

Menorah Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131359
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	315788
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adrian Jacobs
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Neuberger
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Abbots Road Burnt Oak Edgware HA8 0QS
Telephone number	020 8906 9992
Fax number	020 8906 9993

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2008
Inspection number	315788

© Crown copyright 2008

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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Menorah Foundation School is an average sized primary school for both girls and boys. A core commitment to an Orthodox Education underpins all that the school does. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Three pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to that found nationally.

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 good school. Menorah Foundation has been through a period of transformation since its status as a privately run Jewish orthodox day school was changed to that of a voluntary aided Jewish orthodox primary school for boys and girls. At its inception, the headteacher and governors were aware there were a number of areas needing improvement including the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' achievement, the decoration and structure of the building and provision for the Foundation Stage. It has successfully addressed all of these issues.

Achievement is good. The profile of achievement has improved over the last three years. At the heart of this success lie improvements to teaching and learning and the detailed arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. They are now of good quality. Teachers are much better at planning work that corresponds closely to the pupils' varying needs and abilities and at addressing underachievement quickly. The detailed school records and regular assessments show that all groups of pupils are making good progress from their starting points in the school. For example, pupils attained average standards overall last year by the end of Year 6. Standards have continued to rise and the present Year 6 are well on track to attain above average standards overall. This represents good progress from their starting points in school.

Personal development and pupils' care guidance and support are also good. Pupils treat each other with great respect, behave well and willingly accept responsibility. Their enjoyment of school stems from their positive attitudes to each other, their learning and their determination to succeed. Pupils have a good understanding of what they must do to improve and the next steps in their learning. Older pupils are able to discuss their learning and use targets to improve their work.

The satisfactory curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to their personal development. Planning for English and mathematics has been adapted well to meet the needs of the different groups within the classes. However, the opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations in science are less well developed and consequently progress is not as rapid as in English and mathematics. The time allocated to some foundation subjects is below recommended levels. The school has recognised this and is developing an innovative project to teach aspects of some foundation subjects in the Kodesh (Jewish Religious) Curriculum as well as the National Curriculum, to increase the time for pupils to improve their knowledge and skills.

Leadership and management are good. The school has tackled well the areas of concern identified at the last inspection. All the adults are continually striving to improve by setting themselves challenging targets. Detailed and accurate self-evaluation has resulted in an improvement plan of good quality to support these aspirations. Recently appointed coordinators are gaining confidence at monitoring school initiatives in order to increase their impact on the quality of learning as well as the rate at which pupils make progress. The governing body participates in strategic planning and gives effective support because governors know the school well. There is a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well. This represents good progress from the last inspection when provision was unsatisfactory. Children start school with skills and abilities that are similar to those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, almost all attain and a number exceed the early learning goals. There is a good range of structured opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and skills both indoors and out. A number of parents wrote praising the quality of teaching and care for the very youngest pupils. The numbers wishing to start in the nursery has increased to such an extent that there will be an additional class from September.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in science by providing more opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations.
- Extend the links between the Kodesh and National Curriculum to increase opportunities for pupils to practise their skill in foundation subject such as art, design and technology, history and drama and monitor the impact on achievement and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Given their starting points, all groups of pupils are now achieving well and making good progress between Reception and Year 6. The oldest pupils are meeting their targets and are well on the road to achieving above average standards overall. Last year they were average. Pupils make the best progress in English and mathematics. Progress in science is not as rapid because opportunities to design and carry out investigations are not as effective as in other subjects. Standards at the end of Year 2 are also improving. Last year they were average overall. Standards in reading and writing have improved and are now above average. This represents good progress from their starting points in Year 1. The very few pupils arriving at the school with little or no English make good progress at acquiring new language skills. Standards are rising because of a thorough approach to tracking pupils' progress and using the resulting information to match work better to pupils' needs. The most recent information on the tracking of pupils' progress across the school confirms that sustained improvement continues.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their positive attitudes and good levels of enjoyment have a significant impact on their progress. Pupils are proud of their school and make a good contribution to its smooth running by taking on extra responsibilities. Beyond the school, they take part in a number of local activities including the Barnet recycling project and the Safer Moves Initiative. Weekly links with Jewish Care, a local community day centre for the elderly and infirm, enhances the school's strong caring Jewish ethos. The active school council regularly seeks the pupil's views on issues such as the quality of school dinners. They are adamant their views are taken seriously and they make a difference. For example, they influenced the decision to introduce a pasta option with sauce at lunchtime. Good progress in their basic skills means that pupils are well prepared for their future life and learning. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils have a clear

understanding of how to stay safe and have a trusted adult they can turn to for help and advice. They choose healthy food and take regular exercise, for example, during 'Fit Kids' before the start of the school day. Pupils' attendance has been consistently satisfactory over the last few years.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and ensure that pupils make good progress. This was also an area for improvement at the last inspection. Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners and work closely with teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils of all abilities have positive attitudes to learning and achieve well. For example, Year 4 pupils really enjoyed a practical activity using coordinates. The teacher made very good use of the interactive white board which pupils also used well to demonstrate their solutions to each other. Occasionally, however, teachers dominate lessons and do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to be involved or the time to do so. Teachers often give pupils good written and verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve. Pupils are very clear about the good quality of support they receive from teachers. One said, 'Teachers insists you work hard but they also share a joke with us. It makes learning fun. If you don't understand anything they will help to explain it again in a different way'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to their personal development through initiatives to encourage healthy living and staying safe. Planning in English and mathematics has been adapted well to meet the needs of the different groups within the classes. However, opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations in science are not as well developed. Information and communication technology supports the learning across the curriculum and adds much to the pupils' enjoyment of learning. The school recognises that the time allocated for some foundation subjects is reduced by the requirements to deliver Kodesh studies. The school has recognised this shortfall and is developing links between the Kodesh and the National Curriculum so that opportunities for subjects such as art, design and technology, history and drama are shared between both. The next stage of this development is a review of this provision to ensure a suitable progression of skills to meet national requirements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well and takes every step to ensure their health and safety. Child protection procedures are thorough and risk assessments are of good quality. Support for pupils' welfare is strong and the moral and social guidance they are given, rooted in the Jewish ethos, contributes to their progress. Assessment procedures are thorough and accurate. Teachers are good at tracking pupils' progress and using the information to plan challenging tasks and activities in English and mathematics. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection. All pupils have personal targets, which they find helpful and informative. Pupils say their work is regularly marked and the comments that teachers make help them improve.

However, some of the older Year 6 pupils would like even more opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing at meeting their targets. They believe this would help them become more self-critical about their own achievements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, based on careful monitoring and a thorough analysis of test and other data. This has resulted in an improvement plan of good quality so they can tackle weaknesses determinedly. Staff work effectively as a team to keep all aspects of school life under review and subject leaders are receiving good quality support to build their confidence at monitoring new initiatives in order to increase their impact on the quality of learning. Most parents are supportive of the school, one reflecting the views of many in commenting, 'My children love going to school and are becoming confident individuals as a result of the secure environment the school offers'. A few parents had concerns about the arrangements for dealing with the unexpected illness of a Year 6 teacher and the frequent changes to staffing resulting from this. The school was aware of this and endeavoured to keep the parents fully informed at all times. Governors are supportive, well informed and have a very good understanding of their strategic role, which they carry out effectively.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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
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
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	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Menorah Foundation School, Edgware, HA8 0QS

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We were very impressed with your friendliness and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other.

Many of you, and your parents, told us how much you enjoy school and that you feel you are doing well. We agree. You go to a good school and here are some of the many reasons why.

- Children in the nursery and reception settle in quickly and make a good start because everyone is so friendly and helpful. They enjoy the many interesting and challenging activities that are organised for them.
- You make good progress in your work because you are taught well and are thoughtful and work hard in lessons.
- You are able to learn in a friendly and caring school. Your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other.
- You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try hard in your lessons.

One of the hardest jobs when a school is good is to make sure that it keeps on doing well. I know that you will want to help your teachers achieve this by doing your best at all times. To make it even better, I am asking your teachers to give you more opportunities to design and carry out your own science experiments. You said that you really enjoy working in this way, as it is challenging and fun. I am also asking them to give you opportunities to achieve even more in foundation subjects such as art, design and technology, history and drama. Your teachers will be checking how well the school is doing and making sure everyone is as successful as possible.

I am sure that you are ready for this challenge! I know that you will continue to work hard and I am sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely,

John Earish

Lead Inspector