



Kisharon College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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131899

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Basic information about the college

Name of college: Kisharon College

Type of college: Independent, specialist, day

Principal: Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman

Address of college: 54 Parson Street, London, NW4 1TP

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Chair of management committee: Jonathan Schonfeld

Unique reference number: 131899

Name of lead inspector: Charlie Henry HMI

Dates of inspection: 23-26 January 2007

Background of the organisation

1. Kisharon College was established as a college in 2001. It is a department of Kisharon Adult Day Services, which is itself part of the family of Kisharon Services, founded in 1976. The college offers education and training for Jewish men and women, all of whom have moderate to severe learning difficulties. A smaller proportion of students also have autistic spectrum disorders. Currently there are 16 students on roll, almost all of whom are funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Kisharon Adult Day Services also includes Kisharon Day Opportunities Centre, offering day programmes for service users funded by local authority social services. Kisharon College is located within a large Victorian suburban building in the London borough of Barnet. The college has easy access to shops and leisure facilities and there is a large local orthodox Jewish community.
2. 'Kisharon' is the Hebrew word for ability, talent or flair, and it is the aim of the college to discover, encourage and nurture the 'Kisharon' of each student. Students' participation in synagogue activities, observance of festivals and performance of religious duties permeates all programmes. Teaching provision is segregated by gender in accordance with orthodox practice, although students come together during some social sessions. The college aims to provide an environment, according to the orthodox Jewish ethos, in which adults can receive training, leading where possible, to supported and open employment opportunities.

Scope of the inspection

3. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and students' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
 - overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
 - achievements and standards
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

4. Kisharon College is a satisfactory and improving specialist college. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, although not all of these have yet had time to demonstrate their effects in the progress that students make.
5. Students make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in their communication skills and in developing personal and social skills. Students make satisfactory progress in *limmudei kodesh* (Jewish studies) and in their reading, writing and numeracy skills. Progress is good in gaining work related skills; however, too many students do not move on to placements where these skills can be used well.
6. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are planned well and now focus better on the most important areas for learning, based on more detailed and appropriate assessment. Specialist staff contribute well to these assessments. Recording of how well students are doing during each lesson is thorough. However, there is insufficient drawing together of information about the progress made across students' entire programmes. Some opportunities to promote learning of *limmudei kodesh* and reading, writing and numeracy are missed.
7. The range of subjects covered within students' programmes matches satisfactorily with their individual needs. The work experience programme is good. The college is aware that more needs to be done to fully promote reading, writing and numeracy, as well as some aspects of Jewish studies, across all aspects of students' programmes. The range of enrichment activities is satisfactory.
8. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. It is well regarded by students and their parents. Students' personal support is particularly good. They have confidence that they can ask for help and it will be provided. The specialist therapy team is very effective. Social and educational inclusion are good. The college tries hard to ensure it meets individual needs well.
9. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. Leadership by the principal and senior staff is good. It provides enthusiasm and a clear focus on improving quality and raising achievements. Staff are committed to continued improvement. Self-assessment is accurate; improvement plans are detailed though they do not pay sufficient attention to considering the impact of actions on student learning. The management committee contributes well to the college's work. Appropriate procedures for safeguarding students are in

place. Financial management is good. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

10. The college's capacity to improve is good. Clear leadership from the principal and other senior staff, together with the staff's commitment, ensure that the focus is firmly on further improving quality and raising achievements. The self-assessment report is accurate, and increasingly well informed by the improving quality assurance processes. Improvement plans are realistic, although they do not have sufficient detail on how planned actions will affect students. The management committee provides good support for the college's improvement.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

11. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Almost all key issues have improved well. Students are making more progress. There has been improvement in both staff expertise and in the quality of specialist resources, although there remain too few resources to promote Jewish studies well across all aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum has also improved and assessments focus more effectively on identifying important areas for learning. The college meets its responsibilities under equality and diversity legislation. Quality assurance is now more rigorous and is showing its effectiveness in improvements made across the college. Strategic planning has improved.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- development of communication skills
- progress in developing values, morals and spiritual awareness
- work-related learning
- pastoral support and guidance
- multi-disciplinary support
- leadership and commitment to fulfil the college's vision.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the development of literacy and numeracy
- progression destinations for more able students
- embedding *limmudei kodesh* (Jewish studies) across all aspects of the curriculum
- the tracking of students' overall progress
- improvement planning.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

12. Students' achievements are satisfactory overall. The college has correctly assessed this as a significant improvement. It has made substantial changes to the previous range of courses that were externally accredited and introduced qualifications that are appropriate to the skills and interests of individual students. Three students have gained word-processing qualifications and a further five are working towards basic food and hygiene and/or level 1 in horticulture. The majority of students are involved in non-accredited learning. Acknowledgement of these achievements is celebrated through internal certification. Recording of progress against targets is satisfactory at subject level but there is insufficient tracking of students' overall progress.
13. The progress in *limmudei kodesh* is satisfactory. Students make good progress in *davening* (prayer) and in *sedra* (the weekly Bible portion). Effective progress is also being made in *middos* (character building). There are some missed opportunities for learning in *limmudei kodesh* across the range of curriculum activities.
14. Many students have very limited communication skills when they enrol at the college. From this starting point they make significant progress in expressing themselves and communicating with others against appropriately set targets, for example, when they speak in front of others at the weekly *Oneg* event before *Shabbos* (the Sabbath). They make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and numeracy. Students show increased self-confidence and progress very effectively in their social skills.
15. Students develop skills well to contribute to their economic well being and they also contribute effectively to the community, in particular by developing their ability to take part in Jewish custom and practice. The majority of students develop good work-related skills through work placements either within the college or with local employers. Many also develop skills which enable them to travel independently to their workplace. However, more able students are not progressing well enough when they leave the college into placements that make good use of these work skills. Over the past two years, two students have entered employment and two have enrolled at local general further education colleges. The majority have taken up opportunities within Kisharon's day opportunities programme.
16. Rates of retention and attendance are satisfactory and are monitored effectively.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

17. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Inspectors agree that there have been significant improvements since the last inspection.
18. Rigorous observation of lessons by college managers together with the commitment of staff to improve have contributed well to this development of quality. These observations, including moderation through the use of another college and consultants, have identified agreed areas for improvement that are being successfully tackled.
19. Detailed lesson planning is based on targets set within individual learning plans. This ensures all staff focus well on the most important areas for learning. Good relationships between students and staff ensure that assistance is sought and provided when needed. Support tutors know these targets and are deployed effectively to provide help where it is needed.
20. Students are interested in and enjoy their lessons. They know their targets and whether they are making progress; most also know what target they will be working to next. Students explained to inspectors that they felt the college helped them well to increase their knowledge and understanding of their faith and their ability to live to Jewish beliefs and principles. Parents also contribute particularly effectively to this aspect of the college's work.
21. Occasionally lessons are not as well structured as they could be and, as a result, the pace dips at times. Also there are some missed opportunities to promote *limmudei kodesh* and the learning of reading, writing and numeracy through all aspects of the curriculum.
22. Assessment and recording of students' progress in different aspects of the curriculum, and against targets in the individual learning plan, are effective. The college is aware of the need to bring this information together to provide an overview of the progress made. New initial and baseline assessment procedures have been developed to establish more relevant and accurate starting points for students' learning targets. The baseline assessment element has been successfully used with existing students. However, as there have been no new students since the last inspection, the initial assessment has not been implemented fully. Specialist assessment and advice from speech, occupational and physiotherapists provide valuable information that is well used in lessons.
23. The college's approach to meeting the needs and interests of students is satisfactory across the curriculum. The curriculum has been revised so that its main focus is on covering all of the important aspects of students' personal development and well being. The students are helped to live healthy and safe lifestyles. The *limmudei kodesh* curriculum has been recently improved and includes good elements, such as the clear and effective *sedra* curriculum with links to other curriculum topics. The college is aware of the need to extend

these developments to ensure *limmudei kodesh* is promoted through all aspects of students' programmes. Programmes are designed for students around a range of subjects and activities that effectively meet their individual learning needs. However, the strategy and programme for reading, writing and numeracy has not been fully developed, including the acquisition of Hebrew reading and language. The work experience programme has been very effectively developed, with the majority of students taking part in some type of internal or external placement. It provides good opportunities for students to access a range of local employers and organisations to practice work-related skills. A satisfactory transition programme has been implemented this academic year and the first of three transition reviews has taken place. There is a satisfactory extended curriculum and students regularly take part in activities arranged during lunch times and after the college day. There are effective opportunities for students to take part in preparation for Jewish festivals. Arrangements for the health and safety of students are satisfactory with risk assessments in place for most activities and for individual students.

24. Support and guidance for students are good overall. Personal support for students is very good. Appropriate levels of support are provided for students, both formally and informally, for Jewish studies, particularly if they have problems linked to religious practice. Student groups are small with high levels of support from both the tutor and an increased number of support tutors. Students are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their tutor and receive help when needed. Multi-disciplinary support is very good. The college has expanded the number of therapeutic staff who are developing an effective team approach for supporting the needs of students. They work well together and are involved in all aspects of students' programmes. Students are referred to external counsellors when needed and now have access to therapeutic massage. A revised formal personal tutorial system is being implemented satisfactorily. Personal tutors are taking a greater focus in co-ordinating students' programmes and monitoring progress. Improved links with the local Connexions personal adviser have been developed and a range of careers-related booklets are available in the resource area. Communication with parents and carers is very effective. The college has produced a satisfactory draft induction programme for new students enrolling in the next academic year. A useful student handbook has been designed and is available in both text and pictorial formats.
25. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. The college is compliant with recent race relations and disability equality legislation. There is a good focus on enabling students to develop communication and personal skills and increase their ability to be part of the Jewish community. There is too little planning for students to develop reading, writing and numeracy skills. The students have good contact with local employers through their work experience and with community groups. The college seeks students' views through a range of questionnaires and acts upon these, though it does not have a student council.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

26. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Inspectors agree with the college's assessment that it has made good progress since the last inspection.
27. Clear leadership by the principal, supported well by senior staff, has contributed successfully to raising standards and achievement, and the quality of provision. Staff enthusiasm and commitment to improve the college even further are high.
28. Self-assessment is accurate. Involvement of all staff in this review has increased. The resulting quality improvement plan is detailed, it prioritises key areas for improvement and its implementation is reviewed. There is, however, too little detail in the plan on the required effects of the actions upon students' learning.
29. Day-to-day management is good. Staff are informed and involved well in college developments. Quality assurance has improved substantially and informs staff training effectively. Regular monitoring of key aspects of planning and recording has led to improvements in both consistency and quality. The college has correctly identified that there is more to do to ensure all of this work is up to the standards of the best. The observation of teaching and learning is rigorous and helpful. It identifies areas of strength and where further improvements could be made. These are agreed with staff and are reviewed in subsequent lesson observations. There is effective monitoring of the progress made by individual students; however, this information is not yet drawn together to enable monitoring at a college level. Managers have begun to develop a system to address this need.
30. The management committee contributes well to the work of the college. They are involved in strategic planning and approve policies and plans. Committee members are informed well about college developments and the outcomes of quality assurance activity. They do not yet receive sufficient information about the overall progress made by students to enable them to monitor how well they are learning.
31. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Tutor and support staffing levels and expertise are adequate to meet students' needs. There is not always sufficient male staff support for students during *shacharis* (morning prayer).
32. The college has satisfactorily addressed its requirements under equality and diversity legislation. It has the required policies and action plans for ensuring racial equality and preventing disability discrimination. The college also meets its responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Staff undergo necessary training and there is a central register to demonstrate necessary recruitment checks are made.

33. Financial management is good. The college meets its contractual requirements with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide agreed levels of support for each student. The college provides satisfactory value for money.