

Talmud Torah Yetev Lev

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	355/6035
Unique Reference Number	131435
Inspection number	319852
Inspection dates	14-15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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

Talmud Torah Yetev Lev is an independent Jewish day school for boys aged from 3 to 12 in the Broughton Park area of Salford, in Lancashire, and currently has 192 pupils on roll. It was opened in 1997 and is owned and maintained by the Satmar Chassidic community, although it takes children irrespective of their Jewish sectarian allegiance. All pupils come from the immediate area within which the school is situated. The school aims to provide a sound Jewish education that reflects the Satmar traditions, laws and especially moral values. The school aims for a high standard of behaviour and mutual respect among the pupils, and towards peers, teachers and families. It seeks to protect the pupils from any negative influences that may arise locally, or from the traditional media and, to this end, the pupils and their families do not mix socially in the neighbourhood or use any of the traditional local facilities that are available to them. This is the first published inspection report for the school.

Evaluation of the school

Talmud Torah Yetev Lev is providing a satisfactory quality of education and care for its pupils. The curriculum and teaching are satisfactory and help pupils to make satisfactory progress; the provision made within the *Kodesh* (religious studies) area of the curriculum is good. The pupils benefit from attending a school that places a high emphasis on developing respect, tolerance, high moral values, and an understanding of Satmar traditions and laws. The school is also developing a better understanding of the curricular balance needed between the *Kodesh* and secular strands, as an aid to developing pupils' interest in attending school and motivating them to learn and appreciate their Jewish culture and beliefs. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum, including both the *Kodesh* and secular strands, is satisfactory. The planning of the *Kodesh* curriculum is very detailed and contains a range of learning content and activities for pupils. These support very well their development of knowledge and understanding of many basic literacy skills in Yiddish and Hebrew, the main languages of the school, and some basic number concepts in mathematics. This part of the curriculum underpins the core ethos and value system of the school very effectively. Parents and pupils appreciate the detailed and focused

work that is taught as part the *Kodesh* curriculum, and pupils enjoy reading and singing aloud during these lessons. The secular curriculum is developing more slowly, although the school now has in place a detailed curriculum map of what will be taught in mathematics across the whole school. This is helping to ensure challenge and progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding in a range of mathematical ideas. Although the English curriculum focuses on a number of key areas in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and spelling, the school has yet to finalise the written content of this subject across the school.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning are satisfactory, and are occasionally good. Planning for the teaching of the *Kodesh* curriculum is very thorough, but is developing more slowly in the secular subjects, especially in English. Teaching is very competent in terms of management and control of the pupils, with the very compliant behaviour showing that the pupils clearly understand what the teacher expects of them at all times. Relationships are very good, although some teachers are very direct in their manner with the pupils. Where teaching reaches a good standard, the level of interaction and effective questioning creates a high level of motivation in the pupils, and a keenness from them to listen and learn. Some teaching encourages a more passive response from the pupils, and although it is of a satisfactory quality, the pupils make slightly slower progress in their learning. The processes for assessing pupils' progress in their learning are good in the *Kodesh* curriculum, but are underdeveloped in the secular subjects of English and mathematics. The school has recently started to use the WRATE (wide range achievement test) from the Binoh. The available information indicates that standards are generally satisfactory, although there is some variation among the highest and lowest attaining pupils. Overall, the data show that pupils are making satisfactory progress in terms of acquiring further knowledge and understanding across a range of areas. It is very good in terms of them making progress against the stated aims of the school; namely, to develop their understanding of Satmar traditions, laws and moral values.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good. Pupils' attendance and attitudes in lessons are both very good, and encourage them to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life. The school enables the pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through many opportunities to speak and sing publicly, and through incentive schemes for learning, behaviour and the development of interactive social skills. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school's strong emphasis on the Satmar tradition, laws and moral values, which is taught through the *Kodesh* curriculum, and which dictates the core ethos of the school, very effectively enables the pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. Pupils are also taught to respect British law, within the context of being a precept of Jewish law; namely, to respect

the law of the land. This is emphasised through the text-based study and class discussion in both the *Kodesh* and secular curricula. Although not a formally planned feature of the curriculum, when opportunities arise the pupils are taught about the British legal system and the monarchy. There are times when the pupils have opportunities to contribute to the community; for example, participation in the '*hacnosas sefer torah*' and fund-raising events, both of which contribute to the development of their economic well-being. The access the pupils have to knowledge of public institutions and services in England is limited and occurs on an ad hoc basis. Pupils fully appreciate their own culture, given that it is the main feature of the school. They are also encouraged to appreciate other cultures through discussion and by example. Their respect and tolerance of other cultural traditions is evident in their dealing with adults who visit the school, and their neighbours.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory. The strong faith element of the school encourages many aspects of healthy eating and an awareness of personal well-being, relative to the strong moral and religious code of the school. The staff are very alert to ensuring that the school provides a safe and secure environment for all pupils throughout the school day. Health and safety policies are of a satisfactory quality, and include a range of information that shows all reasonable efforts are being made to safeguard the pupils at all times. Complementary behaviour and discipline policies, which further support the general welfare of pupils while at school, are linked effectively to the strong moral emphasis which permeates all aspects of school life. The procedures for out-of-school visits, in particular, recognise that a number of important risk assessments have to be made before any pupils can leave the school. Fire fighting equipment is checked annually, and a record is kept of those occasions when the pupils practise exiting the building, as part of the school's fire safety procedures. First aid procedures are satisfactory. However, the school does not yet have a three-year accessibility plan, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Although the school has actively pursued Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for four recently appointed staff, including several requests for clearance from the authorising agency, its single central register does not yet contain all the required information in line with statutory guidance. The school, however, ensures that these members of staff work under the direct supervision of those teachers who have received CRB clearance. In all other aspects, the school meets all the requirements for ensuring that adults who work with the pupils are suitably qualified and appropriately checked for them to do so.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory, and are conducive to effective learning, despite a recent problem with water damage in the Kindergarten rooms. The school is based in a single building, with a ground floor that houses the Kindergarten and three other classes for early years pupils, a first floor with offices, one classroom, kitchen and multi-purpose hall, and a second floor with five classrooms, staff room and office. The classrooms are of a suitable size for the age and number of pupils who use them. There is an appropriate number of washrooms and toilets. The general décor of the building is satisfactory, although some parts of the outside front of the school are in a minor state of disrepair. The playground area is large enough to accommodate all pupils.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is satisfactory in almost all areas, but there are a few important exceptions. Although the school makes it clear in its brochure that all the pupils will be taught English and mathematics, as part of the secular curriculum, there is currently insufficient detail for parents to know exactly what is taught in each of these subjects across the school. The school does not provide parents with an annual report of the progress and attainment of every pupil, including particulars of academic performance. There is, however, regular contact with parents about the pupils' work and achievements within the *Kodesh* curriculum, and there is the first ever teachers-parents evening in December. Other important information currently not available if requested is a completed list of staff and their qualifications.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints are clear and concise, and comply fully with all requirements.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that there is a clear curriculum policy set out in writing, which is well supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for all areas taught (paragraph 1(2))

- ensure that there is a clear framework by which pupil performance is evaluated across both the *Kodesh* and secular strands of the curriculum (paragraph 1(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that CRB details for all those who work in the school are collected and included on the single central register (paragraph 4C(2 and 3)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that it provides particulars of the full curriculum offered by the school, if requested by parents (paragraph 6(2)(g))
- ensure that it provides particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- ensure that details of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications is provided to parents on request (paragraph 6(2)(k))
- provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6(5)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

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:

- develop further the secular curriculum to indicate what will be taught in English across the school
- improve the dialogue between pupils and teachers in lessons as an aid to helping the pupils make the best possible progress in their learning
- develop clearer systems for assessing and sharing the performance of pupils in all their secular lessons.

School details

Name of school	Talmud Torah Yetev Lev
DCSF number	355/6035
Unique reference number	131435
Type of school	Jewish (Strictly observant Satmar Chasidic)
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1997
Age range of pupils	3-12
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 183
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 9
Annual fees (day pupils)	£642-£2,392
Address of school	393-395 Bury New Road Salford Lancashire M7 2BT
Telephone number	01617 929922
Fax number	01617 929933
Email address	-
Headteacher	Mr Abraham Goldberg
Proprietor	Talmud Torah Yetev Lev LTD
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI
Dates of inspection	14-15 November 2007