

Yeshivah Ohr Torah School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	355/6031
Unique Reference Number	130287
Inspection number	316859
Inspection dates	17-18 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen 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).

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Yeshivah Ohr Torah was opened in 1995 and is situated in North Manchester. It offers secondary education for Orthodox Jewish boys, with provision for both religious and secular studies. The school is affiliated to the Belz Hassidic Community, but it is not exclusive to members of that community. There are 39 pupils on roll between the ages of 11 and 16.

The school states its aim as "*to enable our pupils to reach their maximum potential as productive members of society within the guidelines of traditional Jewish observance and family values.*" School aims emphasise personal development, improvement of character, promoting self-esteem and respect for others. The more able students are expected to help the less able and stimulate an atmosphere of co-operation and unity. On leaving school, all the pupils continue their education in Yeshivot (Talmudical Colleges) in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Evaluation of the school

Yeshivah Ohr Torah is a good school as a result of the headteacher's clear direction and the dedication of all of his staff. The quality of education, both religious and secular, and the care of pupils are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school meets nearly all the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good. The good curriculum and effective teaching and learning lead to pupils making good progress. The curriculum is made up of religious studies (*Limmudei Kodesh*) and secular studies (*Limmudei Chol*). A strength is the fusion of secular elements (*Chol*) with Jewish values. This is achieved by effective use of an extended school day. This enables *Kodesh* and *Chol* to be taught at various times during the day which gives the two strands some parity of esteem.

The *Limmudei Kodesh* is taught entirely in Yiddish and *Limmudei Chol* is taught in English. The secular curriculum includes English and mathematics. Subjects such as PSHE, history and citizenship are not taught as discrete subjects, but are covered well in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula.

Most of the teaching and learning is good and none is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and their planning is precise and well matched to pupils' capabilities. Teachers create an exciting and stimulating learning environment, in which there is good interaction with pupils, based on relationships of mutual respect. Activities give a sharp focus to learning. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in their work. In one or two lessons assessment was not used well to check on what pupils had learnt. In these lessons teaching did not engage pupils as well as it did in most lessons and did not hold their attention.

The time set aside each day for *Hazarah* (revision) gives teachers and pupils a good opportunity to check progress, although this is not being implemented consistently in all classes. The marking of pupils' work takes place regularly and is done mostly conscientiously. Marking often provides pupils with constructive comments which make clear why their work is good and how they can improve it. The information gained from assessment of pupils' work is used to inform lesson planning and ensures that the needs of each pupil are addressed effectively.

The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development across the curriculum is outstanding. Care and respect for others permeate the entire curriculum, which includes many additional activities taking place both in the school and the wider community. This enrichment of the curriculum ranges from pupils leading the daily synagogue services to taking part in residential outdoor pursuits. Other extra-curricular activities, such as visits and a variety of communal charitable projects, add further to the academic, personal and social development of the pupils.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught as part of the Kodesh curriculum, and boys are well prepared for the opportunities and challenges they will face as adult members of their strictly observant Jewish community.

Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive, the strong work ethic within the school, and the high value given to education by the community the school serves.

All the pupils go on to Yeshivot (Talmudical Colleges) to continue their education. The high standards achieved in Kodesh subjects give them a good preparation for this next stage of their education.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' attendance is very good and they enjoy school thoroughly. The school meets its aims of promoting pupils' personal development very successfully. Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school, a major focus of which is the development of pupils' *middos* (desirable personal traits of responsibility, modesty and consideration). As a result, pupils are well informed of, and retain a lively interest in, the environment

and other issues. Central to this is the growth in their knowledge and understanding of Jewish spiritual heritage. This is achieved well through *Limmudei Kodesh* lessons, regular opportunities for prayer and through the whole ethos of the school. After school, pupils continue their learning with study partners, drawn from amongst their peers. This is seen as a privilege by them and an enjoyable activity. Through extensive discussion of Jewish law and ethics, pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Relations at all levels are excellent, and the school is a secure and well-ordered community that is characterised by friendliness and mutual concern. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding.

Pupils have a deep appreciation of, and respect for, their own culture. They are also given opportunities to discuss other cultures in various lessons, both *Kodesh* and *Chol*, and are encouraged to appreciate the virtues of tolerance and harmony.

Pupils prepare effectively for their economic well-being through the in-depth study of classical *Talmudic* and *Halachic* (legal) texts and by applying lessons to daily life. Pupils learn how to be responsible with money and show full understanding of their religious obligations through the practical application of charity. They are effective in their contribution to the life of the school, their community and beyond.

Pupils have a good attitude to learning. The ethos of their families and community is very much learning oriented and most of the community is actively involved in education. For the most part, pupils follow this example and strive, from a very young age, to meet high expectations.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All the required policies are in place. The school ensures that the pupils stay safe and has implemented the appropriate policies for bullying, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and behaviour and sanctions.

The school has appropriate policies on health and safety and has a satisfactory level of fire safety. It has an implemented written policy on first aid. A trained *Hazolah* (First Aid) paramedic offers expert assistance whenever needed.

Staff members are deployed in ways that ensure the proper supervision of pupils. The school keeps careful records of sanctions imposed upon pupils, appropriate admission and attendance registers and it fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

The pupils say that they feel safe and valued. These sentiments are supported by parents who see the caring attitudes of the school as a key factor in their sons' learning and progress.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Before staff are appointed, appropriate checks are made to confirm their identity, past employment history and qualifications. All staff appointed prior to March 2002 have been subject to checks on their suitability to work with children. Staff appointed after March 2002 have not been cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau. All details of such staff have been recently forwarded to the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. The school, therefore, does not meet current regulations as it has not carried out the required checks on these members of staff prior to them taking up their appointments.

School's premises and accommodation

The school makes good use of its present premises, although these are far from ideal. There are three teaching rooms, two of which are only large enough for 12 pupils, but are large enough for the current groups being taught in them. There are no sick room facilities, as required by the regulations, for pupils who are ill. There is adequate space for pupils to play outside safely. The building is maintained in sound order and standards of cleanliness are satisfactory. The dedication of staff and the hard work of the pupils limit the impact of the building's shortcomings on pupils' progress. Planning permission has been received for an upper storey extension to increase the accommodation.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents and prospective parents with comprehensive and useful information through its prospectus, which contains full details of school policies. Parents are regularly updated by informative meetings. A detailed half-yearly report is written for each pupil. This is augmented by a further report at the end of the academic year, which gives parents a clear picture of the progress made in each subject.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has detailed and comprehensive complaints procedures that are clearly outlined in an informative policy document. All parents are informed of the procedures when pupils are admitted and the school makes further copies available on request.

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 suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that an enhanced criminal records bureau check has been made in respect of all members of staff appointed after March 2002, before or as soon as practicable after their appointment (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- ensure that details of all CRB checks for staff are included in the single central register, together with the date on which such checks were completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

School details

Name of school	Yeshivah Ohr Torah School
DCSF number	355/6031
Unique reference number	130287
Type of school	Jewish Day School
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1995
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	39
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	0
Number of pupils who are looked after	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3000
Address of school	28 Broom Lane Salford Lancashire M7 4FX
Telephone number	0161 7921230
Headteacher	Rabbi Wind
Proprietor	Belz Hassidic Communities
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen AI
Dates of inspection	17-18 October 2007