

Talmud Torah Chinuch Norim

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	355/6007
Unique Reference Number	105993
Inspection number	321816
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Coleman 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).

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 Chinuch N'orim is an independent strictly orthodox Jewish boys' school. It serves a mainly Jewish community in the Broughton Park area of Salford. The school premises are two converted Victorian houses surrounded by a spacious hard-surfaced yard. The majority of boys speak Yiddish as their first language. The school curriculum is divided into *Kodesh* (Jewish studies) taught in Yiddish, and secular subjects (*Chol*) taught mainly in English. The school is open six days a week from Sunday to Friday and the majority of time is spent on *Kodesh* studies. The school aims 'to provide a secure environment in which pupils are keen to learn and where boys receive an education which meets the school's stated religious aims'. The school charges no fees and relies on voluntary contributions from parents and other sources. Government funding is received for three- and four-year-old children who attend the Nursery classes. The schools last inspection was in June 2004.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' outstanding behaviour is the result of very high expectations made by all staff. Pupils make only satisfactory progress overall because the *Chol* curriculum, despite providing well for children in the Foundation Stage, lacks balance and fails to include all subjects well enough in the main school. Provision for the *Kodesh* curriculum is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are first rate. Improvements have been made following the last inspection report including many to the premises but these remain barely adequate. The school now meets the vast majority of the independent school regulations but the small number of non-compliance issues means that the school's provision for welfare, health and safety is only satisfactory.

Quality of education

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The *Kodesh* curriculum is good. It provides clear progression across year groups so that pupils gain the appropriate skills they need as they progress in their Jewish religious education. The core structure of the *Kodesh* curriculum includes *Tefillah* (prayer), *Sedra* (weekly portion), Hebrew reading and study about Jewish festivals. Pupils from Year 1 onwards also study *Chumash* (Bible studies), *Rashi* (commentary on *Chumash*) and Hebrew

writing. In Years 5-7 *Mishnayos* and *Gemoro* (Talmudical studies) are added to the curriculum. Pupils learn to read, translate and understand the sacred texts. It is impressive that pupils are taught in the three languages of Hebrew, English and Yiddish which they learn quickly. In Year 6 Aramaic is also introduced. There is a clear policy supported by suitable schemes of work. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills are underdeveloped in the *Kodesh* curriculum. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good with effective and detailed assessments which are well used to plan for these pupils' needs. Personal, social and health education topics are used effectively to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. There are good cross-curricular links between *Kodesh* and *Chol*. For example, in geography, maps illustrate the journeys of *Yidin* (Jews) across the desert; in mathematics, computation is used to determine the worth of the land as one draws nearer to the *Yoival* year (50th year of the cycle) and in history time-lines are used to indicate the period of the flood.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. Planning covers the expected areas of learning for children of this age. A strong emphasis on developing skills in language and communication together with social skills leads to children making good gains in these areas. The outdoor area is used suitably as an extension of the classroom to enrich the children's learning through structured play. There is a suitable range of resources including costumes for role-play, sand and water, outdoor tricycles and climbing apparatus.

The secular curriculum is satisfactory. Provision for pupils to learn basic skills in English and mathematics is supported by brief schemes of work which outline the main content to be covered. The English scheme makes good provision for pupils who learn English as an additional language. General studies covers aspects of science, history and geography. Visits are made to extend learning such as a trip to Salford museum as part of a study about the Victorians. Many subjects rely on dated text books which are used as a core resource and these are uninspiring for pupils. Too much of the curriculum is characterised by the use of English comprehension-style worksheets and there are few opportunities for investigative or research work through practical activities. The notable exception is the school's leisure club which offers pupils in Years 5-7 a twice-weekly hourly session. The club provides an exciting and stimulating curriculum composed of experiments and enquiry-based learning. For example, pupils have recently designed and built their own individual calculators using simple electric circuits and paper clips. Due to the school's religious ethos, activities involving computers are not provided. Provision for physical education (PE) varies and the amount of time allocated for classes is just satisfactory. The hard-surfaced yard provides for some games and sports activities to take place. The absence of a school hall restricts opportunities for gym or dance work. Pupils in Years 6-8 occasionally visit the local swimming baths. There are no extra-curricular activities because of the long school day.

The proportion of time given to the secular curriculum varies across classes but is satisfactory overall. The school outlines a range across the school of between 18% and 33% for secular studies. Given the long hours of the school day, that education

takes place on six days in the week, and the cross-curricular aspects of the *Kodesh* curriculum, the amount of time for secular education is only just adequate in some classes.

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment in meeting the full range of pupils' needs is good. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Most teaching is good in both the *Kodesh* and secular curriculum. Teachers know their pupils well and understand their needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed and give effective support and guidance. Most teaching is formal and traditional relying on an instructional approach. Pupils respond well to teaching and have excellent attitudes to learning in lessons. They are very enthusiastic and have a strong desire to learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this ensures that pupils get the most out of lessons. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and they are quick to speak out, often forcefully and with determination. Teachers manage classroom behaviour well displaying tolerance, patience and understanding.

In the best lessons teachers use effective questioning techniques to build on pupils' learning. They use their very good subject knowledge to sustain pupils' interest and concentration. In the weaker lessons teachers do not explain to pupils what they are expected to learn and this restricts progress because pupils are unsure about the task and the outcomes expected. Lesson planning varies in quality. Although teachers have clear objectives for pupils learning this is rarely written in a formal plan. Although the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, there is a significant emphasis given to discussion between teachers and pupils, both during and after its completion. Regular weekly tests are carried out to assess pupils' progress in the *Kodesh* curriculum and this is closely monitored. In the secular curriculum spellings, times-table and reading tests provide some assessment information. Whilst teachers make effective use of these outcomes to inform pupils' future learning, there is no whole-school use made of the information to analyse the pupils' progress by year or subjects.

The progress which pupils make is satisfactory. Although they learn well in lessons due to good teaching and their outstanding attitudes, the shortfalls in the secular curriculum, in its balance and coverage of subjects, means that that pupils' progress is uneven and inconsistent across some subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school places great emphasis on teaching pupils to emulate the *sterling middos* (character traits) which underpin the school's aims and ethos and are very successful in achieving this aim. As a result, pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards learning and they thoroughly enjoy school. Regular and consistent praise from teachers helps to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Attendance is above average. Teachers care about pupils' well-being and provide good role models treating pupils with respect and courtesy. In return, pupils are polite and well mannered. *Davening* (prayer) and *Tefillah* (prayer lessons) make a valuable

contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual development. Pupils *daven* 'from the heart' with much concentration and do so melodiously.

The headteacher, principal and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour which is outstanding. In several classes during the inspection *Rebbes* (teachers) stressed the importance of choosing the right path and acting with integrity, such as being honest. Consequently, pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and their moral development is outstanding. Pupils' social development is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage children learn to share and work together well with good humour. Throughout the school pupils are given responsibilities such as organising prayer sessions when there is reading from the *Torah* (Law). Pupils have an excellent knowledge of their own culture and a good understanding of the culture of others. The curriculum includes topics such as 'people of the world' about those who have made a difference, such as Dr Barnado.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is only satisfactory because staff training for child protection and first aid are not up-to-date and procedures to maintain attendance registers do not meet the current requirements. The school has an appropriate range of the required policies. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthy foods by a policy which deters the consumption of snacks and sweets and encourages fruit. This is well supported by parents. Pupils have some opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle through exercise but these are restricted due to limited facilities and variable curriculum provision. Staff supervision is vigilant in and around the school building. Although the school has made some improvements to the premises and its decoration the school acknowledges there is much still to be done.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out all the required checks on staff including those with the Criminal Records Bureau. A central register is maintained to record these checks.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are in need of continuous repair and decoration but are satisfactory. The outdoor play area has rotting and missing wooden boards and is unsafe. This was drawn to the attention of the school during the inspection and immediately taken out of use. The school makes best use of the relatively spacious interior to provide good-sized classrooms. The hard-surfaced yard is a large area and pupils take every opportunity to run around and play. Almost all the regulations are met.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides regular information to parents. Responses from the parent questionnaires to the inspection show unanimous support for the school. Twice yearly reports keep parents informed about their children's progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has in place a suitable complaints policy and procedure.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that staff training is up-to-date for child protection (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that staff training is up-to-date for first aid (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- improve the outdoor play area so as not to compromise pupils' health and safety (paragraph 5(j)).

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:

- Improve the balance of the secular curriculum to ensure that all subjects and required areas of learning are consistently given an adequate amount of time
- Improve the provision for pupils' physical education and ensure it is available to pupils in all classes.

School details

Name of school	Talmud Torah Chinuch Norim		
DCSF number	3556007		
Unique reference number	105993		
Type of school	Jewish		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1955		
Age range of pupils	3-12		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 182	Girls: 0	Total: 182
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0		
Address of school	11 Wellington Street East Salford Manchester M7 2AU		
Telephone number	0161 792 9292		
Fax number	0161 792 4000		
Email address	n/a		
Headteacher	Mrs Eva Margouies		
Proprietor	Mr B Waldman		
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI		
Dates of inspection	13–14 May 2008		