

Kerem School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	302/6068
Unique Reference Number	101381
Inspection number	329738
Inspection dates	30 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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).

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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 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.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Kerem School was founded in 1948 to provide Jewish and secular education for families in Hampstead Garden Suburb and surrounding areas of north London. It serves as the local community primary school for many families in Hampstead Garden Suburb and priority for places is given to those who are members of the Hampstead Garden Suburb United Synagogue, in whose building the school is based. The school works very closely with the community and the synagogue Rabbi is the Honorary Principal. Currently, the school has 192 pupils, between the ages of 4 and 11. It has very close links with Kerem House Nursery, which provides the vast majority of the school's entrants to the Reception class.

The school aims '*to provide the highest standards of secular and Jewish studies within an orthodox Jewish atmosphere of Torah learning and practice*' in order '*to help pupils become observant Jews who are thoroughly at home in both contemporary society and in every aspect of Jewish life.*' The school aims to provide a broad, balanced and rigorous curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, which prepares pupils to gain places at the independent and state secondary schools of their choice. The school was last inspected in November 2003.

Evaluation of the school

Kerem School provides a good quality of education that enables children and pupils of all ages, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), to make good progress and prepare successfully for the next stages of their educational lives. Good teaching and learning take place in a caring atmosphere, and pupils are well behaved, enjoy school, and desire to do well. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The recommendations of the last report have been acted upon and the school meets its aims and complies fully with the regulations for independent schools. Pupils and their parents rightly express a high level of satisfaction with the school.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding in the school, and is good in the Reception class.

In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum comprises *Limudei Chol* (secular subjects) and *Limudei Kodesh* (Jewish Studies). This latter forms 25% of the overall curriculum. *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew) is taught as a modern foreign language, although it clearly makes a strong contribution to the pupils' ability to read and understand their religious texts.

The curriculum in the school is outstanding because it matches all the elements of secular and Jewish studies in a manner, which, whilst guaranteeing a parity of esteem, allows pupils full and strong development of both aspects.

The *Kodesh* curriculum is very well planned. It is varied and ensures that pupils gain the necessary skills upon which to build as they progress in their Jewish religious education and future lives as modern orthodox Jews. The focus of the *Kodesh* curriculum is on reading Hebrew, the study of *Chumash* (Bible), developing a knowledge and understanding of daily and festival prayers, and an ability to *daven* (pray). It also imbues a love of Israel, and establishes a centrality of that country's history as a feature of Jewish life. This is augmented by the provision of separate lessons in modern Hebrew, which, whilst developing linguistic skills, also develops a knowledge of the modern history, culture and social life of Israel.

The strength of the *Kodesh* curriculum is not at the expense of the secular curriculum (*Chol*). The *Chol* curriculum very successfully promotes pupils' literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening, as well as their personal development. The school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Curriculum policies are comprehensive and detailed and are supported very well by medium- and long-term planning. This ensures that pupils can progress well in their learning. Even where restrictions are imposed by the nature of the building, for example in specialist science provision, pupils' nevertheless attain standards which are above, and often well above average. The provision for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT), which is augmented by a new ICT suite, also ensures progress and attainment in those subjects which enables pupils to gain places in the secondary schools to which they, and their parents, aspire.

The curriculum is further enriched by provision of a range of experiences and opportunities for pupils to develop breadth and depth in skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects such as art, history, geography, and music. The use of a specialist music teacher for all classes in the school assures the highest standards in this subject, and music permeates much of the curriculum through cross-curricular links.

Children in the Reception class follow the Foundation Stage curriculum and work towards the early learning goals.. Speaking and listening are well developed. Mathematical development is at the expected level, with greater emphasis on

understanding number than other areas. However, the very nature of the building means that Reception children do not have free-flow access to the outdoor learning area and opportunities for role play and creative play are limited.

Teaching and assessment are good, and ensure that pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory but the majority is good. In the best lessons, teachers accurately match work to pupils' needs and abilities and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils are encouraged to participate in their own learning and are given opportunities to assess their own work. In these lessons, there is a buzz of excitement. However teaching is not always consistent, and in some lessons there is a lack of challenge and work is not adequately matched to the individual abilities of pupils. The pace is slow, the lesson is predominantly teacher led and pupils make little active contribution to their learning. In such lessons, pupils' concentration wanes, and their behaviour leads to low level disruptions. Marking is regular and undertaken conscientiously. In much of the marking, there are constructive comments which make clear to pupils why their work is good or how they can improve some aspects, although this is not universally the case. Assessment is comprehensive. There is not always evidence of how it informs teachers' planning to enable them to support pupils and move them on.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is clearly shown in the religious elements of the school. However, it is manifested in several areas beyond the religious aspect. These include art, and particularly, music. *Tefillah* (prayers) are the nexus where pupils sing their prayers with joy.

Pupils say that they love coming to school. This is not reflected in the attendance figures. Due to concerns by parents for a number of medically very vulnerable pupils, attendance figures are slightly below average. This atmosphere of regard for the well-being of others is a good example of pupils' understanding of what good citizenship means. However, in a more general sense, they make a telling contribution to school life through their roles as prefects and monitors, their participation in drama productions and simply being excellent role models for younger pupils. Pupils' contribution to fund raising, charitable events and their participation in inter-school events and local happenings all help to set their sense of community in a context beyond the school gates. Pupils' personal development combines effectively with their academic development so that when they leave school they are more than ready to face the next educational challenges in their lives and to work towards their economic well-being.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and courteous; confident and articulate. However, there are occasions, often, but not exclusively, in lessons where teachers have not sufficiently engaged them, when their confidence and articulateness outweigh their politeness and courteousness.

Pupils have a good knowledge of public services and institutions in the United Kingdom. In addition, pupils gain a good understanding of race and equality issues

and the pervading atmosphere in the school is one of tolerance, respect and cross-cultural harmony. The school has embarked on a programme to promote this tolerance and ingrained respect through providing for pupils' knowledge with links with other faiths, such as the burgeoning link with Holy Trinity School.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The overall provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The care for the very vulnerable pupils is excellent.

The school takes all appropriate steps to minimise risks to pupils' welfare, health and safety and provides good care for them. All the required policies and records are in place. Procedures for recruiting staff and safeguarding pupils are compliant and a single central record confirms that all the necessary checks have been carried out. Good links with outside support agencies, together with the school's own internal mechanisms, ensure that help is always on hand for any vulnerable pupils. Staff have received relevant training in first aid, including paediatric first aid. The school has very good awareness of procedures relating to child protection, and staff follow them assiduously.

Within lessons and at break and lunch times supervision levels are good and discussions with pupils indicate that they feel safe and secure in school, that bullying is not an issue and that on the rare occasions that they it does occur, the school deals swiftly and effectively with it. Pupils feel '*there is always someone to talk to if you have any worries or concerns*'. Pupils have a good understanding of what is needed to follow fit and healthy lifestyles. However, whilst understanding the restrictions imposed by the building, they would like more physical education and sports lessons. The school has appropriate awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and fulfils its obligations in full.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Reception class is good. Children make good progress because very good transition from the feeder nursery ensures that the school has good prior knowledge of the children. Moreover, routines are clear and relationships between teachers and children are good; as a result, children feel happy, safe and secure. This helps their good learning and their good personal development. Planning shows coverage of all six areas of learning but is not sufficiently detailed to include individual children's needs. The quality of the welfare, health and safety of the children is good. The curriculum is good. It is interesting and relevant, and is instrumental in advancing the children's general and Jewish knowledge and skills. The school is developing more of a balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by children. However, the restrictions of the building, though ameliorated a little by weekly visits to the outside facilities of the Kerem House Nursery, limit the provision for outdoor activities. The headteacher and the head of Key Stage 1 jointly oversee the management of the EYFS well, and they have a good understanding of the new framework and its statutory requirements and of the areas in which they have to improve.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

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:

- ensure the wider dissemination of best practice in teaching by peer observation
- ensure that planning in Reception targets every individual child

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	Kerem School		
DCSF number	302/6068		
Unique reference number	101381		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent Jewish		
Date school opened	1948		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 89	Girls: 103	Total: 192
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,155		
Headteacher	Mrs R Goulden		
Proprietor	Kerem Schools (a co. ltd by guarantee)		
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen		
Dates of inspection	10 October 2008		