

Beis Rochel d'Satmar Girls' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	204/6296
Unique Reference Number	100293
Unique Reference Number for registered childcare	EY516561
Inspection number	329736
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision¹ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

Information about the school

Beis Rochel d'Satmar Girls' School is an independent day school for girls aged two to 16 years in the London Borough of Hackney. It is owned and maintained by the Beis Rochel d'Satmar Charitable Trust and serves girls from the strictly orthodox Jewish communities of Stamford Hill and Stoke Newington. At the time of the inspection there were 935 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils in the school are from the Satmar community, but there are also girls from other Chassidic communities and Yemen. The majority of girls come from bilingual homes where both Yiddish and English are spoken. The school caters to a community that is insular and the girls have no access to radio, television or internet. The school is accommodated on two sites. Older pupils occupy purpose-built premises on Amhurst Park. Younger pupils are housed at Cazenove Road; Nursery and Reception children are in refurbished accommodation, whilst Year 1 has new purpose-built accommodation.

The school is run almost entirely from voluntary contributions. There are no fees, although parents are expected to pay whatever they can. The school was last inspected in January 2004.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of the education at the school is good and the school meets most of the regulations. It has made significant progress since the last inspection in various areas. These include the completion of fire risk assessments, adequate provision of information, and a draft accessibility plan that has regard for the Disability Discrimination Act. The school has also provided the pupils with an adequate number of washrooms since the last inspection. Pupils are well cared for, feel safe and supported, and thoroughly enjoy their education.

¹ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

Quality of education

The quality of the education and curriculum are good with some outstanding features. Curricula for both *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) and *Chol* (secular subjects) throughout the school are robust and cover a broad range of subjects. This contributes to pupils' good progress throughout their tenure in the school. Consistent progression is evident even though the Junior and Senior departments are effectively separate. There are effective curriculum co-ordinators for all subjects in the Senior department. These co-ordinators work in close contact with the teachers of their subjects and meet with the headteacher fortnightly. *Kodesh* and *Chol* subjects are effectively integrated. This supports pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), cultural awareness and community cohesion. Some examples of this are the sewing and art curricula for senior girls that include strong elements of PSHE and *Kodesh* lessons that are exceptional in the ways that they integrate spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC), science, maths and other subjects. In the Junior department, the headteacher acts as the curriculum co-ordinator for *Kodesh* and there is a co-ordinator for *Chol*. Teachers of both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are keenly aware of the curriculum, follow plans carefully and plan pupils' learning accordingly. In *Kodesh*, worksheets support the curricula of Hebrew and Yiddish reading, *Sedra* (weekly Torah portion), *Pirkei Avos* (Ethics of the Fathers), *Tefilla* (prayer), Jewish History and *Dinim* (law). The teaching and assessment of these subjects graduate according to the abilities of the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties are well-supported by designated staff. Staff work in close conjunction with parents, teachers and the senior management, helping these pupils make good progress

Pupils make good progress at all levels, with evidence of outstanding progress especially in the Senior department. GCSE results for 2008 were outstanding; the majority of pupils achieving A or A* in geography, history, maths, English and art. In the Senior department, the sewing and art curricula are particularly outstanding. In the 2008 Art & Design GCSE, three pupils were amongst the top ten in the country who achieved the highest overall marks.

Overall teaching and assessment are good with some teaching that is outstanding. Where teaching is outstanding, the atmosphere in the classrooms is charged with excited interest, pupils are exuberant in their participation and teachers are dynamic in the ways and methods through which they teach their lessons. Assessment is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods especially in the Junior department and all teachers have good subject knowledge. In the Senior department, teaching is more formal although pupils are given opportunities for self-expression especially in art and sewing classes. Teachers plan their lessons well, follow their plans carefully and are good timekeepers. Plans include effective methods to meet the learning needs of all pupils, and those with learning difficulties are well catered for. Overall, there are effective forms of assessment throughout the school, although recording is not yet fully

developed in the EYFS. The heads of each department are aware of the progress of each pupil and provide support to pupils with difficulties.

Behaviour in the school is exemplary. Pupils are well mannered, responsible and courteous. Pupils enjoy and are enthusiastic about learning and there is a spirit of academia in the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and a major strength of the school.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are very well motivated and have extremely positive attitudes towards all aspects of their school. This is not reflected in the attendance which is below the national average; this is attributed to absences in order to attend family celebrations. Pupils take pride in their work and are anxious to meet the demanding standards set by their teachers. To quote one pupil, 'teachers see potential in every girl.' Another stated in her questionnaire, 'I love school.' The school's strong emphasis on the moral and ethical teachings as taught through the *Kodesh* curriculum permeates every aspect of their lives. This instils in the pupils the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong. Pupils learn to understand the importance Judaism attaches to respecting the law of the land and being law-abiding citizens. They respond exceptionally well to the trust that staff place in them and are eager to take responsibility.

Pupils contribute to the local and wider Jewish community in a variety of ways. They raise funds for *tzedokoh* (charity) and visit local old people's residential homes. Particularly admirable is the scheme organised by the school whereby pupils provide voluntary domestic help to local families. They are given opportunities to learn about public institutions and services in England. For example, they have been to Buckingham Palace and have visited the Science Museum. In addition, Year 11 pupils will shortly pay a visit to the State Opening of Parliament.

Pupils prepare well for their future economic well-being. They gain knowledge and skills in numeracy, typing and sewing as well as fluency in English and Yiddish. Older pupils are taught business studies. Opportunities are provided to learn about other cultures through work in art, history and geography. In discussions with pupils, it was evident that they understand the importance of showing respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and cultural traditions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils are taught to be aware of how to keep healthy and safe through the teaching of science and *Kodesh*. They know what is healthy to eat and that they must keep fit, although opportunities for physical activity are somewhat limited. Pupils are encouraged to walk to school and are taught about road safety in the Junior classes.

The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and ways of promoting good behaviour amongst pupils are clearly stated in its behaviour policy. Sanctions are clearly outlined and a sanctions record is in place. A suitable first aid policy has been produced and three members of the staff have been trained as first aiders.

Clear procedures and policies are in place for educational visits, health and safety, including fire protection, and all meet the requirements. Fire safety training has been provided and fire drills and other checks are recorded. Routine monitoring of health and safety takes place and is adequate. Although there is a child protection policy this has not been implemented satisfactorily and the designated person has not been trained. The staff, including those in the EYFS, have not been adequately trained in the procedures to follow should a pupil make a disclosure.

The school has a suitable three year plan to improve accessibility as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. The school maintains a comprehensive register of admissions but its daily attendance registers, although completed, are sometimes written in pencil and do not have sufficient detail of the reason for absences.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has inadequate recruitment procedures in place to ensure that all staff, including temporary staff, have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. All staff have, or have applied for, the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. However, many applications are pending despite appointments having been made several years ago. As a result, the single central record of staff checks is incomplete. The school's practice is to only recruit personnel who are well known and who are considered to be stable members of the local community, and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that this is always the case, however, checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are necessary to secure the safety of the pupils

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory. The buildings are safe places in which to be educated and the school complies with fire safety and general health and safety regulations. There are sufficient classrooms to enable the teaching of the curriculum. Pupils' work is displayed attractively throughout the school to support their learning by enforcing pride in their work and giving them opportunities to share new ideas with fellow pupils. The main school in Amhurst Park is purpose built; there is an art room and a sewing room. Classrooms on both sites are large enough for the numbers of pupils. Within the new Year 1 block, classrooms are spacious. There is good flooring throughout both sites and the accommodation is maintained in satisfactory decorative order. The number of toilets and hand basins for children is adequate, however, in the early years building there is no hot water. Arrangements for looking after pupils that are ill are good with a designated medical

room in both sites. Both buildings have outdoor play areas which are adequate though small. This is particularly so at the Amhurst Park site, as break times are not always staggered and space to play is limited for the number of pupils out at these times.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents are provided with clear information about the activities of the school and about their children's progress. The school successfully encourages an open dialogue with parents and carers, viewing them as key partners in the policy and decision making process. They are welcome to visit the school at any time and are offered opportunities to attend all school events. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire reveal that they are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education their children receive.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints are clear and comply fully with the requirements. There have been no formal complaints from parents in recent years.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is satisfactory. There is basic planning which is divided into the six areas of learning prepared by the Early Years manager together with the teachers. This planning does not yet include all of the cross-referencing to ensure a comprehensive coverage of all six areas of learning, although, staff are in the process of developing this area to the necessary standards. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the children is satisfactory. However, staff are not always deployed to ensure acceptable staff/pupil ratios and staff are not up to date with the new requirements of the EYFS, including the appropriate level of qualifications. During the course of the year teachers will have the opportunity to work towards the qualifications now needed under the new EYFS requirements. The EYFS action plan shows that staff will shortly attend the required paediatric first aid training.

Teaching and learning are good and take place through the medium of Yiddish. Children are given opportunities to express themselves and develop language skills through Yiddish but are exposed to and start to learn the English language letters in Reception. Similarly, children learn to count in Yiddish but are exposed to and learn the English equivalent at a later stage. These methods of learning are effective and the pupils' language skills are good by the time that they finish the Reception Year. Assessment of children's progress is satisfactory; assessment is ongoing through observations, the results of which are used to inform planning for each individual child. Although this is in its early stages children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile has been adapted by the school but, as yet there is little written evidence of pupils' progress at the end of the Reception Year.

There is a good range of child-initiated activities in which children have opportunities to experiment, investigate and explore. Children enjoy drama, dressing up and role-play; these activities are done well and promote learning effectively. Parents agree that their children are happy, feel safe and are understood by staff. Special mention was made by parents about the enjoyment that their children have in listening to stories, then building their own props and acting. The varied activities offered, ensure that children are happy to try new experiences. For example, children write letters to grandparents and take them to post in the nearby post box. Children develop good fine motor control skills through a variety of activities including cutting and sticking small shapes. They explore different textures and movement of sand and water. Outdoor play is restricted and there are plans to renovate this area to make it more suitable for use on a regular basis.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The school makes good provision for the personal development and well-being of the children. There is a key worker system to ensure that children's individual needs are met. The relationships between teachers and children are good; staff are enthusiastic and caring, resulting in children who feel happy, safe and secure.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), 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:

- implement the written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school, especially ensuring that all staff, including the designated persons, are appropriately trained in child protection (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- maintain comprehensive daily attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupils 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 an enhanced criminal record check has been made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and that an enhanced criminal record certificate be obtained urgently for all members of staff and before or as soon as is practicable after any appointment is made (paragraph 4(2)(b))

- ensure that details of all outstanding checks are entered on the single central register (paragraph 4C(2&3)).

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

- provide hot water in the EYFS building to ensure that the water supply meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(a)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that there is the required ratio of staff to children at all times and with the appropriate level of staff qualifications
- ensure that there is a paediatric trained first aider on site at all times
- ensure that the named person for safeguarding has up to date training and all staff are trained in this area.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?			✓	
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?			✓	
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?			✓	
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?			✓	

School details

Name of school	Beis Rochel d'Satmar Girls' School
DCSF number	204/6296
Unique reference number	100293
EY Registration Number	EY516561
Type of school	Wide age range
Status	Independent
Date school opened	25 October 1965
Age range of pupils	2-16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Girls: 935
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Girls: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Girls: 1
Address of school	51-57 Amhurst Park London N16 5DL
Telephone number	0208 800 9060
Fax number	0208 809 7069
Headteacher	Ms G Smus
Proprietor	Beis Rochel D'Satmar Charitable Trust
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin AI
Dates of inspection	25–26 November 2008