

The King David High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105583
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308892
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	834
6th form	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Rowe
Headteacher	Mr B Levy
Date of previous school inspection	11 April 2005
School address	Eaton Road Crumpsall Manchester Lancashire M8 5DY
Telephone number	0161 7407248
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by students; the quality of teaching; the management of the school; and improvements made since the last inspection. The inspector gathered evidence from observations of six lessons and other activities; eight discussions with staff, students and the chair of governors; and scrutinised the school's documentation on management, teaching, the curriculum, care and support for students and the performance of students.

Description of the school

The King David High School is a voluntary aided comprehensive school of below average size with a specialism in mathematics and computing. It serves boys and girls from the Jewish community of Greater Manchester and beyond. Some 94% of students are of White British heritage, 2% come from minority ethnic groups, and less than 1% have a first language other than English. Fewer students than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry is well above the national average. Students travel daily from a wide geographical area, including some from Leeds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. It has improved considerably in recent years. The issues identified in the last inspection have been dealt with vigorously. The school has the ambition and the capacity to become outstanding.

Attainment on entry to the school overall is above average, with students ranging from the very able to those with learning difficulties. They come from a range of social backgrounds within the Jewish community. Some travel daily from a considerable distance. By the end of Year 11, academic standards and examination results are outstanding and well above the national average. Most students stay on into the sixth form. Their high performance is carried over into excellent GCE A-level results, a very high rate of entry to universities including Oxbridge, and very good academic and vocational results for those who started school with learning difficulties. Students' achievement compared with their prior attainment and the progress they make between Year 7 and the external examination years is excellent. However, progress made between Year 7 and Year 9, as indicated by national tests, though at least satisfactory, is less well developed. The school is aware of this, has identified a number of causes and has taken planned steps; for example, to ensure that teaching in Years 7 to 9 is as rigorous as it is for the older students. More time is needed for these actions to bear fruit. The school, however, has taken the considered view that it must meet the aspirations of parents in ensuring that more able students achieve the high levels of performance in external examinations which would be the norm in independent selective schools. This is because the school aims to meet the needs of students who would have gone to the independent sector were The King David High School not to achieve high examination performance. The school has traditionally regarded concentration on attaining high performance in the Year 9 national tests as a distraction from its over-riding goal in the main school of preparing students rigorously for GCSE examinations. It argues convincingly that this partly underlies the difference between the progress made between Years 7 and 9 on the one hand, and between Years 7 and 11 on the other.

The personal development, self-esteem and articulateness of students are very good. Attendance is good. Behaviour is civilised though a few parents are concerned about discipline in a very small number of lessons. The vast majority of students take their learning seriously and are mature enough to see the value of educational success to their future prospects in life. They settle into school quickly and this is aided by the very close links the school has with the primary schools from which the students come. Teaching is well tailored to the differing abilities of students as they study in classes carefully streamed according to past attainment. The school is a well ordered and purposeful place. Discipline is good. Students receive very effective care and support and are very well advised on how to make progress and plan for life after school. The school has gone to great lengths to provide a secure environment for learning. It is very popular with parents though a significant minority believes that the school pays too little attention to their views or those of the students. This is despite the school having improved its practice in this area in recent years. The staff know the students very well. They mark their work regularly but are at an early stage in using assessment procedures to make clear to the students what they need to do to improve. Many students take advantage of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school's religious basis underlies its excellent ethos. There is a palpable sense of community within the school within which students develop as individuals. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

The teaching seen was at least good, some very good and some excellent. This reflects the view of the school that teaching overall is very good. Teachers have strong subject expertise. The school's unwavering determination that students will reach academic excellence and the high levels of student motivation combine with the teachers' subject expertise and enthusiasm to yield excellent attainment.

Leadership and management are good. The school is well run. This is aided by the well informed and highly effective governing body which is ably led by an energetic and highly committed chair of governors. The headteacher, deputy head and senior leaders ensure that leadership and management are very effective and sharply focused on the academic and personal development of all students. They are well aware of the school's performance using a wide range of evaluation methods, especially those based on good and often informal communications between members of staff. A newly designed performance management system is now in place and the school rightly intends that this will be effective whilst not deflecting staff from teaching into time-consuming paperwork. Staff at all levels work cooperatively. There is a pervasive sense that they 'go the extra mile' to ensure that students of all abilities reach their potential.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Standards are very high as indicated in the excellent examination results and the high rate of entry to university. Academic progress is excellent. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides rigour for students of a range of abilities. Vocational courses are relevant, popular and have appropriately high status within the sixth form: students are highly satisfied with this provision. Extra-curricular activities are extensive and attract the interests of a large number of students. They receive very well informed guidance at a variety of levels and are very well prepared for future studies and employment. They have ample opportunity to mature into self-confident individuals, and those spoken to rate the school very highly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve students' progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Strengthen the use of assessment to help students better understand how to improve their work.
- Embed the performance management system so as to support improvements to teaching whilst minimising paperwork.
- Strengthen consultation with parents and students.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

After my visit to your school I would like to tell you of my findings.

- This is a very good school and it has some outstanding features.
- Examination results are excellent in Years 11 and 13.
- The school provides an interesting and broad curriculum which meets your needs very well.
- The teaching is good overall; some is very good and some is outstanding. The school is developing new ways of evaluating teaching.
- The staff are skilled and work very hard to ensure that each of you learns and develops well.
- You are keen students. You take your learning seriously, work hard and enjoy your time in school.
- Attendance and behaviour are good though a few of you misbehave in a small number of lessons.
- The school provides a very good atmosphere for your learning. This is helped by its emphasis on Judaism.
- The school is well led and managed though a few of you, and a few parents, feel that the staff could pay more attention to your views.
- Your work is regularly marked but you would be helped more if the marking gave you clearer advice on how to improve.

Although the school is very good overall, four improvements are needed. These are:

- improve the progress you make between Years 7 and 9
- improve the helpfulness of marking
- strengthen the way in which teaching is evaluated
- strengthen consultation with students and parents.

I wish you all very well for your future studies at The King David High School.