

Pardes House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133364
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	328697
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	169
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	21
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Sprung
Headteacher	Mr Robert Leach
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hendon Lane Finchley London N3 1SA
Telephone number	020 8343 3568
Fax number	020 8343 4804

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Inspection number	328697

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pardes House is an Orthodox Jewish school. The proportion of boys with learning difficulties is lower than average. Currently, three boys have statements of special educational need. The school population is very settled although eight new pupils were admitted during the course of the last academic year. Almost all boys speak English as their first language but many speak other languages at home. Boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are catered for in Reception class. Most of them have attended the kindergarten, which is on the same site. An inspection of the kindergarten was carried out in parallel with this inspection.

The school was placed in special measures in October 2006. For the last year, an acting headteacher led school. He was appointed as the first substantive headteacher for many years, in July 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

'I have seen a huge improvement in the education and care of my son over the last year...' This comment reflects the views of many parents who responded very positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The school is fostering an active and growing partnership with parents.

The school is providing a satisfactory education for the boys. There have been marked improvements in the leadership and management, and the provision the school makes for the boys. As a result, their behaviour, attitudes and achievement have improved and are now satisfactory. Those involved in leading and managing the school are in no doubt that there is much more to do. They know this because monitoring and self-evaluation are far more rigorous and incisive than they have been in the past. The headteacher and governors now have an accurate and realistic view of the school's performance. Their recent successes place the school in a secure position to continue to improve. One governor commented, 'This is just the start!'

The boys make good progress in the Reception Year, which they satisfactorily consolidate in Key Stage 1. Recent assessments at the end of Year 6 show a marked rise in standards, most notably in mathematics. Standards are now above average by the end of Year 6. Assessments at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 show that standards are rising and the boys are making satisfactory, although still variable, progress. Analysis of these assessments and the inspection of the boys' work show that the development of their writing skills remains weaker than it should be.

The teaching is satisfactory. Although some lessons are good, too much variation remains to enable the boys to make consistently good progress. With the aim of ensuring more and more lessons challenge the boys to reach higher standards, the headteacher monitors the quality teaching, and the subject leaders check the quality of lesson planning and the standard of the boys' work. The boys' attitudes and enjoyment have benefited considerably from a broader curriculum that includes art and music. The school is looking to make more links between the Kodesh and secular curricula to benefit the boys' broader education. Although the school promotes a very strong understanding and appreciation of its own community there are too few opportunities for the boys to gain an awareness of other and wider communities.

The headteacher, the Menahel and the governors have a shared will and determination to bring continuing and sustained improvement. This unity has enabled and encouraged many of the recent improvements. The headteacher set out a very clear plan for improvement in the short term that, alongside the support of the local authority, has been central to recent developments and changes. However, subject leaders are not yet contributing sufficiently to the strategic direction of the school in the longer term. The governors, with the aid of their adviser, have established robust structure for their work. They have a much clearer understanding of their roles and are now holding the headteacher and subject leaders to account for the school's performance.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When the boys start school, many are at and a few are beyond the levels expected for their age. Their skills are strongest in their social, physical and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.

The boys thrive because the staff team work together very closely, offering a secure environment and a variety of stimulating learning experiences. The confident way that the boys arrive at the start of each day and commence work is testament to the effectiveness of the school's induction arrangements. A key strength of Reception provision is the way that learning develops in both indoor and outdoor environments. Even on a cold November day boys relish opportunities to work outside engaging in imaginative play, physical exercise and writing.

Adults are skilled in their observation of the children's development and through careful questioning and engagement, move learning forward at a good rate across all areas of learning. The information from regular, focused assessments is stored systematically in each boy's portfolio and used to inform the adults' planning for the next steps in learning. This evidence, along with the inspectors' observations of the children at work and play shows that they are achieving well in all areas of learning.

The Reception teacher thoroughly analyses a range of data from the end of Reception year assessments. Last year, most boys moved into Year 1 with good levels of overall achievement. However, the teacher was swift to recognise that whilst they had made good progress in most areas of learning, their performance in communication, language and literacy was slightly weaker, especially in relation to linking sounds to letters and writing. This year, there has been a focus on improving provision in these areas and the children are showing increasing confidence in early writing and developing a good grasp of the sounds of letters.

Parents express positive views about the leadership of the Foundation Stage and the good communication between home and school. The Reception teacher provides a good role model for teaching assistants which helps ensure that boys are safe and conscientiously supported in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure the boys make consistently good progress, particularly in writing.
- Extend the influence of subject leaders so that they play a more significant role in longer term planning for improvement.
- Develop effective links between the Kodesh and secular curricula in order to enhance the broader knowledge, skills and understanding of the boys.
- Increase the range of opportunities for boys to develop a greater awareness of other and wider communities.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The boys make good progress in the Reception Year and reach, and in some cases exceed, the goals set for the end of the EYFS. Over recent years, this good start has been wasted and standards have declined to below average, with too few boys reaching the high standards they should, by the end of Year 2. With a more settled teaching staff the situation is improving. The boys are now making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and the good start made in the Reception Year is being built on well in Year 1.

The steady decline in standards by the end of Year 6 has been halted and reversed. Recent assessments show that all boys in Year 6 reached the expected level in English, mathematics and science at the end of the last academic year. Over half of them reached the higher level in mathematics and science. In English, fewer boys reached this level because weaknesses in writing are still evident throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, greater consistency in progress is emerging. Recent assessments in Years 3, 4 and 5 have been analysed in detail to identify the areas where teachers need to focus their efforts in order to accelerate progress and raise standards further. These test results also confirm that standards are rising.

Boys with learning difficulties are making satisfactory progress because their needs are being systematically and appropriately considered and supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The boys have much improved, and generally positive, attitudes to work. Where tasks are demanding they concentrate and persevere. However, some boys are easily distracted and do not always display strong self-discipline when tasks do not challenge them. Behaviour in the playground is considerate and orderly. The boys say they feel safe and are not aware of any bullying.

The school now provides a healthy sandwich lunch on one day each week and the boys say this is helping them to develop healthier eating habits. One boy explained that he no longer has chocolate spread everyday and that tuna, egg and salad provide more balanced sandwich fillings in his lunchbox. Although the curriculum time allocated to physical education is still somewhat short of expectations, organised exercise and games form the focus of breaks from lessons, and are warmly welcomed by the boys.

The school council is becoming increasingly influential and its members are proud of its achievements. The older boys have very perceptive views of how the school has changed and improved. They say that, 'Lessons are more interesting', and that improvements in behaviour have, 'made a big difference'. Combined with a broader curriculum, these improvements have considerably enhanced the boys' enjoyment of school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

'As a parent of the school for many years I have noticed a clear difference in the past few months... teaching... has improved immensely.' Another parent wrote, 'The teaching has been

erratic but is improving.' These responses are typical of many that recognise the improvements that have resulted in the teaching now being satisfactory.

Thoroughly planned and carefully modified tasks provide different groups within the class with appropriate challenge in some lessons. This was the case in Year 6 where the boys were developing the use of varied structures to shape and organise a story. The teacher maintained the pace of learning and challenge throughout the lesson. Consequently, the boys made good progress. However, in a satisfactory lesson in Year 2 where the boys were writing a factual account linked to their work in science, the challenge for the more able was not maintained throughout the lesson and the pace slowed. As a result, the boys made satisfactory rather than the good progress of which they were capable. Marking, although not entirely consistent, has improved considerably and there are good examples of teachers' comments that give the boys clear guidance on how they can improve their work.

The introduction of specialist teaching of art, music and physical education adds a variety of approach and challenges that result from the teachers' effective use of their subject knowledge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The time available for the secular curriculum is used far more productively. Although it remains somewhat short of that in many schools the addition of art and music has added a dimension to the curriculum that the boys thoroughly enjoy. In conversation, they are almost unanimous in citing the introduction of these subjects as the most important change made over the last year. The humanities curriculum is also developing well with a comprehensive scheme of work now in place to make sure the boys study a range of topics and themes, and visit places of interest. However, some themes are not studied in sufficient depth and do not provide the challenge they should, particularly in respect of other and wider communities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Clear routines and expectations of behaviour are now well established and more consistently applied. This has created an environment that is conducive to the boys enjoying learning and achieving satisfactorily. Appropriate checks are carried out on all adults who work with the boys.

Improvements to lesson planning mean that boys with learning difficulties receive additional support and the tasks they are set match their needs. Those with statements of special educational need are supported satisfactorily.

Recent developments in class and individual target setting now form an important part of the school's drive to raise standards further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's success in establishing a calm, orderly and productive climate for learning have underpinned improvements in teaching, learning and the boys' progress. Effective monitoring of lesson planning, the quality of teaching and the standard of the boys' work is encouraging an increasing consistency of approach but variations remain. Nevertheless, it is

clear that these activities have established a satisfactory and secure foundation for the school to continue to improve. The governors have a comprehensive committee structure in place that is allowing them to oversee all aspects of the school's work. They are now steering the school forward with ambition and have put into place policies and procedures to ensure requirements for equality of opportunities are met. However, the school is not promoting a broad awareness of other and wider communities.

The shared views and united approach of all those involved in leading the school have set a clear direction that has, until recently, been difficult to achieve. However, there is also recognition that there is some way to go before it provides the high quality of education they wish to give the boys. Subject leaders are generally making progress in improving provision in their subjects but they are not sufficiently involved in planning for long-term improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
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**

26 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pardes House Primary School, London, N3 1SA

I have been visiting your school for two years and have seen many changes in that time. When I spoke to some of the older boys on my recent visit, they told me that they welcomed many of the changes that have taken place over the last year. They told me that lessons are far more interesting and that they particularly like art and music. Like me, they can see how important improvements in behaviour have been.

I am sure you know that the school was put into special measures when it was last inspected. Under the leadership of the new headteacher things have improved considerably and my colleague and I judged the school to be satisfactory. This means it is no longer in special measures, although the headteacher and governors know that more improvements are still needed to make yours a good school.

Although the teaching has improved we would like to see it get even better. We have asked the teachers to make all lessons challenging and interesting so that you can make faster progress, particularly in writing. The school has been focusing on putting things right over the last year. We have asked the headteacher and subject leaders to set out longer term plans to make sure the school continues to improve. Part of these plans should be to develop better links between the Kodesh and secular curricula in order to give you more chances to gain broader knowledge, skills and understanding. The school should also increase the range of opportunities you have to develop a greater awareness of other and wider communities.

The youngest boys get off to a good start in the Reception Year and progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory. The good results at the end of Year 6 this year show that things are getting better and that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

I have enjoyed my visits to Pardes House and hope it continues to improve so that you can all achieve the best you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector