

Beis Malka Girls' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	204/6337
Unique Reference Number	100295
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Inspection dates	19-20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	George Derby 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).

This inspection of the funded nursery education was carried out under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and framework Act 1998.

This inspection of the day care was carried out under the 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.

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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

Beis Malka is a Hassidic ultra-Orthodox Jewish Girls' School, established 27 years ago and owned by a charitable trust. It is situated near Stamford Hill, in the London Borough of Hackney. It provides education for pupils from three to 16 years and has recently established a workplace crèche for children under three. This is registered with Children's Service Directorate at Ofsted. The crèche and the school's registered funded Nursery education was inspected by a child care inspector during this inspection. This was the school's first inspection.

The school is in three separate parts (nursery, primary and secondary) each with its own headteacher. Although located on one site, it operates as three distinct and separate schools. The crèche is also separately managed. Approximately two-thirds of pupils come from Yiddish speaking homes and use English as an additional language. A small number of pupils have learning difficulties.

The school's philosophy aims to instil in pupils a determination for self-improvement both academically and personally, as well as equipping them with the skills to help them achieve their maximum potential.

Evaluation of the school

The school is successful in achieving its aims and provides a good quality of education; this reflects the views of parents the majority of whom think highly of the school. It is effective because of the high commitment and dedication of its skilled staff. Teaching is good, enabling pupils to learn well and make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding, as is their behaviour. Support for individual pupils is good but a number of health and safety issues were identified during the inspection, which makes pupils' care inadequate. Many regulations are not met. While senior staff effectively monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and curriculum in their individual schools, there is insufficient oversight of health, safety, accommodation and appointment of staff.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and is generally well planned with a good balance between the Kodesh and Chol aspects. The school is very clear on what it intends to provide and always has its aims in focus. There are clear policies, which guide the school's planning and development of the curriculum. Programmes are successful because of the effective and rigorous oversight by the headteachers and curriculum coordinators.

The primary and secondary headteachers have worked exceptionally hard to develop the Kodesh curriculum. The secondary Kodesh curriculum is good; there is clear guidance for teachers. It is exceptional in the primary school. Much work has been put into its planning to enable pupils to make progress. Grades, levels and criteria are clearly established so the schools can record and assess pupils' progress. Links with subjects of the secular curriculum are a strength.

In the primary school, Chol includes the full National Curriculum with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT). In the secondary school, ICT is provided in Year 9 and 11 for pupils undertaking the computer literacy and information technology course. It is to be offered as a GCSE course from September 2007 and will be taught to pupils from Year 7 onwards. Textiles and home economics are additional subjects and in Key Stage 4 pupils choose CGSE courses from a series of options. Although there is no modern foreign language taught in Key Stage 3, Biblical Hebrew and Yiddish are very much part of Kodesh.

The depth of planning and the way it builds on what pupils have learned previously makes pupils' progress good. There are good, clear policies for personal, social, health education and citizenship and aspects of these are well included in other subjects and in Kodesh. However, planning for these subjects is insufficiently detailed. Physical education is mainly taught through games and provision for this is too narrow.

Teaching is good and has some outstanding features. This enables the pupils to achieve well. The pace of teaching in all schools is very rapid. Teachers' questioning is extremely probing and challenging and a good variety of methods are used. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm. These are particularly strong features, as is the secondary school's approach to setting targets for individuals in English. The staff use the limited resources they have extremely well; even the pupils say these are not enough. Work is usually matched well to pupils' needs and abilities. However, in a few lessons there was a lack of challenge when pupils were all given the same work to do. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and in the secondary school there are extension and additional activities for them. However, there is sometimes not enough challenge for these in the primary school and Nursery.

Assessment is good; it is rigorous, regular and used well to inform planning. It is outstanding in the primary school for Kodesh and Chol. There are very good features

to the assessment of Kodesh in the secondary school and assessment is good for the secular subjects. Good systems are in place across both schools to track pupils' progress and identify those who are underachieving.

Additional support for pupils who need help is readily at hand so that all can achieve to their full potential. Those learning English as an additional language are well supported. In the primary school, support for pupils with learning difficulties is good overall and for those with the most needs, such as with a statement of special educational needs is excellent. This enables such pupils to make outstanding progress. In the secondary school, provision is adequate.

As pupils move through the school the rate of their progress improves. Over recent years, results in national tests and examinations have improved significantly, with many pupils achieving levels above those expected. The school's results in GCSE examinations in 2005 and 2006 were much better than in previous years and above the figures for all schools nationally.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school puts much emphasis on teaching pupils to emulate the Middos (character traits) which underpin the school's aims and ethos. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and have extremely positive attitudes towards learning. High levels of attendance confirm this. Relationships with each other and staff are excellent.

Davening (prayer) and Tefilloh (prayer lessons) make a valuable contribution to pupil's outstanding spiritual development. Through their Tefilloh lessons pupils learn the meaning of the Tefillos and this ensures that they daven (pray) with feeling, giving much thought to the impact Tefilloh makes in their own lives.

The headteachers and staff set high expectations of behaviour and stress the importance of pupils being good role models. This results in outstanding behaviour and an extremely strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are very polite to visitors and members of the school community. They work exceptionally well, as individuals and in groups.

In order to familiarise younger pupils with public institutions they learn about the work of the police and fire services and visiting speakers provide information about traffic awareness and re-cycling. Pupils raise money for various charities. They are encouraged to put some of their pocket money into a 'Mitzvah Gemach' (a free loan fund). This money can then be used by the needy in the community and can also be used by the pupils, thus aiding their economic understanding. Amongst the many charitable contributions made, the pupils, together with their families, have a close association with a local charity shop and a flower shop. They also visit a local home for the elderly and a local nursery. Pupils have responsibilities, for example, through

the prefect and class representative system. However, there is no school council and many secondary pupils in their questionnaire say the school does not listen to their views and does not involve them in decision making.

Pupils learn about their own and other cultures. Assemblies emphasise that 'everyone is created in the image of God' and pupils are thereby encouraged to adopt a tolerance of, and a respect for, all people. Other cultures, such as Indian and Sikh, feature in the English curriculum. Cultural teaching takes place amongst the older students in humanities, art and literature.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is inadequate.

The school fails to meet a number of regulations. The lack of oversight has resulted in too many health and safety issues, including fire precaution and electrical checks, not being implemented. Although staff undertake general supervisory duties before school, in the primary school formal supervision of pupils in classrooms occurs only after 9am; pupils can be in their rooms from 8.40am onwards with no direct supervision. Although there is an adequate child protection policy, safeguarding procedures are not fully in place as there is no single central record of staff checks. First aid arrangements cover all parts of the school except the crèche.

Not enough attention is given to healthy lifestyles including eating, drinking and exercise, something which parents and pupils alike drew attention to on the pre-inspection questionnaire.

The school has not yet drawn up a three year accessibility plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school's systems and procedures for the appointment of staff are inadequate. Not all criminal record checks have not been completed and the school does not keep sufficient evidence of the checks it makes of staff's identity, background, previous employment, qualifications and references.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are inadequate. The school has improved its Nursery and crèche facilities well and the accommodation in the main part of the primary school is satisfactory. However, there are too many areas where the accommodation is inadequate and the external fabric is in poor condition. Primary pupils report they do not like the way the building looks. The room where pupils go, when they are ill, does not have a sink. Internally in many areas, flooring,

decoration, and cleanliness require major attention. This gives rise to a large number of mostly low level health and safety problems. The library is in very poor condition. The library roof has a severe water leak that has encouraged mould and fungal growth.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A good range of information is provided for parents about the school's work, policies and procedures and there are regular reports, mostly of good quality, informing them of their child's progress. Very good quality information is provided about pupils with learning difficulties in the primary school.

Procedures for handling complaints

These fully meet regulations.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- increase resources across the school (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is in place (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- implement its policy on health and safety effectively, especially by instigating a system for monitoring health and safety, including making essential electrical checks, and identifying and dealing with risks (paragraph 3(4))
- carry out checks, as required, of the fire alarm system, emergency lighting, ensure that fire drills are held regularly and that all these aspects are recorded appropriately (paragraph 3(5))
- ensure that pupils are fully supervised at all times when on the premises (paragraph 3(7)).

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 ensure that checks have been carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level to confirm their suitability to work with children, and that appropriate checks are carried out with regard to volunteers who help in the school (paragraph 4(b))
- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure that checks are made on their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, their qualifications and professional references and that such information is taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- rectify the problems with the library roof and eliminate the areas of dampness and mould growth on walls in parts of the school (paragraph 5(f))
- ensure that the external cladding to parts of the building is renewed so that rain cannot penetrate it (paragraph 5(f))
- ensure that the room used by pupils when they are ill has a sink and there is a toilet nearby (paragraph 5(l))
- ensure that the school is in a clean, tidy and hygienic state (paragraph 5(n))
- improve the standard and maintenance of decoration (paragraph 5(q))
- provide furniture which is at the correct height for pupils and is in a clean state (paragraph 5(r))
- rectify the defects in the floor covering and condition of the floor itself (paragraph 5(s)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

Inspection of day care registered by Ofsted

Effectiveness of the registered day care

Since the registration of the crèche there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted. There is an appropriate method to record complaints.

The provision for being healthy, staying safe and organisation is inadequate. Children

are looked after in a caring environment where adults know them well, which supports their well-being. However, children are not always encouraged to learn to wash their hands before eating and after playing in the garden. Arrangements for children to sleep and rest are not sufficiently monitored to safeguard their welfare. Children have regular drinks throughout the day to ensure their health and well-being. However, staff do not ensure hygiene procedures are implemented throughout the crèche to prevent cross infection. There is no qualified first aider on site to ensure children are fully protected. Staff record children's attendance, however, not all children are appropriately registered in order to ensure their safety. Arrival and departure times are not recorded. Risk assessments are carried out but these are insufficiently comprehensive to safeguard children when indoors or outdoors. Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues. However, incidents are not recorded.

The provision for making a positive contribution, learning and achieving are satisfactory. Children play well and are interested and motivated to learn and staff observe their developmental progress. However, staff's limited interaction with babies and the lack of variety of activities provided means that sometimes children lack stimulation. Children learn about cultural and religious events. Those with special needs are supported well and individual needs are given priority. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Parents share routines which supports children's well-being.

The management's lack of a clear understanding of the National Standards means that registered numbers have been exceeded which is a breach of conditions. Children's welfare is not safeguarded as staff, without appropriate clearance, have unsupervised contact with them. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

To improve the quality and standards of the care the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- improve outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework 30/07/2007
- ensure that staff follow hygiene procedures in line with health and safety procedures 29/06/2007
- improve deployment of staff with children under one year to ensure that their emotional and social needs are met 22/06/2007
- ensure that all staff working with children are suitably vetted to ensure the safety of children 22/06/2007

- ensure that registered numbers of children are not exceeded in line with conditions of registration 22/06/2007
- maintain a suitable system to record the arrival and departure times of all staff and children 22/06/2007
- ensure that at least one member of staff with a valid first aid certificate is on the premises at all times 29/06/2007
- develop a system to regularly monitor babies while they are sleeping to ensure their safety and well-being 22/06/2007
- devise a risk procedure to ensure that when children access the outdoor area it is secure and free from hazards. 29/06/2007.

These actions will be set out in a notice of action to improve and must be completed by the date specified in the notice. Your local authority has been informed.

Inspection of funded nursery education

Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff promote most aspects of the children's learning and development well. They are satisfactorily informed about the children's individual needs and skills. They have high expectations for children's achievements. Most staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the curriculum is based on the six areas of learning. Children are observed and when children achieve skills these are recorded. Profiles are completed and learning is well planned. However, learning is not sufficiently evaluated against the stepping stones to effectively plan the next steps for children. There is a strong emphasis on project work and practical activities. However, art activities are often adult led and the use of pre-printed sheets gives children fewer opportunities to express their own creative ideas and imagination. Children with learning difficulties receive effective support from staff who work closely with professionals and parents to provide an inclusive curriculum.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour and as a result children behave well overall. Staff plan a broad curriculum for learning, however, the organisation of some activities does not always fully promote effective learning, for example, in creative development and the resources for role-play. Children have easy access to books and a home to school book club promotes their interest and parent involvement. Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The nursery is committed to working in partnership and regular newsletters keep parents informed of the

activities provided. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to discuss the progress of the children in the Foundation Stage.

Leadership and management is satisfactory, teaching is monitored to meet the needs of the children. The manager also uses this to support the development of staffs' individual strengths. Regular staff meetings are held to plan the curriculum, however, the recent introduction of new observation and planning systems and the lack of evaluation against the stepping stones means that older more able children are not fully challenged. The setting means the need of the range of children for whom it provides.

Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of the nursery education the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- further develop the assessment and evaluation process to identify the next steps for children's learning using the stepping stones for children's learning and development
- provide children with more opportunities for open ended art activities and extend opportunities to have access to creative resources to extend their own ideas and imagination.

School details

Name of school	Beis Malka Girls' School
DfES number	204/6337
Unique reference number	100295
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	EY521898
Type of school	Orthodox Jewish day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1980
Age range of pupils	2-16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	359
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	2
Number of children receiving day care	20
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	50
Annual fees (day pupils)	There are no fees
Address of school	93 Alkham Road London N16 6XD
Telephone number	020 8806 2070
Fax number	020 8806 1719
Email address	beismalka@aol.com
Headteacher	Mrs Wind (secondary school), Mrs Galanduer (primary school), Mrs Spitzer (nursery).
Proprietor	Mr Grossman
Reporting inspector	George Derby AI
Dates of inspection	19-20 June 2007