

Hertsmere Jewish Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131955
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	328660
Inspection date	15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	480
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rebecca Hilsenrath
Headteacher	Mrs Michele Bazak
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Watling Street Radlett Hertfordshire WD7 7LQ
Telephone number	01923 855857
Fax number	01923 853399

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: 'What is the progress and achievement of pupils in reading and writing throughout the school and do higher attaining pupils fulfil their potential?' 'How effectively do Foundation Stage staff maximise opportunities for children's outdoor learning?' and 'How effectively has the role of core subject (English, mathematics and science) coordinators been developed in monitoring their subjects?' Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and observations of playtimes and assemblies, scrutiny of pupils' work and documentation, including assessment tracking data, parents' letters and comments and interviews with pupils and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Hertsmere Jewish Primary School is larger than average and over-subscribed. It is a purpose-built, modern Orthodox Jewish school on a new site. The planned opening of the school was done in such a way that numbers built up gradually each year and only in the last few years has the school had pupils in all older year groups. Provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is available for three-to five-year-olds in the school's own Nursery and Reception classes. Average proportions of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Virtually all of the pupils come from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who need extra support with their learning and those with statements of special educational needs is broadly average. While attainment on entry covers the full range, it is broadly average overall.

The school has achieved the Basic Skills, Healthy Schools and Sportsmark Awards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The passion of the whole staff to provide pupils with the best produces excellence of achievement across all aspects. It is based on leaders' and managers' accurate self-evaluation of the school's work, which is used very effectively to boost standards. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement. She works tirelessly to ensure that each pupil has the highest quality of education. The governing body and staff support her extremely well in this. Subject leaders take the initiative in tracking pupils' progress to maximise achievement. This process has developed exceptionally well and leaders have an excellent understanding of standards throughout the school, which is linked to very high expectations. They are swift to put in place effective action if monitoring indicates any slackening of progress for any group. Planning for community cohesion is excellent and, as a result, there are very strong links with the local and wider community. This contributes excellently to pupils' learning and social development, through the opportunities for pupils to learn about the views of different groups and shared community values. The school's capacity for continued improvement and maintenance of high standards is excellent.

Outstanding leadership and management result in optimum gains in pupils' learning. Achievement is excellent and boys and girls of all levels of ability and prior attainment, including potentially higher attaining pupils, make consistently excellent progress. Over three quarters make significantly greater progress than normally expected, because of the challenging targets that the staff set and work towards. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently high. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher Level 5 is well above average.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and is a major contributory factor in ensuring that pupils from all groups, including those of potentially higher attainment, make excellent progress. Lessons are extremely well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and, as a result, lessons progress calmly and with a brisk pace. Great care is taken to make lessons interesting and exciting. Pupils' imagination is fired and they listen with rapt concentration and eagerly join in with discussions, further questions and explanations. Pupils who find learning more difficult are provided with high quality support by learning assistants. This enables them to make excellent progress towards their individual targets. Excellent use is made of resources such as interactive whiteboards and projectors to make instructions clear and lessons interesting.

The curriculum is outstanding. It is extremely well planned, including a remarkably effective balance between the secular curriculum and Jewish studies. This enables pupils to develop into highly confident, articulate and well rounded individuals. Pupils enthusiastically discuss the wide range of extra activities open to them, including visits and residential experiences and clubs, which they say, 'help you in your work and others which are just for fun'. A particularly strong emphasis on pupils learning to be healthy and stay safe is evident. The range of information about diverse backgrounds and lifestyles of people in Britain today is extensive. This careful planning of the curriculum contributes very positively to pupils' personal and social development, which is excellent.

High quality displays in classrooms and corridors celebrate pupils' work and core beliefs and contribute very positively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is based

solidly on the school's positive Jewish ethos, which permeates all that it does. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils demonstrate their enthusiasm by extremely high rates of attendance and enthusiastic participation in everything provided. Pupils' attitudes to school are outstandingly good and their relationships with each other and staff are extremely high. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and happy. School council members undertake their roles wholeheartedly. They talk with enthusiasm about making decisions and about the work they do with other groups, such as other schools and charities. Pupils' excellent personal development, combined with the high standards they achieve in their work, prepares them outstandingly well for the next stage of their education.

High quality care and welfare-support contribute highly to pupils' personal development, while also ensuring that they are well looked after. Pupils' work is marked effectively and with sensitivity, showing them exactly what they do well and what they need to improve still further. This contributes to their high standards. Very challenging targets are set and pupils and their parents have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to achieve them. However, despite this otherwise exemplary practice, not all written documentation complies fully with current Government regulations. Action to tackle this weakness is an urgent priority.

Parents are overall very positive in their views of the school. The comment made by one parent, 'We feel privileged to have a school like this for our children', was typical of many. However, a significant minority of those who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they felt their views and the views of their children were not always taken sufficiently into consideration by the school. Inspection evidence suggests that this is not the case, although more could be done to explain to parents how their ideas are used in making decisions.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get an excellent start to their education in the EYFS. This stems from excellent provision, care and leadership, which ensure that children settle quickly and engage happily in their learning. Excellent arrangements exist to ensure the daily health and safety of children. The excellent care, guidance and support offered to children results in them settling into school life outstandingly well. Excellent use is made of the outdoor area for Nursery and Reception children. Learning is based on exciting, practical activities that cover all six areas of learning for this age. Teaching is excellent. Teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for imagination and play, both indoors and outside. Staff evaluate children's progress in all areas of learning with great care and plan activities to meet their learning needs excellently. They give particular emphasis to developing personal, social and communication skills and the progress children make in this aspect of learning in particular, is outstanding as a result. Children play and work well on their own and with others. They choose which activities to undertake and help themselves to fruit and other healthy snacks. They demonstrate a good understanding of what they are learning and can explain what they are doing. Children work very confidently and happily and cooperate extremely well with each other. They are given an excellent start to their learning in the EYFS and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the time they transfer into Year 1. This is demonstrated by the great enthusiasm and enjoyment children develop for school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the school is fully compliant with current Government requirements in its documentation for safeguarding.

- Show and reassure parents how their views and those of their children are taken into consideration.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Hertsmere Jewish Primary, Radlett, WD7 7LQ

Thank you for looking after Mrs Levenberg and me so well when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you work and play together. Particular thanks go to those of you who gave up time during lunch to talk to us. You are rightly very proud of your school and we really appreciated hearing your views.

You go to an excellent school. You are achieving extremely well and standards of your work in English, mathematics and science are high as a result. This is because your teachers teach you extremely well and take your individual needs into account all of the time when they plan your work. Another reason the progress you make is so good, is because teachers make sure you know what to aim for and how well you are doing. You told us that you feel extremely safe in school and all have considerable confidence in your teachers and the other adults who advise you when you need help. We agree with you and your parents that you are especially well cared for. We think that your behaviour is excellent and you are very considerate of one another. Mrs Bazak wants nothing but the best for you and she and other adults in the school are working exceptionally well to achieve this.

There are two things that we have asked your governors, headteacher and staff to do to make your school even better. These are:

- make sure that the written documentation of how to keep you safe and well cared for is kept in line with the latest government requirements
- make sure that you and your parents are reassured about how the leaders and managers of the school take everyone's views into consideration when decisions are made.

We are sure that you will help to keep up the excellent standards in your school.

We send you our best wishes for the future

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector