

Nancy Reuben Primary School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	925/9900
Unique Reference Number	133533
Inspection number	317001
Inspection dates	31 October- 1 November 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).

Inspection of funded nursery education was carried out 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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Nancy Reuben Primary School is a small modern-orthodox Jewish community school in north-west London, catering for pupils age 3-11. The school, which opened in 2001, is primarily associated with the local Sephardi Synagogue and community, of which many of the pupils and their families are members. However, the school has pupils from Ashkenazi families, and therefore, the traditions and customs of both communities are taught and celebrated with parity of esteem. The school has 167 pupils on roll. The school's aims are to give a balanced curriculum of both secular and religious studies. Holding a strong belief that *"ignorance causes many of the difficulties in society today"*, the school's ambition is that *"all of our pupils leave school as an example of living and celebrating diversity."*

Evaluation of the school

This is a good school which provides good education and care for its pupils. The school meets the needs of its pupils and the aspirations of their parents. The curriculum, which is good, offers a broad and suitable range of activities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is good teaching in both the secular and religious strands of the curriculum. The headteacher provides good, purposeful leadership and direction for both the school and its dedicated staff, in the drive for the development of teaching, learning and pupils' welfare. The school meets most but not all of the requirements of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum and of teaching is good. This leads to pupils' good learning and good progress. The curriculum is divided into two distinctive strands: religious studies (*Limmudei Kodesh*) and secular studies (*Limmudei Chol*). A strength of the curriculum is the fusion of the secular elements (*Chol*) with the underpinning Jewish values of the school.

Limmudei Kodesh covers a wide range of distinctively Jewish studies, including the study of Classical Hebrew and texts, and brings pupils to an understanding of Jewish history, culture and religious practice. *Limmudei Chol* delivers the National Curriculum. Literacy and numeracy are taught on a daily basis. Science, history, geography, art, design and technology, music and physical education are also

taught. French and modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*) are taught as modern languages. The clearly written curriculum policies are supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work which ensure that both *Kodesh* and *Chol* strands of the curriculum are implemented effectively.

The spiritual and moral aspects of the curriculum are outstanding. Care and respect for others permeate the entire curriculum, which includes an expanding range of enrichment activities both within the school and in the wider community. Other extra-curricular activities, such as visits and a range of communal charitable projects, provide for the further academic, personal and social development of the pupils.

Personal, social and health education is taught as part of the *Kodesh* curriculum. The main focus is on the development of pupils' *middot* (desirable personal traits of responsibility, modesty and consideration) and the pupils are well prepared to take on the opportunities and challenges which will come to them as they grow up in an observant Jewish community which is firmly based in, and at ease with, the larger community.

Teaching is good overall. Lessons range from satisfactory to outstanding. Most lessons observed were good. In the best lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and their planning is precise and well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers create an exciting and stimulating learning environment, in which there is good interaction between teacher and pupils, based on relationships of mutual respect. Learning is placed at the centre of all activities and lessons have appropriate pace and challenge. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve above average standards. In less successful lessons, teachers do not fully utilise the opportunities to check all pupils' learning. Such lessons tend to be overly teacher-centred, and though behaviour is never less than good, it is clear that some pupils lose concentration and are not fully engaged.

Marking is regular and is undertaken conscientiously. In much of the marking there are constructive comments which make clear to pupils why their work is good or how they can improve some aspects. Teachers use the information gained from assessment to inform their future planning and ensure that the needs of individuals are addressed well.

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. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support which they receive. All pupils who move on from this school are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The personal development of the pupils is an outstanding feature of the school and its success is reflected in their very good behaviour. Central to this is the development of knowledge and understanding of Jewish spiritual heritage. This is achieved not only through *Limmudei Kodesh* lessons, but also in the regular opportunities for prayer, and through discussion of '*Dinim*' (laws) and '*Middot*', where the school stresses to pupils the importance of being role models and ambassadors for their religion whether they are on outings, on educational visits or simply engaged in school activities. As a result, pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong and they accept responsibility for their own behaviour, both within and outside the community of the school. Attendance is very good, indicating the pupils' thorough enjoyment in coming to school. Throughout the school there are extensive opportunities for pupils to learn how to respond to others with kindness and consideration. Consequently, relations between pupils at all levels are excellent and the school is a secure and well-ordered community that is characterised by friendliness and mutual concern. Pupils are taught, with empathy, about other cultures. The religious customs and festivals of other faiths are studied. Reference is made to those aspects of Jewish prayers which emphasise peace and harmony. Pupils are thereby encouraged to adopt a tolerance of, and a respect for, all people.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All required policies are in place and have regard to Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance. The school ensures that the pupils stay safe and has prepared and implemented appropriate written policies for bullying, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and behaviour and sanctions.

The school has suitable policies on health and safety. It encourages healthy eating and all classes receive two periods of physical education per week. The school has a satisfactory level of fire safety. It has implemented its written policy on first aid. The headteacher and one other member of staff are advanced trained first-aiders.

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

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

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out the required checks on all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Identities and references are checked. The checks on the most recently appointed staff have been requested from the Criminal Records Bureau but a response has not yet been received. These staff work unsupervised with pupils. The school does not yet therefore comply with this aspect of the regulations.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are good, enabling pupils to learn effectively and safely. The school shares its site with the local synagogue and provides a centre that is highly valued by the community it serves. Over the past few years the premises have been developed well to keep pace with the increasing numbers on roll. The newer parts of the building in particular are light, airy and spacious and there is sufficient office space. In addition to the main classrooms, areas for subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT) and music are used well. The classrooms are suitable for the needs of each age group, although the Reception classroom is relatively small for the number of pupils it currently contains. The building is maintained and furnished well. The outdoor space is being developed well, for example, with high quality resurfacing of the playground, although the school does not have a playing field. While they are rarely needed, the school does not have adequate facilities for pupils who are ill. At present a bed is provided in the staff room and this is not satisfactory in meeting the needs of either sick pupils or the staff.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A clearly written prospectus is provided for parents. This is enhanced by regular newsletters, written reports on pupils' progress and frequent informal contacts with pupils' families. Information to parents concerning their children's academic progress is disseminated by comprehensive written reports on all aspects of their studies, together with parents' evenings. The school makes successful efforts to be available to parents at all times to discuss the pupils' welfare.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a comprehensive complaints procedure, which provides the details that are required to explain the process fully to parents. The school received no formal complaints in the school year preceding this inspection.

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 record check in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and the enhanced criminal record certificate which is the subject of the application, is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after his/her appointment (paragraph 4(2)(b)).

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)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- establish consistency of best practice in teaching and learning.

Inspection of funded nursery education

Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The provision is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are committed to meeting the individual needs of the children, as a result they provide well for children's learning and development. The use of 'all about me' information from parents means that staff are well-informed about the children and so can plan an individual curriculum. Children's progress files are available, however, they do not always provide a clear record of children's rate of progress.

Children learn mainly through play; they use cubes to measure how tall the giraffe is and the width of the dinosaur. Children are creative and their art work is attractively displayed. They have celebrated festivals from other cultures including Diwali and Chinese New Year.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff read 'good deed notes' brought in by the parents and children are praised for what they have done well. Children's behaviour is generally well managed, however, when activities are insufficiently planned children do not participate fully and this results in behaviour being managed in a negative way.

The leadership and management of the nursery are good. Although the head teacher knows how she wants the school to progress there is a need to monitor the quality of teaching.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the early year's department. Notice boards, displays of children's work and photographs provide parents with information about what the children do in school.

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:

- ensure that the management systems in place support staff to achieve consistency in the quality of teaching
- consider how the group size for activities is affecting children's learning
- ensure that observations of children in the kindergarten are carried out on a regular basis, that they are dated and provide a record of children's progress.

School details

Name of school	Nancy Reuben Primary School		
DCSF number	925/9900		
Unique reference number	133533		
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	EY311617		
Type of school	Jewish Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2001		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	MI		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 81	Girls: 86	Total: 167
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of children receiving day care	Boys: 6	Girls: 5	Total: 11
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 31	Girls: 25	Total: 56
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 2400		
Address of school	48-50 Finchley Lane Hendon London NW4 1DJ		
Telephone number	0208202 5646		
Fax number	0208203 7568		
Email address	office@nrps.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs E Haye		
Proprietor	Rabbi David		
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen AI		
Childcare inspector	Pauline Naxarkardeh		
Dates of inspection	31 October -1 November 2007		