

Talmud-Torah Yetev-Lev

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	2046233
Unique Reference Number	100289
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Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland

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, strictly orthodox, Jewish day school for boys aged from three to 12 years of age. There are 675 pupils on roll. It is located, near Stamford Hill in the centre in of north London's orthodox Jewish community. The school is owned and maintained by the Satmar Chasidic community. Virtually all boys speak Yiddish as their first language. Jewish studies (*Kodesh*) are taught in Yiddish. Secular subjects (*Chol*) are taught in English. There is a headteacher for the Jewish studies and one for the secular studies. The majority of time is spent on the *Kodesh* studies. The school is open six days a week from Sunday to Friday. The school exists to meet the need '*for learning, socialisation, care and support for Yiddish speaking children and parents in the locality*'. This is the school's second published inspection report. The first report was published following the inspection on 18-20 June 2001.

Evaluation of the school

Although the *Kodesh* work is satisfactory and good in some respects, the overall quality of the education provided by the school is inadequate because of the unsatisfactory quality of the provision for the *Chol* curriculum and the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has not undertaken all the necessary checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are satisfactory. The pupils make good progress in their *Kodesh* studies, but only satisfactory progress in their *Chol* studies. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its provision for their children. The school does not meet a significant number of the regulations. The school has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The overall quality of the curriculum is inadequate because the secular curriculum is unsatisfactory. Too little attention is given to the scientific, aesthetic and creative, technological and physical areas of learning. There are few subject policies and no schemes of work for any *Chol* subjects.

The *Chol* curriculum focuses on English and mathematics, which is taught from Year 1 upwards. Other subjects are taught intermittently throughout the school, for example, science in Years 6 and Year 7, geography in Year 6 and history in Years 5 and 6. The lack of continuity results in pupils not gaining an understanding of these subjects in sufficient depth. Planning for English and mathematics is underdeveloped, although these subjects are taught satisfactorily. The lack of planning results in pupils, many of whom are capable of more demanding work, not doing as well as they could. Pupils who find learning more difficult receive good support and this is a strength of the school.

The *Kodesh* curriculum is good and well planned. It is varied and ensures that pupils gain the necessary skills upon which to build as they progress in their Jewish religious education and future lives as observant Jews. The focus of the *Kodesh* curriculum is on reading Hebrew, the study of *Chumash* (Bible), *Gemoro* (Talmud), *Mishnayos*, Jewish general knowledge and *Sedra* (weekly Bible portion). Personal, social and health education pervades the *Kodesh* curriculum, as well as being taught in some *Chol* lessons. Pupils begin to learn *Chumash* in Year 2, *Rashi* (commentary) in Year 3, *Mishnayos* (Talmud) in Year 4 and *Gemoro* in Year 5. There is evidence of some cross-curricular work. Boys study in three different ancient languages; Hebrew, Yiddish and Aramaic, as well as in English.

The early years programme is satisfactory, with some good features. The school follows the six areas of learning and this is planned accordingly. However, there is no framework for assessment and resources are inadequate overall. Areas of strength include number work, the quality of information sent to parents, and the outstanding behaviour of pupils, due to the highly motivational approaches adopted by the teachers.

The overall quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Teaching in *Kodesh* is satisfactory with some good features. The assessment of *Kodesh* is good. Teachers have all attended higher schools of rabbinic study and are well-versed and articulate in the subject matter. Teaching is usually formal and traditional, although teachers use a wide range of worksheets that challenge the pupils effectively. The curriculum ensures progression from year-to-year. Lessons are planned well although planning is not always in written form. Pupils are assessed through weekly testing.

Although craft-work is not a major feature of the school's work, it happens from time to time, for example, before major festivals. Through their Talmudic studies the pupils are given opportunities, and are trained, to learn for themselves. An effective system to support pupils who find learning more difficult ensures that all pupils are given access to the curriculum. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are especially well cared for by devoted teachers and auxiliary staff. The pupils' progress in *Kodesh* is good. It is effectively followed up by teachers, headteachers and at home to ensure that pupils retain the subject matter on a weekly basis.

The overall quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment in *Chol* is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress, although they are working below the level normally expected for their age. Teaching in *Chol* classes usually takes place in English, although Yiddish is sometimes used to explain more complex ideas. Exercise books are kept well and the pupils clearly enjoy and respect this work. There are limited resources, for example, in an English lesson no dictionaries were available to enable pupils to discover for themselves, standard definitions of new words being learnt. Marking is sometimes inadequate. In some classes teachers usually only tick the work done and rarely provide any comment on its quality or what pupils need to do to improve. There is no clear framework for assessment in *Chol* subjects to guide teachers.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. The way pupils *daven* (pray) with great concentration shows that their religion shines through their faces. Pupils are given the opportunity to lead parts of the prayer, for example, in *bentching* (saying grace after meals). The considerable emphasis placed on the moral and social aspects of their education, through the extremely strong ethos of Torah values, leads to pupils growing in their understanding of justice, right and wrong and respect for all. An extensive range of incentives encourages the pupils to make progress in their academic work and to take responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils display positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy school life. Behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors and are supportive of one another. Pupils feel safe and respected and this is greatly appreciated by parents.

Pupils make an effective contribution to the school and wider community and take part in and arrange events. These include Purim activities, *Siyumim* (celebrations), organising *davening* (prayer session) and collecting for *tzedoko* (charity). *Kodesh* lessons, with their emphasis on discussion, analysis and thinking skills, give the pupils a good range of transferable skills for their future lives within their own and the wider community. Attendance is slightly below the national average but there are few unauthorised absences. Pupils display a satisfactory knowledge of British institutions and services, gained in lessons and through educational visits. They have a deep understanding of their own culture and some knowledge of other cultures.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's overall provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate as too many of the required policies and procedures are undeveloped and do not meet the requirements of the regulations. The policies on bullying, child protection and first aid are inadequate and provide too little effective guidance for staff. The policy on health and safety on education visits is not implemented effectively. The pupils have limited opportunities for exercise as physical education is not timetabled

for all pupils. The pupils are not well supervised at all stages during their time on the school premises. Fire drills are not carried out regularly at all the school's buildings.

There is an appropriate behaviour policy with a suitable system of sanctions to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. There are staff qualified to administer first aid and accidents are carefully recorded. The school has carried out most of the necessary provision for fire safety and equipment is regularly checked. The school correctly maintains an admissions register but the attendance registers are not kept strictly in accordance with requirements. The school does not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 with inadequate plans to increase access for those with disabilities.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All members of staff have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level, but the school has not carried out all the further required checks to confirm their suitability to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies three properties in all, with two of them on one site. The main, purpose-built, three story school building is satisfactorily maintained as are the three terraced, former residential properties on the same site. A further large terraced property, close to the main school, also used for teaching purposes, is not as well maintained and, although satisfactory, is in a shabby decorative order. Classrooms in all buildings are an adequate size for the number of pupils in each class. The school does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell and does not provide hot water in all the pupils' washrooms. The school makes good use of the rear of the main school building as an area for play and recreation.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a very small amount of the required information for parents and prospective parents and so fails to meet most of the regulations for this section. The information includes an expression of the school's aims and ethos but does not include all the details the school is required to provide for parents and prospective parents. Similarly, the school does not indicate to parents and to prospective parents that other information is available on request relating to school policies and details of staffing. Almost all parents report that they are happy with the quality of the information they receive and with the progress that their children make. They receive weekly reports on their child's progress and an annual report which provides a satisfactory amount of information on the pupils' achievements in English and mathematics.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written complaints policy which sets out the procedures it will follow in the management of any complaint. It contains most, but not all, of the information on the specific elements required by the regulations. There have been no formal complaints from parents in the 12 months before the 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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- set out a curriculum policy, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for each subject and each year group, and implement it effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure the curriculum give all pupils of compulsory school age sufficient experience in all the following areas of learning: scientific, technological, physical and aesthetic and creative (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))
- put a framework in place to assess pupils' *Chol* work regularly and thoroughly and utilise the information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DCSF guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (DCSF 0064/2000) (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school by ensuring all staff have the appropriate training in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DCSF guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- provide a satisfactory level of fire safety, ensuring regular fire drills take place in all school buildings (paragraph 3(5))
- produce and implement a satisfactory written policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6))

- ensure staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils at all stages during their time on the school premises (paragraph 3(7))
- ensure attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), appropriate checks are made to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and take this information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that for each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007, the register shows checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; qualifications (where required); the right to work in the UK and, where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school; along with the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3))
- ensure that the register shows that a check was made on each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on or after 1 August 2007 of: his/her identity; right to work in the United Kingdom; and whether an enhanced CRB check was carried out and certificate obtained, or where appropriate, confirmation that he/she is not barred from working in school under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 and the register shows the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(6 and 7))
- ensure that all the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).

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

- provide hot running water in washrooms for pupils, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

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

- provide the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- provide the name and address for correspondence of the Chair of the board of governors (paragraph 6(2)(c))

- provide parents and prospective parents with particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide parents and prospective parents with the particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with a statement of special education need and pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of policies relating to:
 - the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
 - bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and rewards and sanctions (paragraph 6(2)(h))
 - the school's academic performance during the preceding year (paragraph 6(2)(i))
 - the complaints procedures and the number of complaints during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
 - the number of staff employed at the school including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure the complaints procedure sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c)).

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

School details

Name of school	Talmud Torah Yetev-Lev
DCSF number	2046233
Unique reference number	100289
Type of school	Faith: Jewish primary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1965
Age range of pupils	3-12
Gender of pupils	Male
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 675
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 5
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 144
Annual fees (day pupils)	No fees charged
Address of school	111-115 Cazenove Road London N16 6AX
Telephone number	0208 806 3834
Fax number	0208 806 8414
Email address	accounts@satmar.co.uk
Headteacher	Rabbi E Padwa
Proprietor	Talmud Torah Education Limited
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland
Dates of inspection	18-19 March 2008