

Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	302/6092
Unique Reference Number	101388
Inspection number	333813
Inspection dates	23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Dr Anna Coyle

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 students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding students and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls is an independent day school serving a section of the strictly observant Jewish community in north-west London. It was established in 1980 and moved to its current premises in 1998. At the time of the inspection there were 261 students on roll aged 11 to 17. Four students have statements of special educational needs. There are two students for whom English is not their principal language. The school aims that, 'Girls should be intellectually developed and stimulated in all areas of their learning and that they should feel happy and fulfilled in their studies.'

The school was last inspected in November 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls provides a good education for its students, which is based on a Jewish Studies (*Kodesh*) curriculum and a secular studies (*Chol*) curriculum. It achieves its aims successfully within the family environment of the school whereby students feel safe and happy. The school is a welcoming, caring environment and ensures that all students benefit from a varied curriculum which provides well for their individual needs. Students enjoy learning and, assisted by an appropriate curriculum and good teaching, make good progress. They make particularly rapid progress in Years 10 to 12 and attain high standards in public examinations. The school has maintained its good quality provision since the last inspection, although it does not currently comply in full with a few of the regulations relating to safeguarding students and providing information to parents.

Quality of education

Both the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula are good and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work; both strands of the curriculum are implemented effectively, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Students have good access to all of the specified areas of learning and subject matter is appropriate to the ages and aptitudes of all students, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Students who do not have English as their principal language are integrated well and

provided with suitable work to help them learn. Students are well prepared for the seminaries that they attend after they leave the school and they are well equipped for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Although different aspects of music are covered at varying levels, such as the 'Annual School Show', 'Summer Music Project', and *Seuda Shlishis*, (the third meal of the Sabbath), the school is now actively looking for a music teacher. Music is not taught formally in the school. The school has an appropriate policy for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and aspects of PSHE are covered in physical education (PE), home economics *Kodesh*, child development and other subjects. However, there is no written syllabus to ensure the effective and consistent planning and coverage of the intended learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and has been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Teaching is sometimes outstanding; for example, in English and mathematics in Years 10 to 12. This is because lessons proceed at a very brisk pace and learning is carefully structured to ensure that students build effectively on their prior knowledge. Consequently, students make good progress and attain high standards by the time they leave Year 11, as shown in their well above average results in the public examinations. They also attain high standards at the end of Year 12 where, in the past, all students have gained two A-levels in one year.

Staff are calm and positive with the students. They successfully encourage outstanding behaviour and quiet respect which leads to very positive relationships between students and with staff. Skilful questioning and a good match of work to the different needs of students has a very positive effect on their learning. These strong features help to create a purposeful environment in which students are encouraged to do well. Lessons are carefully planned and staff have high expectations. They provide sufficient challenge to students so that no time is wasted in lessons.

Support staff are deployed effectively to guide those who have learning difficulties and specific language needs to help them make good progress. The school's plentiful resources are used well. Students are given activities which are designed to stimulate their interest and imagination, as seen in displays of artwork in Year 11, which are of a very high standard. Teachers make good use of assessment information to help them plan and match work to the capabilities of the students. They keep careful records of students' progress, and update the information systematically. The marking of students' work is thorough and sufficiently detailed to help them know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Students are encouraged to assess their own work and that of their peers, which helps them to be independent and take responsibility for their own learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students enjoy their learning and this is seen in their good attendance. They are motivated well to apply themselves and achieve good results. Their behaviour is outstanding. The religious ethos of the school enables students to distinguish between right and

wrong and respect the law: '*Dina d'malchuta dina*' ('The law of the land is law'). Students are provided with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England through civics and history lessons and through regular assemblies and class discussions. Students prepare effectively for their future economic well-being through civics lessons and through the religious moral guidance that is at the heart of the school. Staff members act as good role models to prepare the students for their futures. The school enables the students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through an effective *mechaneches* (mentoring) system and through opportunities to express themselves and learn independently. Students make a positive contribution to the school community, through opportunities to speak publicly at assemblies and events, and to the wider community through fund-raising drives for charity. Students are involved in rotas that assist needy members of the local community on a regular basis.

School projects help the students share their creativity with the community and help them develop their knowledge and appreciation of the roles that they play in society; examples are the Bat Mitzvah project, the Year 9 project, and the annual show. An effective prefect system encourages personal responsibility and bolsters confidence. Students have a keen understanding and respect of their own culture. They are knowledgeable of other cultures through their studies in history, geography, art, home economics, English and English literature. Assemblies and class discussions promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students. It has an appropriate range of policies that are implemented effectively. These include anti-bullying procedures, arrangements for educational visits and for ensuring child protection. The admission and attendance registers meet the regulations and the school fulfils the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. The day-to-day procedures for safeguarding students are effective, and the designated person has received recent training to update her knowledge of child protection. Criminal Records Bureau checks have been made on all staff. While recruitment procedures meet the regulatory requirements, there is no written policy for the recruitment of staff. This is an important omission that the school is currently rectifying. There is a clear policy for first aid which is implemented effectively and staff have received appropriate training. The school ensures that fire safety and risk assessments are carried out appropriately and that records are maintained as required. Students say that they feel safe and that they are well cared for by adults. The school places a good focus on healthy diets through the *Dinim* curriculum and science. Pupils are taught the importance of *Kosher* foods and appropriate techniques for preparing food. Students eat healthily and enjoy nourishing packed lunches that they bring in from home. They take regular exercise in the outdoor playground and have lessons with specialist teachers for PE, using the school hall when the weather is wet.

Parents receive informative written reports twice a year for each student's individual progress and attainment, together with consultation evenings for parents, but they do not receive sufficient information about the school's results of public

examinations. Insufficient information is provided to parents, carers and others about the proprietary body and its policies.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

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

- prepare a written policy for the safe recruitment of staff (paragraph 3(2) (b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for information to parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must provide parents with:

- particulars of the address and telephone number of the proprietary body's registered office (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- particulars of the name and address for correspondence for the chair of governors (paragraph 6(2)(c))
- particulars of the school's policy on arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)).

In addition the school should make parents aware that the following information is available and that they may request it:

- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and the sanctions for misbehaviour (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the curriculum by providing a written syllabus for PSHE and extending the current provision for music.

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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School details

Name of school	Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls
DCSF number	302/6092
Unique reference number	101388
Type of school	Secondary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1980
Age range of pupils	11–17
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Girls: 261
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Girls: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Girls: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,220
Address of school	Stratford Road Hendon London NW4 2AT
Telephone number	020 8203 4322
Fax number	020 8202 8480
Email address	c.burke@bjgs.org
Headteacher	Mrs D Steinberg
Proprietor	Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls Limited
Reporting inspector	Dr Anna Coyle
Dates of inspection	23 June 2009