

Tashbar School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	355/6024
Unique Reference Number	106002
EYFS Reference Number	EY404567
Inspection number	330041
Inspection dates	29-30 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher

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

Tashbar School is an independent strictly orthodox Jewish boys' school which opened in 1990. It serves a vibrant and growing Jewish community in the Greater Manchester area. The school premises are centred around a large Victorian building surrounded by a spacious hard-surfaced yard. The majority of boys speak English as their first language. The school curriculum is divided into *Kodesh* (Jewish studies), and *Chol* (secular subjects). The school is open six days a week from Sunday to Friday and the majority of time is spent on *Kodesh* studies. The school aims to provide an excellent education guided by giving over the principles of a true '*Toradik Chinuch*'. There are 428 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven years. Government funding is received for three- and four-year-old children who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school's last inspection was in November 2004 and an inspection report for the early years provision was carried out in January 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the Tashbar School and are right to be so as it provides a good education. The pupils are very happy at the school. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Care and welfare are outstanding and this, coupled with the pupils' outstanding behaviour, is the result of high expectations made by all adults. Pupils make good progress in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* because of the well-structured curriculum. Progress is satisfactory in the EYFS because the school is still developing this new curriculum. Pupils' attitudes to learning are first rate. The school is constantly seeking to improve and now meets all of the regulations except two.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. The *Kodesh* strand of the curriculum is particularly robust and includes clear guidelines with regard to Hebrew reading, *Chumash*, *Mishna* and *Gemoroh*. This is complemented by an extensive general knowledge curriculum that affords the pupils with a good grasp of the many topics that are integral to Jewish life. It sets out progression from year to year in ways that enable the pupils to make good progress in their learning and provides scope for pupils who are gifted and talented to excel. The curriculum promotes human and social development

significantly and is the basis for an exceptional atmosphere of moral and social growth in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are especially well catered for.

The *Chol* curriculum is well organised and planned with respect to literacy and numeracy and the school has recently introduced an impressive science curriculum. Pupils make good progress in these subjects. Schemes of work are in place for all areas of learning, although some are planned in more detail than others. The pupils gain significant experience in the technological, physical, aesthetic and creative areas of learning within both the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula; however, the school accedes that skills in these areas would be enhanced if formed into more detailed schemes of work. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) are covered within both strands of the curriculum. These reflect the aims and ethos of the school and are conveyed through wall displays and extra-curricular activities. Pupils, especially those in the older years, are prepared for adult life by the PSHE aspects of the *Chol* curriculum and a *Kodesh* curriculum that effectively prepares the pupils to become upstanding members of the orthodox Jewish community.

Teaching and assessment are good, with some outstanding features. Teachers of both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their subjects, and clearly enjoy good relationships with their pupils. The strong sense of shared purpose among the staff allows them to work as an effective team across subject areas.

In the best lessons, opportunities are taken to widen pupils' understanding and to make cross-curricular links; for example, a supervised snack break developed into a rich learning experience including team activities, drama and science, while a *parsha* (Biblical portion) lesson included discussion of construction materials and processes.

Lessons are well planned and well paced, making good use of the resources. Humour, drama and practical examples are deployed effectively to convey complex concepts. Pupils respond well, are eager to participate and quick to carry out instructions. They are encouraged to think independently and to co-operate with one another in paired and group activities.

Teachers' good knowledge of their pupils allows them to target work accurately at appropriate levels, but this knowledge is not always recorded. While regular assessment is carried out effectively, the marking of pupils' work does not always make clear how pupils can improve.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding, as is their behaviour. Torah values underpin the school's ethos and this shared body of ethics enables staff to clearly communicate their expectations to pupils; for example,

a boy involved in a disagreement in the playground was told which specific areas of *halacha* (Jewish Law) he had contravened. Pupils support one another well, in particular accepting and supporting their classmates who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Pupils are taught to care for one another and the wider community as an integral part of school life; for example, the reading of Psalms as reading practice was followed by the traditional prayer for the sick. The school regularly visits the local old people's home and has organised communal events such as a *Hachnosas Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll reception) and a prayer session for all local schools as part of a worldwide event.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of school life. The library is run entirely by Year 6 pupils, who also set up the hall for and deliver speeches at Key Stage 2 assemblies. Year 6 produces two shows annually for the public, while Year 5 write and produce their own Chanukah show. Pupils decide how the money they raise by sponsored events should be spent and are also responsible for anti-litter initiatives. Such opportunities help to prepare pupils for their adult lives and general economic well-being.

Pupils learn about government and other national institutions through literacy, where they carry out a 'Prime Minister for the Day' activity, and geography, including studying the European Union. They are familiar with democratic processes and vote themselves as part of various school activities.

The school has a written Cultural Harmony policy which promotes anti-racism and ensures that pupils learn about a wide range of different cultures, mainly through geography and literacy. The school's involvement in wider community activities brings pupils together with members of other groups whom they would not otherwise have met.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils is outstanding. All relevant policies and training are in place and are implemented effectively by a caring staff to whom these issues are of paramount importance. Pupils feel safe and valued, and although bullying happens infrequently, know the procedures if they ever feel threatened by fellow pupils. There is an ethos of healthy living in the school and this is evident through the school policy regarding snacks, relevant strands of the curriculum and wall displays, for example on physical exercise.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out all the required checks on staff including those with the Criminal Records Bureau. A central register is maintained to record these checks.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises are centred on a converted Victorian house, augmented by several purpose-built extensions, a separate annexe block housing Key Stage 1, and a number of demountable units on a higher level for children in Reception. The Nursery occupies the ground floor of a separate building, the upper floors of which are currently vacant. The school has planning approval for a complete redevelopment of the site, but is currently unable to finance it.

The premises are generally in satisfactory decorative order and offer satisfactory facilities for safe and effective learning, bearing in mind their age. Cracks are visible in some ceilings, but the school has had the building regularly checked by professionals and is satisfied that it is structurally sound. There is a rolling programme of minor improvements and redecorations and wall displays have been used to good effect throughout the building. Hinge protectors have been fitted to all doors and fire extinguishers are regularly serviced.

Although there are sufficient toilet facilities for the number of pupils, there are insufficient washbasins in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Toilet areas are cleaned twice daily and air-freshening units have been installed.

The main playground has been completely resurfaced and an adventure playground area has been constructed. This is very popular with pupils of all ages, and is only opened when there are sufficient staff on duty to ensure that it is adequately supervised.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is good. As specified in the school prospectus, parents of pupils and prospective pupils have access to all of the policies required by legislation, including academic performance during the previous year, and to procedures relating to complaints. As one parent states, 'This is my third child in the school and they are happy, well cared for and all make good progress.'

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has in place a suitable complaints policy and procedure.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of provision in this phase is satisfactory. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are generally expected for three-year-olds, and they make good progress in this setting, and in particular in their personal development. They demonstrate good control and independence, for example when reciting *brochos* (blessings) before eating. They are keen to learn the *aleph, beis* (Hebrew alphabet) and enjoy shaping the letters with lollypop sticks and corks. The *Kodesh* curriculum is integrated within the six areas of learning effectively so that children learn about *Bereshis* and *Noach* (the weekly Biblical portion) through songs, games and construction toys. The children play well on their own and with others and learn to communicate in both Hebrew and English. They are happy at school and have settled in well. Staff in the Reception classes have not yet had training in the EYFS curriculum and teaching and progress are no more than satisfactory because children of different abilities often do the same work and lessons are very structured and teacher directed. Assessment is not always used to help children develop even further. Children play outside at set break times but there is limited planning of the use of the area for outdoor learning. Learning Hebrew enriches the curriculum and enables children to further develop their linguistic skills and their awareness of different cultures. Welfare, health and safety procedures are good and children are well cared for. There is good early identification of children who may be experiencing difficulties, with strong support provided, including the use of outside agencies and strong links with parents. Leadership and management are satisfactory. At present, the headteacher takes responsibility for overseeing the provision as there is no one to take on this role. The school recognises that training in EYFS is needed and that the Nursery and Reception staff need to work more closely together.

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 two.

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

- provide sufficient washbasins for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 (paragraph 5(k)).

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

- ensure that planning follows the six areas of learning in the Reception classes.

What the school could do to improve further

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

School

- formalise schemes of work for art and design, physical education and design and technology
- ensure greater consistency in assessment and record keeping across the school.

EYFS

- review and improve management to ensure consistent practice in the EYFS curriculum
- develop the outdoor area as an outside classroom.

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	Tashbar School		
DCSF number	355/6024		
EYFS number	EY404567		
Unique reference number	106002		
Type of school	Jewish Day School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1990		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 407	Girls: 0	Total: 407
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 21	Girls: 0	Total: 21
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,460		
Annual fees (childcare)	£1,200		
Email address	N/A		
Headteacher	Mr A Pinczewski		
Proprietor	Tashbar Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher AI		
Dates of inspection	29-30 October 2008		