

T'Mimei Lev School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	352/6062
Unique Reference Number	135027
Inspection number	331318
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
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

T' Mimei Lev school is in Salford, Greater Manchester. The school was established in 1997 and rents rooms in a Jewish Community centre. It is a school that provides full time education for Jewish children who have behaviour and/or learning difficulties and disabilities. At present, 4 Reception aged children work according to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and one older Key Stage 4, pupil follows a tailor made curriculum suitable to his individual needs. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and the others are in the throes of the statementing process. The school is associated with an integrated nursery in the same building. It is the school's desire, where appropriate, to help its pupils return to mainstream Jewish schools. However, the school continues to be available to accommodate any pupil whose needs are better met at a specialised school.

The school was previously inspected in 2004.

Evaluation of the school

T'Mimei Lev school meets its aims of being at the heart of the Manchester Jewish community and provides a good quality of education. The school looks after the pupils well and following their initial start at the associated Torah Tots nursery. The attention given to understanding individual needs through a multidisciplinary and holistic approach for both *Kodesh* (Religious Studies) and *Chol* (secular work) leads to good progress. Pupils' personal development is good as they benefit from attending a school where Torah values and *middos* (moral education and good behaviour) have a high priority. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and meets all but one of the regulations because some staff training is needed.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good. The curricula for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are supported by good, solid planning that utilises time constraints effectively and schemes of work that are personalised for each pupil. The school successfully integrates *Kodesh* and *Chol*, thus providing the pupils with access to a

broad range of cross-curricular topics in ways that support pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties.

Older pupils make good progress in life skills, communication, language and literacy. Pupils are also taught to keep fit through the regular use of the swimming pool and exercise rooms that are on site.

The school provides children in the early years with good opportunities for learning and development. An exciting range of activities such as making a fruit salad, playing with keyboards, planting seeds and listening to chime bells enables children to make the most of the internal learning environment. Planning for the outdoor classroom is not so specific and there have been few outings or visits.

The atmosphere is calm and caring so children feel safe and secure and the provision for welfare, health and safety is good. They enjoy their learning and behave well. Children show a good awareness of safety, love jumping in the ball park and driving the bikes sensibly. They eat healthy snacks and know they should drink lots of water. Adults work hard to help the children settle in and they slowly gain confidence and become part of the family atmosphere.

Children make good progress and achieve well across all the areas of learning, particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy both in Hebrew and English. They are helped to learn and develop well. Planning is detailed and clearly linked to their learning programmes.

The early years manager demonstrates a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years' provision. She leads well and has build up a strong team with clear plans to bring about improvements, such as developing the outside area. Safeguarding procedures are fully in place, with all children having key workers who know them and their families really well.

The warm, supportive atmosphere in the school is conducive to learning. Pupils are encouraged to excel and are stretched according to their abilities in a genuine effort to enable them to join mainstream schools when possible and to make positive contributions to Jewish communal life. Positive encouragement is used extensively and pupils of all ages succeed in their studies because they are encouraged to appreciate their own unique potential.

The quality of the teaching and assessment is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, know their pupils well and work in close conjunction. This enables them to utilise a wide range of resources, practical activities and teaching methods. They are beginning to realise the value of learning through the use of information and communication technology. Teachers plan lessons that are 'tailor-made' for individual pupils whilst including all pupils in group lessons. Assessment is detailed, especially in relation to individual education plans and there are clear targets set that ensure gradual improvement in learning.

Teachers are very patient and understanding. The emphasis placed on enabling pupils to behave responsibly is evident in planning, teaching and supervision. However, activities are not always manageable when not enough staff are in the classroom. In addition to this, teaching is not always properly focused, and lacks clear learning objectives. For example, some prayers are said by rote and activities sometimes overlap.

Pupils are encouraged and are given opportunities to think for themselves. An example of this is a reading book produced by a Key Stage 4 pupil that is made up of personal photographs and sentences. The school makes good use of additional support systems from a wide range of special needs therapists who work on site, and there is an educational psychologist attached to the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as a result of the school's strongly embedded emphasis on personal development. Children proudly show their *mitzvah* (good deed) notes, and daily give a penny to charity.

The religious ethos of the school contributes to an environment where trust and mutual respect are steadily fostered. Pupils are helped to settle and feel part of their community and transition between the nursery and the reception class is well thought through. Torah values underpin the work of the school, so that both behaviour and attendance are good.

Effective behaviour management supports pupils, helping them towards a growing awareness that their conduct affects others and has direct personal consequences. This development is further supported through an additional social and life skills programme, to enable the pupils to be integrated and live a full life within their community. Older pupils attend the *yeshiva* (boy's seminary) daily, for *davening* (prayers) and breakfast and this is as beneficial for the *brochim* (seminar students) as it is for the T'Mimei Lev pupils themselves.

Pupils fully appreciate their own culture, given that it is the main feature of the school, and their respect and tolerance of other cultural traditions is also evident in their dealings with adults who visit the school, and their neighbours.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school ensures that the welfare, health and safety of its pupils are good. An appropriate range of policies is in place to promote the safety and well-being of pupils in all circumstances, including first aid and fire procedures. Parents, staff and

pupils report that they appreciate the warm, family atmosphere provided by the school. However, new members of staff have not yet received recent formal training in Child Protection. Hence, the school does not meet the regulation in this area.

Healthy living is in keeping with Torah values, and this is an integral part of school life. Clear policies to promote good behaviour ensure that pupils learn in a calm, positive atmosphere. Rules are simple and clearly understood by all.

Although attendance is good, the school needs to work more closely with parents to insist on punctuality. Admissions and attendance registers are kept in accordance with regulations. The school takes seriously its duty with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has access for the disabled and disadvantaged.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level. All the required employment information is recorded on a central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The schools' rooms are in a community centre that also accommodates an associated nursery school and other adult activities including acts of worship, fitness training and swimming. Suitable arrangements are made to ensure that pupils' lessons are not interrupted and that their welfare is safeguarded. Staff are alert to the issues of working in a community building. The main building is substantial and in satisfactory condition. The classroom is well maintained and pupils' work is celebrated in displays to make an attractive environment. Pupils have regular access to a gym and they eagerly await their time in the swimming pool in the centre which is both well maintained and appropriately supervised. The whole ground floor of the building is suitably adapted to allow easy access to all pupils. Furniture and fittings are suitable for the present pupils. There is appropriate provision for a medical room.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

With such a small number of pupils who have very particular needs there is no whole school information published about academic performance since the school does not take part in any national tests. Individual records are readily available to parents who have easy access to teachers, receive an annual written report and have regular meetings about how well their child is doing. Each pupil has a home-to-school book in which both teachers and parents write comments. This is a successful means of communication. The school has good relationships with the local authority regarding providing information about the progress of the pupils with statements of special educational needs. Information for annual reviews is supplied as required.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's policy and procedures for handling complaints meets the requirements.

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 one.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all staff have up to date training in Child Protection and Safeguarding (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- make greater use of the outside area as an outdoor classroom
- organise outings and visits for the children in the Reception class.

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	T'Mimei Lev School		
DCSF number	3526062		
Unique reference number	135027		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY511558		
Type of school	Special needs school for Jewish pupils		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1997		
Age range of pupils	4 - 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 2	Total: 3
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5000		
Address of school	Manchester Community Jewish Centre Bury Old Road Manchester M7 4QY		
Telephone number	0161 795 2253		
Fax number	0161 795 2253		
Email address	torahtots@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Mina Gold		
Proprietor	Mr G. Glickman		
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher		
Dates of inspection	21–22 January 2009		