

Michael Sobell Sinai Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 101549 |
| Local Authority | Brent |
| Inspection number | 335745 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 March 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | David Wynford Jones |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 670 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Clive Goodman |
| Headteacher | Vivienne Orloff |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 January 2010 |
| School address | Shakespeare Drive Kenton Harrow HA3 9UD |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent observing learning. Inspectors visited 28 lessons and observed 22 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe, the school improvement plan and 165 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress in writing throughout the school and in mathematics in Key Stage 1
- the impact of the school's work in promoting pupils' cultural development
- the contribution of leaders and managers at all levels in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

Michael Sobell Sinai is a large voluntary-aided Modern Orthodox Jewish primary school. It is located in Kenton but serves the Jewish community from a much wider area. It is the largest Jewish primary school in Europe. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder are mainly from Other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is growing and is greater than that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or difficulties is broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils holding a statement of special educational needs is marginally above the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving during the school year is smaller than in most schools. The school holds, among others, the Healthy School and the Investors in People awards.

Provision for religious education did not form part of this inspection. It was inspected and reported on separately. The onsite privately run after-school club was not inspected as part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which provides good value for money. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and make a good contribution to the community. They are polite and effectively embrace the school's ethos of welcoming new pupils and visitors to the school. The lack of opportunities to work and play on a daily basis with pupils who hold other religious beliefs, values and customs is dealt with well through links with other schools. Pupils have a good knowledge of other cultures and are well prepared for living in today's pluralistic society.

Children enter the nursery at the age of three with skills and knowledge which are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They are joined by a further 30 children at the start of the Reception class. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their progress continues as they move through Years 1 to 6. However, progress is variable between classes and year groups. This is because of inconsistencies in teaching. In some classes, expectations of some pupils, particularly the more able, are not always sufficiently high. The school is addressing this issue through more rigorous use and analysis of assessment information. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating. Pupils tend to make better progress in their writing than in mathematics and science. This is because marking is more informative. Pupils have a better understanding of their targets and are clearer about their next steps for improvement. Their attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 is typically above average and occasionally exceptionally high. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are good. A strength of the school is the good level of care provided for the pupils who are vulnerable, those who are learning to speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables them to progress as well as their peers.

The school is well led and managed and has progressed since the last inspection. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and systems updated. The information is used effectively to hold staff to account and to set challenging targets. The senior leadership team has worked effectively with governors to complete major building developments. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well established in the purpose-built accommodation. However, the use of the outdoor areas as natural extensions of the classrooms is still in the early stages of development. Pupils in other year groups have moved classrooms so that the school is structured to enable parallel classes to share sections of the school. This facilitates opportunities for parallel classes to work together closely and provides pupils with equality of opportunity of access to the curriculum. Middle managers are enthusiastic, supportive of the school and understand their roles and responsibilities. However, their contribution to whole-school development

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is limited by too few opportunities to undertake their role in observing others and promoting good practice. Subject coordinators' action plans are detailed but the measures by which they can be evaluated are not always clear and precise. Self-evaluation procedures are thorough and correctly identify the school's strengths and areas for development. However, the school's view of its overall effectiveness and the majority of the underpinning grades are higher than the inspection team's judgements. Nevertheless, based on the improvements since the last inspection, the determination of the senior leadership team, the commitment of all staff and effective governance, the school has a good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure good practice in teaching is promoted throughout the school by:
 - giving staff more opportunities to share and build on good practice
 - having greater consistency in the use of assessment information to provide more challenge for all pupils
 - extending the good marking practices in English to other subjects.
- Enhance the effectiveness of middle managers by:
 - providing them with more opportunities to monitor and evaluate provision and its impact on pupils' learning and progress
 - reviewing their action plans so that the criteria by which the actions are measured are precise.
- Develop the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor areas as natural extensions of the classroom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and appreciate the school's security arrangements. Their attendance is above average. They are keen to take responsibility and want to become prefects, peer mediators and members of the school council. They raise funds for national and international charities and take part in local events. Pupils are reflective and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They get on well and are respectful of each other but there are occasional disputes. Their behaviour is good but sometimes slips when lessons do not capture their interest. Pupils' good understanding of healthy living is evident in their knowledge of healthy eating and their understanding of the importance of taking physical exercise. This has contributed to the school receiving Healthy Schools Status.

In the vast majority of lessons, pupils are attentive. They speak positively about their teachers and support staff. They enjoy the opportunities to work together in pairs and larger groups. Pupils are motivated and respond well to challenge, but some say the work is sometimes too easy, especially in English and mathematics. The content of pupils' writing is developing well. They write for a range of purposes and audiences. Their use of punctuation, vocabulary and sentence construction is above expectations.

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However, greater use of adventurous language, adjectives, similes and so on, would make their writing more interesting. Some pupils' handwriting is untidy and letters are poorly formed. Improvements in teaching and in the use of assessment have accelerated pupils' progress in writing across the school. In mathematics, pupils enjoy the opportunities to investigate number and shape. Their understanding is above average. The recent focus on raising attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 is proving effective and pupils are on track to reach close to well above the expected level by the end of the year. In mathematics and science the pupils' skills in undertaking investigations and in their use and their understanding of subject specific vocabulary is developing well. This is contributing effectively to raising attainment and accelerating their progress. There is no significant difference in the performance of different groups of pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

The level of care, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils, is good. Relationships are good and all pupils feel safe. They know that they can turn to staff if they have any

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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concerns. Pupils have greater confidence that issues will be followed up by some staff than others. The school works well with a wide range of agencies to promote pupils' learning and welcomes the involvement of parents and carers.

Within an overall profile of good teaching, some teaching is less effective. In the better lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged. Teachers make effective use of questioning strategies. Initial answers are probed and pupils' thinking is consolidated and extended. The lessons proceed at a quick pace and there is good balance between the teacher's and the pupils' contributions. In contrast, where teaching is less effective, pupils' interest is not captured and the work is not matched to their needs and abilities.

Introductions to lessons are lengthy and there are lost opportunities to make links in learning between subjects. Nevertheless, in all lessons teachers explain clearly what is to be learned during the session. Teachers are confident in the use of electronic whiteboards to support learning. Assessment strategies to support learning are in place and are increasingly used effectively to enhance learning. However, the information is not used consistently in all classes to raise expectations and to plan work that challenges all groups of pupils. Pupils' learning is enhanced by good links with different organisations, visitors to the school and the opportunities to take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Staff are in the process of reviewing the curriculum to develop a more creative approach. This is to ensure that basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are consolidated and extended through other subjects. Themed days and weeks, such as the Indian and Chinese weeks, present staff with good opportunities to promote learning across all subjects and provide an added stimulus for the pupils. A considerable part of the school day is devoted to religious studies. This contributes to pupils' wider understanding of the world and the celebration of their faith.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides firm leadership. She is ably supported by the senior leadership team. Together they provide clear vision for the development of the school which is laid out in the detailed and lengthy school development plan. Staff are positive and work together well. This is reflected in the school gaining the Investors in People award. Staff and governors are committed to improving provision for the pupils. Much has been achieved in enhancing the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and

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in developing assessment procedures. The management of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This is partly due to senior managers not being sufficiently rigorous in acknowledging and addressing the variability in the quality of teaching. In addition, middle managers and subject coordinators have not had sufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Consequently, not all teaching is as effective as it could be.

Governors take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They set suitably challenging targets and monitor the work of the school closely. Governors ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are thorough and implemented consistently. Site security is impressive. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is good. The governors, headteacher and staff know the school community well and have done much to promote the school locally. There are links with other schools in the United Kingdom and in other countries. This enables pupils to develop their understanding and appreciation of other cultures and beliefs effectively. Staff and governors promote equality of opportunity well. They welcome pupils to the school and ensure that all are included. However, the variation in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils has not been fully ironed out.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction arrangements and relationships with parents ensure that children feel safe, settle quickly and develop their self-confidence. Children in the Nursery and Reception Years work and play well together and are developing good social skills. Their

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behaviour is good. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy living and follow routines which promote good hygiene practices.

Staff use their good understanding of how young children learn to plan a good range of stimulating activities that maintain the children's interest. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The emphasis placed on ensuring the children's welfare enables all children to experiment and explore within a safe and supportive environment. Classrooms are well organised and vibrant. Children's work is celebrated and displayed effectively. There is a good range of appropriate equipment for the children to use. The use of the outdoor area as a natural extension of the classroom to promote the children's learning is still at an early stage of development. Activities are not always structured to provide opportunities for problem solving. Adult intervention and questioning does not consistently challenge children's thinking and extend their learning. The area designated for the use of bikes, scooters and other wheeled toys has yet to be maximised.

The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. She coordinates the team well. Children's attainment is regularly assessed and used appropriately to plan their next steps in learning. As a result, they are making good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the responses from parents and carers were entirely supportive of the school's work. Their positive views are generally supported by the inspection evidence. A particularly high proportion of parents stated that their child felt safe and enjoyed school. Discussions with the pupils, and their questionnaire responses, confirm this to be the case. A few parents felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and that the school does not take into account parents' suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour is good. There are a few pupils who have difficulties in behaving well but this is generally managed effectively. Inspectors were reassured that the school takes parents' views seriously but this may not always be appreciated by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Michael Sobell Sinai to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 165 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 670 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 105 | 64 | 54 | 33 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 115 | 70 | 43 | 26 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 63 | 38 | 86 | 52 | 15 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 75 | 45 | 82 | 50 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 79 | 48 | 78 | 47 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 80 | 48 | 73 | 44 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 61 | 37 | 83 | 50 | 15 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 58 | 35 | 79 | 48 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 72 | 44 | 77 | 47 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 56 | 34 | 80 | 48 | 16 | 10 | 7 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 51 | 31 | 77 | 47 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 5 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 81 | 49 | 70 | 42 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 96 | 58 | 59 | 36 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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10 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Michael Sobell Sinai Primary School, Kenton, HA3 9UD

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and that your attendance is better than that found in most schools. You showed us that you are keen to take responsibility and that you all get on together. You have a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy keeping fit. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. You show respect for each other as you move safely around the school and in the playground. You clearly know a lot about keeping safe.

Your school provides you with a good education. By the end of Year 6 your attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average but is not as high as it could be. Nevertheless, your progress and achievement are good.

You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Your teachers and support staff have worked hard to set up the classes in the new building. The displays are really nice and there are lots of opportunities for you to enjoy learning. It is still early days, but there is still work to be done to make certain you get the best use of the outdoor areas. We have asked your teachers to make certain this happens.

In Years 1 to 6, you continue to make progress as you move through the school but it is variable between classes and year groups. This is because some of the lessons are not closely matched to your needs. To help you, we have asked the teachers to use their assessments of your work to plan lessons that will challenge you. In addition, when marking your work, we want them to make certain that you know what you must do to improve and meet your targets. We have also suggested that those who are responsible for different subjects monitor your lessons and your progress and that your teachers have opportunities to watch each other and share good practice.

Please remember, you must also play your part by always trying your best. Good luck

for the future and remember to keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford Jones

Lead Inspector

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