

Manchester Junior Girls' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	355/6027
Unique Reference Number	106003
Inspection number	330027
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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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.

Information about the school

Manchester Junior Girls' School was founded in September 1993 in response to demand for additional places for Orthodox Jewish education for girls in the area. The school is a Primary school and Nursery providing a Jewish and general education to girls aged 3-11 years from the local Jewish community. The National Curriculum programmes of study for English, mathematics and science are followed in broad outline for Years 1-6, and the Early Years provision follows the Statutory Framework and Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Nursery is on a separate site but is an integral part of the school. Childcare provision is available on the Nursery site for children age 0-3 years and this is managed by a separate independent proprietor. The school aims: *'to equip girls with the academic skills needed to move confidently into the local Jewish High Schools, and to develop in each girl a deep appreciation for, and a joy in the practice of, the Jewish religion, as laid down by the Torah'*. The school was last inspected in July 2004.

Evaluation of the school

Manchester Junior Girls School provides a good standard of education. Pupils make good progress in their Jewish and secular studies because the school provides a good and interesting curriculum and because pupils show outstanding behaviour and exemplary attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Jewish study lessons. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Their social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The headteacher has ensured that the school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The school is highly successful in meeting its stated aim. All but one of the independent school regulations are met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. Along with other activities, it is successful in meeting the needs and interests of pupils. Jewish studies (Kodesh) are taught each morning and secular subjects every afternoon. The time allocation for each is suitable. There are some good examples of integration between the religious and secular curricula. For example, pupils learn about giving taxes in Temple times and paying taxes today,

they learn to draw a timeline of Jewish history and acquire skills of historical enquiry in terms of sequencing and chronology. The school provides a discrete curriculum to develop pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) through teaching of *middot* (ways in which to behave as a good citizen). The Kodesh curriculum is good overall and enables pupils to make good progress and reach high standards of work in their religious Jewish education. It is well thought out and planned, broad and balanced. With clearly written documentation and schemes of work, it provides many of the skills needed for adult Jewish life and living in this Jewish community. The secular curriculum includes good provision to enable pupils to learn basic skills in English, mathematics and science. Art, geography history and physical education (PE) are also provided. The school premises restrict the quality of provision for PE which is just adequate. In keeping with the school's Jewish beliefs, computers are not used and pupils are not taught about other faiths and religions at this age. Visits to places of educational interest are arranged for pupils and visitors such as the 'bird of prey' man enrich aspects of pupils' learning. Planning for the curriculum, an issue at the last inspection, is now fully in place. Schemes of work outline the teaching programme for each subject and commercial texts are utilised in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers complete medium- and short-term plans which detail the objectives for pupils' learning.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory in meeting the full range of pupils' needs. Teaching in Jewish studies is consistently good. There is good teaching in some lessons and occasionally this is outstanding, but there is also variation in quality between classes and subjects. No teaching is less than satisfactory. In some age groups teachers' expectations are too low, there is an over reliance on worksheets and teaching is uninspiring. Teaching throughout the school is mainly characterised by a formal instructional style. Teachers often use good questioning techniques to consolidate and extend learning. Pupils show outstanding attitudes to learning and have superb concentration in lessons so that they get the most out of the opportunities which the school provides for them. Staff know their pupils well and have excellent relationships with them. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge especially in Jewish studies. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory but is not sufficiently evaluative and does not always indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Teaching assistants provide good support to individual pupils who have particular learning needs, identified through an effective system led by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The deployment of teaching assistants in the EYFS is a strength of the school, and the staff are very effective in supporting and guiding pupils' learning and personal development. Teaching assistants in the main school are less well deployed and can become passive observers in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers provide practical activities where pupils get involved in their own learning and enjoy opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other and extend their understanding. Assessment procedures in Kodesh and secular education are satisfactory. In the secular core subjects, assessment is structured and well monitored, providing clear evidence of the standards which pupils attain. Evaluation and assessment are used inconsistently to inform the intended learning for all pupils in lessons.

Pupils make good progress in their learning in Jewish studies and in secular subjects. Pupils' work in Jewish studies shows that most reach high standards in writing skills, but, because there are limited opportunities for sustained or independent writing, pupils largely achieve the same, regardless of their prior starting points. Pupils demonstrate good Hebrew reading skills and show good use of Hebrew terminology. Many pupils are a little reticent about speaking aloud in lessons, although in conversation with their friends they show a wide and articulate command of English and Hebrew. The results of Foundation Stage Profile assessments reveal that most pupils entering Year 1 do so with skills and knowledge which are significantly above those expected nationally from children of this age. School data from the results of national tests, which are used in Years 2-6, shows that pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The progress made by pupils in the secular subjects is consistently good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's comprehensive Jewish Studies programme, which develops knowledge, learning and language skills, also includes many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and develop an outstanding spiritual awareness. A great strength of the Kodesh curriculum is the development in pupils of good *middos* (character traits) and Torah values. Staff are excellent role models in showing respect and consideration for others, and their high expectations result in pupils developing outstanding moral values. These are lived out through their outstanding behaviour. Pupils are helpful and readily volunteer to do extra jobs around school. They make visits to a local senior citizens' home, have contacts with a school for pupils with severe physical impairment and collect toys for 'Camp Simcha' (an organisation providing relief for children with life-threatening illnesses). Pupils develop respect for all people through the school's ethos, which teaches consideration for family, community and the wider world. Nevertheless, the school rightly recognises that more could be done to enable pupils to gain a greater cultural appreciation and understanding of other groups of people in the local, national and global community.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school has in place a suitable range of policies and procedures to safeguard pupils from harm. Pupils say that they feel safe and can readily turn to a member of staff if they need help. First aid and medical procedures are clearly documented. The policy for healthy eating includes a list of acceptable snacks such as dried fruit; this is shared with parents and enjoys their support. Risk assessments are made including those for educational visits. The most recent fire authority visit found satisfactory provision. Fire drills are regularly practised. There is a limited range of physical exercise

available to pupils. This is restricted by the lack of a school hall and a shortage of outdoor grassed spaces.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All the required checks and safeguarding procedures are in place.

School's premises and accommodation

The school meets the regulations except for that pertaining to the standard and maintenance of decoration. The Reception class and the school offices and dining room are located in an old building in much need of refurbishment. Following monitoring visits by Ofsted, the school has a suitable plan in place to improve the decoration and maintenance of this part of the premises. The Nursery building provides a large hall space which is adequately resourced. Outdoors, there is a small, mainly hard-surfaced, area which is just suitable for the children to use as an outdoor learning environment. The main school building is located adjacent to the offices and is a recent and modern construction. Outdoors, there is a small hard - surfaced area used for playtimes and PE lessons.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides appropriate information to parents including regular newsletters and annual reports about pupils' progress. The reports are informative about pupils' development overall and detail academic standards reached by the individual pupil and the whole class. A school brochure outlines all the required information which parents may need and makes clear the availability of the school's policies upon request. Parents' pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly supportive and full of praise for the school's provision and performance.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures meet all the regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery and Reception class are good in providing for children's needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Good provision ensures good progress across most of the areas of learning. Outdoor provision is just adequate and the school is mindful of the need to take every opportunity to make maximum use of their basic facilities. Outcomes are also good for each of the Every Child Matters areas of being healthy, staying safe, enjoy and achieving, positive contribution and economic well-being. Every child is recognised as an individual and planning is structured closely to the EYFS curriculum guidance. Children's learning and development are good as a result. The self-evaluation of the leadership is accurate.

Children achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and learning, and the warm secure relationships between staff and children. Children make good progress so that by the end of Foundation Stage the vast majority achieve at a level above those expected for similar children. Staff support learning well. Regular observation and assessment help to maximise children's achievement and progress. Play is very purposeful and there is a good balance of adult-guided and child-initiated activities. The EYFS meets all the welfare requirements. The provision for children's personal development and well-being is good. Children show a high level of enjoyment and fully engage in the many interesting and stimulating activities. They learn routines quickly such as washing hands and tidying the table. They communicate well with each other in groups and with the adults who care for them, though they are hesitant when talking to visitors. Good leadership and management are provided by the staff team.

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 the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- improve the standard and maintenance of decoration in the old school building (paragraph 5(q)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- share more widely the good and sometimes outstanding teaching practice in the school, and ensure that lesson planning takes full account of the prior learning of all pupils
- make more of opportunities to broaden pupils' cultural development.

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	Manchester Junior Girls' School
DCSF number	355/6027
Unique reference number	106003
Type of school	Jewish
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1993
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	196
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	10
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	2
Number of pupils who are looked after	0
Annual fees	£2280
Address of school	Undisclosed
Telephone number	0161 7400566
Fax number	0161 7954588
Email address	beis.chinuch@yahoo.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Lieberman
Proprietor	Rabbi A Ehrentreu
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI
Dates of inspection	2–3 December 2008