

Beis Yaakov High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134196
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	328851
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School (total)	213
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	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Ziskind
Headteacher	Rabbi Goldblatt
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Lane Irlams o'th Height Salford Greater Manchester M6 7RQ
Telephone number	0161 7369286
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This Jewish High School for girls serves the North-West Orthodox Jewish Community based in Salford, Bury and Manchester and moved into its new purpose built building in September 2006. The school is much smaller than average. The school day is longer than in most schools because of the demands of the Jewish and secular elements of its curriculum. Almost all pupils speak English fluently but many speak another language at home because one or both parents are from abroad. There are few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average but is rising over time. Beis Yaakov is a nationally accredited Healthy School.

On the school site there is an independent sixth form that was not inspected. A crèche provides childcare and early education for the children of teachers at the school and if there is space it takes children from teachers who work at other schools. The crèche was inspected at the same time as the school and the report on the crèche is integrated with that of the main school. Provision is available for children up to the age of five, but most children are in the pre-Nursery age group, up to the age of three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and rapidly improving school, in which pupils' personal development and academic achievement are outstanding and which provides the highest quality of care, guidance and support for each individual. Pupils love their school and comment, 'We always believe that our teachers believe in us.' Parents are of the same opinion and add, 'The school invests much effort in bringing out any qualities our children may possess. It caters for the specific needs of every pupil, both academically and emotionally.'

Pupils behave with a maturity which often belies their years and they, too, support their peers exceptionally well. They are welcoming to visitors and display high levels of courtesy to all. They are appreciative of the adults who work with them and mutual respect is the order of the day: at the end of every lesson, both pupils and teachers thank each other with real warmth for their efforts. Pupils are actively involved in taking responsibility, through the school council, for example, and they play an impressive part in many areas of school life. They display an enviable social conscience and their extensive support for charity is well known in the community.

Pupils reach consistently high standards which show improvement each year. The percentage of pupils attaining five or more higher grades at GCSE is quite remarkable, being well above average, and 98% reached grade C or above in both English and mathematics in 2008. Furthermore, progressing over four National Curriculum levels in mathematics across Key Stage 3 is not unknown. Pupils' academic targets are always challenging and they invariably reach or exceed them.

The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils find lessons more interesting and engaging and they respond positively to the realistic levels of challenge from their teachers. There are now more paired and group activities - in a minority of lessons there is too much teacher direction and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

The curriculum provides an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and their opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) are increasing. Jewish Studies and the celebration of the school's faith values permeate the whole life of the school. There is a variety of thematic events which not only reinforce pupils' academic skills but which also enable them to examine their faith in a wider context.

Care and support for all, irrespective of individual ability or circumstances, are the cornerstones of everything the school tries to do. Pupils and staff are made to feel valuable. As a result, levels of self-esteem among both youngsters and adults are high and all are more than willing to make their contributions to school life in all its forms. As members of staff say, 'We enjoy being here because we know our work is valued.'

The Principal is an inspiration to all connected with the school and his vision is shared by pupils, teachers and support staff. The school knows itself well and middle leaders are becoming increasingly involved in evaluating the performance of their subject areas. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good but pupils do not have enough opportunities to explore the history and culture of countries beyond the shores of the United Kingdom. The maintenance of high standards over time and the marked improvements in provision since the previous inspection demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Beis Yaakov is a school in which each individual is equally important.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the crèche is good with outstanding features. Overall, children achieve well. Most start with skills typical of children of their ages. Their good progress is monitored closely by visual and written observations recorded in profile books. These observations demonstrate effective indoor and outdoor learning and that staff use their observations well to plan activities to meet the children's needs. A significant number of children are beginning to learn English as their second language. They achieve well from their starting points and quickly learn to understand and speak English. This is a result of good support from staff who are competent in the children's home languages. Children of all ages feel safe and secure and consequently enjoy their activities and respond well to the motivating experiences provided. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding and they form positive relationships with other children and the staff and make a strong contribution to their small community. Children greet visitors to the crèche with a smile. Their welfare is promoted exceptionally well. They become independent and active learners attaining standards generally above those usually expected in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Resources are extensive and complemented by the adjacent outside play area with appropriately-sized equipment. There is effective leadership and management, as well as an overriding commitment from all staff to the health, safety and well being of each individual child. There are exceptionally good links with parents, who strongly support the crèche.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to work independently in class in order that they can take more responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- Ensure that pupils have more opportunities to become aware of and appreciate the culture and history of countries beyond the United Kingdom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Girls' standards on entry to school are generally above average. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching, coupled with pupils' excellent attitudes to learning lead to pupils making outstanding progress reaching standards that are consistently and exceptionally high by the end of Year 11. Standards at both key stages have risen since the previous inspection and in 2008 almost every pupil reached the higher GCSE grades in both English and mathematics. Irrespective of their levels of ability, pupils invariably reach or exceed challenging targets year-on-year. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well and in line with their peers. Never complacent, the school has introduced a range of very effective strategies to meet the needs of pupils with low basic skills on entry and those who transfer from abroad in their earlier school careers. In addition, its work to improve pupils' speaking skills, an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection, is bearing much fruit in all years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an outstanding feature of the school and its success is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour. The school is a secure and very well ordered community, which is characterised by friendliness, mutual respect and a concern for

the well-being of all. Pupils love coming to school and enjoy their learning with great passion, but attendance remains broadly average because too many miss school to attend family celebrations. Teachers do all they can to make sure that regular attendance is at the forefront of pupils' and their families' minds.

Pupils are articulate and confidently speak of what makes a balanced diet; they have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit. The school council has an enviable reputation among pupils and represents their views with confidence. Pupils willingly take on responsibility for a range of internal community projects, including the production of a school newspaper and the organisation of social and cultural events. Pupils in Year 11, for example, lead prayers with skill and sensitivity. Pupils are prepared very well academically for the next stage in their education and the school is introducing a variety of initiatives to develop their skills which will be valuable in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's emphasis on the sharing of good practice and on encouraging teachers to evaluate their own classroom performance has led to a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning over the past three years. Teaching is now good overall and some outstanding in both key stages. Teachers treat their pupils with the utmost dignity and respect and receive the same in return. As a result, relationships are strong and pupils are delighted when their classmates succeed. Pupils are generally fully engaged in the activities and rise willingly to the high levels of challenge and expectation in most lessons. In an outstanding Year 7 personal development lesson, pupils benefited from creative resources and excellent support from adults, resulting in thought-provoking comments on what makes a good member of the school. The school recognises that there is sometimes too much teacher direction in lessons and pupils are not always required to work independently and to take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A strength of the much improved curriculum is the good balance between Jewish Studies, a major element of the school's faith values, and the requirements of the secular National Curriculum. The Jewish Studies-led personal development programme makes a significant contribution to the raising of pupils' self-esteem through modules entitled 'What makes me me?' and 'What makes you you?' The scheme does much to encourage pupils to engage with others and to see the impact of their actions. Whole-school and year group cross-curricular projects are on the increase, reinforcing pupils' understanding of learning skills and enabling them to see links between subjects. The school has developed applied science and textiles in Key Stage 4, meeting the needs, interests and aspirations of its pupils more closely. ICT, including electronic whiteboards, is now used more extensively in classrooms as a teaching and learning tool. The school is aware, however, that its pupils would like more opportunities for physical education and teachers are considering the introduction of a GCSE course in this subject. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities through the extended services programme and both pupils and parents speak highly of the 'Activities 4 U' initiative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality and extent of pastoral care are excellent. The school recognises the link between pupils' personal development, their academic achievement and the raising of their self-esteem. As a result, the emotional well-being of pupils is a priority of all adults working with them. This is recognised by parents, one summing up the views of many that, 'The atmosphere and environment within the school are unique. Our daughters are extremely well cared for in both their educational and emotional development.' In addition, staff make specific efforts to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the support needed. The talented and committed team of teaching assistants ensures that each individual benefits from all that the school offers. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and fully meet current guidelines. Assessment of pupils' work and academic guidance are now major strengths. Teachers monitor the progress of their pupils closely and intervene quickly and very effectively when any possible underachievement is identified. Pupils, too, are fully aware of the progress they are making, of the targets which are set and of how best they can reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the Principal is outstanding. He has built a strong culture in which every adult supports every pupil to achieve the utmost in their academic and personal development. His vision and direction have given a strong sense of purpose as the school continues its journey of rapid improvement. The senior leadership team is equally committed to maximising the life chances of all pupils and to maintaining high standards and achievement. Middle leaders are developing their evaluative skills well and make a good contribution to the rigorous procedures now in place for monitoring performance in all areas of school life. They have a high regard for their senior leaders who, they say, 'Challenge us to be innovative but support us really well.'

The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well and the elimination of discrimination is central to the school's culture. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion overall and it has good partnerships with other schools locally and beyond. However, the school's own audits demonstrate that pupils do not have enough opportunities to become more aware of the culture and history of other countries. Governance is good and members of the governing body are knowledgeable, highly supportive of the school and challenge the leadership with rigour. The school provides excellent value for money.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	2
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**

Inspection of Beis Yaakov High School, Salford, M6 7RQ

Thank you all so much for your wonderful welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. You were so friendly, polite and considerate to us. We are particularly grateful to the members of the school council who gave up their time to speak to us at Tuesday lunchtime. We also enjoyed Wednesday prayers and found it such a moving experience.

Beis Yaakov is a good school and we know you are very proud of it. Your teachers and all the adults who work with you take excellent care of you and support you exceptionally well inside and outside of lessons. You respond very well to them and to your classmates, your behaviour is outstanding. You have many opportunities to take responsibility and to play a full part in school life. You lead charity appeals and organise a range of after-school activities.

You make quite outstanding progress in your academic work too, because your teachers teach you well and because you want to learn and have an excellent attitude towards your studies. Your standards, particularly in English and mathematics, are so much higher than in most schools and GCSE results have been excellent for many years now. The curriculum is improving all the time and there is a good balance between Jewish Studies and the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Your Principal is excellent and he is supported very well by senior staff and all the other teachers. They know how to help your school go from strength to strength. As you know, nothing is ever perfect and we have asked your teachers to do two things which will help the school to improve even further. First, we have asked them to give you more opportunities to work independently in class so that you can take even more responsibility for your own learning. Second, we have asked them to give you more opportunities to appreciate the culture and history of countries beyond the United Kingdom.

Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection. Please keep enjoying school and looking after each other.