

London Jewish Girls' High School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	302/6110
Unique Reference Number	131403
Inspection number	316942
Inspection dates	12-13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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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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

Tiferes, the London Jewish Girls' High School, is an independent day school for girls between the ages of 11 to 16. It is located in a residential area in Barnet and serves Jewish girls mainly from Barnet and Hackney. It was founded in 1997 as a charitable trust. At present 104 students are on roll. Of these, 65 are in Key Stage 3. Three students have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). No student speaks English as an additional language. The school is based in a building that was originally designed primarily as a meeting hall and which is owned by the synagogue. It aims to provide the students with the Hashkofo and knowledge to be firm in their Yiddishkeit, whilst teaching them the necessary skills to deal successfully with the world around them. There is one full-time teacher and 28 part-time teachers. Seven teachers have qualified teacher status. All other teachers have a qualification from Jewish teacher training colleges. This is the school's first published inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

This is an outstanding school in which students achieve high academic standards and develop excellent skills for adulthood. They make outstanding progress because teaching is often excellent and is consistently good through the school. Students are cared for well in an ethos of high expectations and achievement. The school meets all but one of the necessary requirements in its procedures and practices.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good at both key stages because it provides students with a breadth of learning experiences of a religious and secular nature. It broadly follows the national curriculum and emphasises English, mathematics and science at both key stages. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught in all years, enabling students to develop and extend their competences as they move up the school. The Jewish faith is embedded in the curriculum. For example, over 50% of all lessons in Year 7 focus on Kodesh. This percentage of time reduces year by year to ensure sufficient time for examination courses and in Years 10 and 11, it is just below 40%. All year groups learn Chumash, Parsha and Nach with Avos and Tefilla lessons taught in particular years. Other lessons demonstrate the opportunities for students to understand their religious past and culture. For example, in history at Key Stage 3, the focus is on Jewish history, and languages provision concentrates on

modern and Biblical Hebrew. There are also planned opportunities in subjects such as English, to develop an appreciation of the culture and beliefs of others. Students develop their creativity through, for example, art and sewing and opt for one of these at GCSE level. All students are timetabled for physical education (PE) lessons each week but a number of students, mainly in Years 8 and 10, expressed a desire for more opportunities to take exercise.

The whole school curriculum is planned well and the policy shows clear aims, objectives and learning methods. However, several subject policies do not state the aims of their subject. Also although there is some monitoring and evaluation of learning, for example in English, in general this is a less well developed aspect of curriculum planning. The curriculum caters well for students with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The regular provision at another centre for a small number of students who need extra support, ensures that students get the provision that they need. For example, the school has recently introduced entry level mathematics and vocational options are increasing. The needs of the more able are being met particularly effectively in some areas with the most able students successfully completing 'A' level mathematics by the end of Year 11, instead of taking GCSE. Most classes are in mixed ability groupings although where the ability range is wide, the school uses streaming, to help ensure that students reach their potential. Resources are adequate for students' needs.

Further evidence that the school caters for the needs of all students in the broadest sense is in the strong and diverse extra-curricular programme of activities. The school puts great emphasis on these to support students' broader development. Students enjoy links with another local school, which provides opportunities for regular sports matches. The school's general knowledge programme and the support that older students give on a weekly basis to students in a special needs school, encourage their exceptional inter-personal development as well as widening their understanding. Careers advice is in place in Years 9 and 11 and focuses on the needs of students, all of whom move on to further education. For this reason, work experience is not offered.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall. Together with good individual support for students, regular testing and preparation for examinations, and the motivation of students, this leads to outstanding progress. Students' excellent progress extends to all areas of Kodesh. The standards that students reach at Key Stage 4 are exceptional. In 2007 every student attained at least a 'C' grade in all the subjects for which they were entered, with a very high proportion achieving A* and A grades in English, mathematics, science and art. The results show consolidation of the high grades that students attain in Key Stage 3 national tests and reflects teaching that is solidly good through the school, with some that is outstanding. All teachers know their subjects very well, ensure a clear purpose to learning and make lessons interesting and enjoyable. Students respond particularly well to problem solving and investigative tasks because they are taken from real situations with which they can identify. In the best lessons, there is a very good level of challenge,

with focused and sharp questioning enabling students to make excellent progress. The pace is brisk and time related activities keep students focused. Without exception, students take great pride in their learning, are very enthusiastic and work extremely hard. However, teachers' marking does not often tell students what they have achieved or how to move on in their learning. Regular tests and the mid-year assessments, which are carried out in all year groups, enable teachers to plan work at the right levels. This leads to prompt action to address any under-achievement. More able students are given extension work to ensure they make the progress that they should. Those with learning difficulties are supported effectively in a variety of ways and make rapid progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. This is a happy and friendly school in which students thrive and become confident young people. They respond to the high expectations of the staff and enjoy learning because they are highly motivated. Their behaviour is excellent, their attendance is above average and they mix well with students from other year groups, reflecting the respect and care for each other that the school espouses. Spiritual knowledge and understanding are central to the daily life of the school and prayers and lessons relating to the Jewish faith formalise this. Current affairs and faith lessons provide teaching about morals and values which encourage students to become caring members of the community.

The school has recently organised visits to the Houses of Parliament, the law courts and the Imperial War Museum which have increased students' knowledge of public institutions and services. Students are expected to use their initiative and relish the myriad of opportunities to be leaders and to take responsibility for school activities and events. They all have roles in running their school although Year 10 students, in particular feel that they have too few opportunities for decision making. One example of students' involvement is in running the Tiferes Fun Day, a great community occasion, which encourages the development of many skills for adulthood.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students so that they feel safe and supported. Risk assessments on various activities ensure their safety both in school and off-site visits. There is much good practice in the school. For example, every class has a teacher who is designated to speak regularly with students, to discuss individual issues which are of concern. The school has devised and implemented a range of well thought out policies for anti-bullying, the health and safety of students on visits outside the school and behaviour. However, the named child protection officer has not yet attended up-to-date training. The school has reacted very promptly to this omission by arranging an appropriate course. The school has a three year plan which complies with the Disability

Discrimination Act 2002. Healthy living is encouraged by the school at all levels with the tuck shop providing healthy options and students being encouraged to walk to and from school.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all the requirements. It is run by a board of three governors which has appropriate procedures for the appointment of staff. The school has worked very hard to ensure that it has appropriate procedures to meet the requirements for the suitability and checking of staff. Criminal Record Bureau Certificates have been sought for all of the staff and the proprietor, but a few have not yet been returned. In the meantime, the school is adopting the procedures recommended in the guidelines.

School's premises and accommodation

The school meets all the regulations for premises and accommodation. The current accommodation is satisfactory and enables effective learning. There are sufficient classrooms and subject specific areas to enable the teaching of science, ICT, sewing and art. The facility for PE is adequate, relying on a nearby park for outside provision. The science laboratory meets the regulations although it is housed in a temporary building which presents heating challenges. Classrooms are bright and the displays are effective. There are sufficient washrooms for students and staff, and a room, which is appropriate for ill students, is suitably equipped with a sink and bed. The site is tidy and the school maximises its space.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The regulation is met because the prospectus contains all of the information that is required. It is clear, accurate and up to date.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the 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 the one listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for students' welfare, and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that teachers monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching in all subjects so that it can inform future planning of lessons
- make sure that marking of students' work always tells them what they have achieved and how to make further progress.

School details

Name of school	London Jewish Girls' High School
DCSF number	3026110
Unique reference number	131403
Type of school	Jewish Secondary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1997
Age range of students	11-16
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll (full-time students)	Girls: 104
Number of students with a statement of special educational needs	Girls: 3
Annual fees (day students)	£4500
Annual fees (boarders)	£NA
Address of school	The Community Centre 18 Raleigh Close London NW4 2TA
Telephone number	0208 203 8618
Fax number	0208 203 8618
Email address	tiferes@onetel.com
Headteacher	Rabbi Joel Rabinowitz
Proprietor	Mr David Hersh
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock
Dates of inspection	12-13 March 2008