older students also attend a local centre to study horticulture.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with several good features. In all classes teachers and teaching assistants form good relationships with pupils and treat them with respect. They give praise and encouragement to recognise effort and achievement and any distracting behaviour is managed sensitively. This helps pupils to try hard and stay at their work for increasing lengths of time. Teaching is most effective when there are high expectations of what pupils will learn and activities are closely matched to their individual need. Signing and electronic aids are used effectively to support communication. This ensures pupils use their full range of language and learn to make choices. Teaching assistants also work closely with the teachers and assume responsibility for running activities, for example in Davening sessions, or topics about practical mathematics. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, the pace is too slow and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to discuss or review their learning. The teacher directs activities too closely and there is little scope for pupils to work collaboratively or explore their own ideas. Best use is not always made of assessment information to identify pupils' next steps in learning and to plan lessons. This sometimes results in pupils of different ability completing similar work and not all receiving appropriate challenge.

Teachers' knowledge for teaching pupils with SLD is satisfactory but improving rapidly. The school is fortunate in having a committed staff team who are eager

to improve their practice. Several staff have been appointed recently. Some are experienced in teaching pupils with SLD and are competent in the use of makaton, a recognised signing system for pupils with communication difficulties. The school is appropriately extending the use of makaton by providing additional staff training. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have been very creative in adapting resources to meet the needs of SLD pupils. Pictures and symbols are used well in displays and to help pupils understand the daily timetable. Also, some teachers have recently introduced appropriate computer software which uses symbols. However information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently across the school and there are limited sensory resources for pupils with more complex needs.

There are satisfactory systems in place for assessing pupils' progress. These include the use of 'P' levels (performance descriptors used for recording the attainment of pupils with SEN working towards the first level of the National Curriculum). Post-16 students who follow the ASDAN course have their progress recorded as they complete the course units. Evidence from school data, files and pupils' work shows that pupils make satisfactory progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The spiritual and moral teaching is a strength of the school. Great emphasis is placed on the teaching of Jewish values and how they are applied to everyday life. This teaching pervades the work of the school. Pupils are prepared to participate in many celebrations including Bar Mitzvah, Sheva Brochos and Festivals. Pupils participated in a Chanukah Wonderland, which was a very visual experience that all pupils enjoyed. A recent, very moving highlight was when pupils attended a wedding in a Shul or Synagogue.

Pupils are taught, at all opportunities, right from wrong and to respect their elders, parents, teachers, themselves and each other. The Limmudei Kodesh and PSHE programmes emphasise these values. There are opportunities within the curriculum to learn about kindness, to visit the sick and discuss such issues as bullying and telling the truth. Pupils enjoy lessons; their behaviour is good and they form good relationships with staff. They learn how to relate to each other during 'circle time', although there are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and work collaboratively in some other lessons. Group targets are set each term, towards which all pupils work; for example opening and holding doors for others to pass. An award book is used in assembly which celebrates pupils' successes and helps raise their self-esteem. Pupils learn about their local community when they visit and participate in programmes in other schools. They have recently joined in another school's choral performance and visited

homes for the elderly, local shops and libraries. Some responsibilities are given to pupils, such as collecting pencils at the end of lessons, but thought could be given to extending these opportunities.

Pupils discuss different roles in the community and are taught to respect others and their differences. Although they discuss cultural traditions other than their own, this is not always accomplished in depth. They visit museums, look at different styles of dress and watch videos about different cultures, for example ancient Egypt. A day was spent on experiencing food from around the world and everyone participated in a rain forest project which involved music, drama and art.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory. The school gives high priority to pupils' welfare, although some procedures relating to the health and safety of pupils need strengthening in order to meet requirements. Pupils feel safe and are comfortable approaching an adult if they have a problem. There are good levels of supervision and staff know and understand the individual needs of pupils. Staff have had training to help manage the few incidents of challenging behaviour in a non-confrontational manner. Pupils' behaviour is managed sensitively with an accent on rewarding the positive and ignoring the negative. This approach works well and has led the parents of one child to comment they are happy with the 'warmth, care and attention to our child's needs'.

The school provides nutritious lunches and makes water available which effectively promotes healthy living. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out, for example relating to visits away from school and the administering of medicines. Policies are in place for all aspects of health and safety, although in some respects their implementation needs to be more robust. The child protection policy is in place but it does not meet recent guidance since the nominated staff member has not received appropriate training. Fire drills are held regularly and fire safety equipment checked. Most of the recommendations following a recent fire officer's visit have been carried out. Repair of some fire exit doors is still outstanding and the school is currently arranging to have this work completed. Some other issues were in need of action at the time of the inspection; for example it was observed that some electrical equipment had not been subject to a recent safety check and not all fluorescent light tubes had covers. A First Aid policy is in place although procedures for dealing with minor injuries do not provide clear guidance for staff. The school is aware of the need to improve staff training in aspects of health and safety and suitable courses have been identified for staff to attend.

The school has a draft plan which considers access to the site; however this plan does not specify action with a time scale to show how the accommodation

might be modified to meet the needs of disabled users. The plan does not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff and volunteers have been subject to satisfactory clearance at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau. References are sought for all new appointments, and there are checks to ensure an applicant's proof of identity, the validity of their qualifications and their medical fitness. Records are not currently kept in one place which makes it difficult to retrieve information quickly. The school is reviewing its administrative procedures to address this.

School's premises and accommodation

The standard of the accommodation is satisfactory. There are attractive and thoughtful displays which create a positive learning environment for pupils with SLD. There are specialist rooms for ICT, music, PE and food technology. There are additional small rooms for therapy and individual study. There are no specialist rooms for practical science, art or design technology which limits teaching and learning the practical aspects of these subjects. Some rooms are cramped and the corridors are narrow, although classrooms are of adequate size for the number of pupils using them.

There is adequate space for outside play, which although a small area, is used to maximum benefit by provision of a wide range of play equipment.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has recently updated its prospectus to provide a good range of information for parents. Parents receive detailed reports regarding their child's progress and receive daily information through the 'home link' books. The school conducts its own surveys to seek parents' views about the school. These are overwhelmingly positive. There are records to show the cost of educating individual pupils, although local authorities are not provided with an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred in respect of each pupil they fund.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear policy which sets out how informal and formal complaints can be made to the school. The school notes any concerns parents may have and follows them up promptly.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that staff receive up-to-date training in child protection and prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in compliance with DfES; '*Safeguarding Children in Education*' (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001), (paragraph 3(4))
- produce a satisfactory written policy on First Aid and ensure it is implemented (paragraph 3(6)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide for local authorities (and on request to the Secretary of State) an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of each pupil they fund (paragraph 6(7)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- extend the use of ICT across the school
- improve the use of assessment data to analyse pupils' progress and identify their next steps in learning
- add further detail to curriculum planning, particularly for pupils with more complex needs.

School details

| | | | |
|---|--|----------|-----------|
| Name of school | Kisharon Day School | | |
| DfES number | 302/6085 | | |
| Unique reference number | 101386 | | |
| Type of school | Special day school | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | 1976 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 6-17 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 12 | Girls: 5 | Total: 17 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 12 | Girls: 5 | Total: 17 |
| Annual fees | £16,777 - £31,875 | | |
| Address of school | 1011 Finchley Road London NW11 7HB | | |
| Telephone number | 020 8455 7483 | | |
| Fax number | 020 8209 0994 | | |
| Email address | kisharondayschool@kisharon.org.uk | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lilian Amdurer | | |
| Proprietor | Kisharon Ltd | | |
| Reporting inspector | Mr Andrew Redpath HMI | | |
| Dates of inspection | 9–10 January 2007 | | |