

Gateshead Jewish Primary School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	390/6004
Unique reference number	108416
Inspection number	342470
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

Age group: 5-11

Published: 08 December 2009

Reference no: 342470

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2009



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², 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

Gateshead Jewish Primary School was established in 1953 as an independent Jewish school for boys and girls aged from 6 to 11 years. There are now 461 pupils on roll. It serves the strictly Orthodox Jewish community in Gateshead and is tailor-made for their specific religious and educational needs. In accordance with the religious ethos of the school, boys and girls are taught separately on different sites. The school educates a very small number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. There are two leadership teams supporting and overlapping where necessary. The school is guided by the principles of Torah (Old Testament/Jewish Law) and rooted in an ethos of Torah values. The school's last inspection was in February 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of the education provided by the school is good and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust, and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. The school meets all of the regulations except that it does not have a three-year plan in keeping with the Disability Discriminations Act and classrooms and other parts of the school are not always kept in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. The school has made steady improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The quality of the education at the school is good, as is the curriculum, teaching and assessment. Curricula for both *kodesh* (religious studies) and *chol* (secular studies) provide the pupils with solid grounding in all of the required areas of learning, and many aspects of secular learning are integrated within *kodesh* as well. These include genuine and meaningful experiences in aspects of the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, and aesthetic and creative areas of knowledge, over and above the school's comprehensive *chol* curriculum. The *kodesh* curriculum is particularly robust and includes all of the subjects appropriate to the backgrounds and expectations of the pupils that attend the school. These are: *chumash* (Bible), *rashi* (Bible commentary), *nach* (books of the Old Testament), *gemorah* (Talmud -

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

boys), *mishnayos* (Mishna - boys), *halocho* (Jewish law), general knowledge, *sedra* (Bible stories) and Hebrew reading and writing.

For *chol*, the school uses the National Curriculum as a guide for the teaching of the main subjects and the school has recently implemented a new science curriculum. For religious reasons, and according to the ethos of the school, information and communication technology (ICT) is only introduced in Year 6. The school provides a small range of extra-curricular activities. However, there are few educational outings or visits. In order to support curricular development, the school is in regular contact with other Orthodox Jewish schools in London, Manchester and abroad. It has excellent links with its feeder school, the local Jewish kindergarten and with the local secondary schools to which the pupils graduate. There is a coordinator for special educational needs attached to the infant boys' department and the headteachers act in this role in the girls' department. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are especially well cared for.

Staff are dedicated and committed, and teachers have exceptionally good subject knowledge. The school strives for high reading standards, both in Hebrew and English in the lower grades. An internal monitoring process informs senior management of the progress of each pupil and serves to highlight those who need extra support. The school is in the course of consolidating its processes of lesson observations and the monitoring of teacher performance in both departments. Lessons are matched to the average capabilities of the pupils and they progress well. However, the matching of work to those of different abilities is, on occasions, not as effective as it could be. Marking is basic, and planning is generally sound, however it does not always refer to how the pupils' different learning needs will be met. Tracking systems evaluate pupils' performance effectively. For example, there are standardised assessments for Hebrew reading in the lower grades, written tests and worksheets, regular examinations by senior management and national tests at the end of Year 2. Support staff provide weekly reports to the coordinator for special educational needs.

In keeping with the ethos of the school and reverence for religious study, *kodesh* lessons are formal. *Chol* lessons are also often teacher-led and formal. As a result, pupils are not always given opportunities to learn independently or to take initiative in the learning process, although they do take an active part in class discussion and debate. Teaching methods and activities are effective albeit on occasions, outdated. Class time is managed effectively and most lessons have a good pace. Relationships are good and teachers are aware of the aptitudes and needs of their pupils. However, this does not always inform their planning and some pupils are not supported fully as a result. Resources are adequate and are used efficiently; however, wall displays do not celebrate pupils' work adequately.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. This is accomplished by enabling the pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence by inculcating healthy, warm relationships with their teachers. This enables the pupils to discuss issues in mature ways and prepares them for their future lives including being upstanding members of the community. Pupils say that they enjoy school and that much of the learning is 'exciting'.

Pupils are enabled to distinguish between right and wrong and to respect the law as part of their religious obligations and as specified in many areas of the *kodesh* curriculum. Adherence to school rules and developing a good reputation for the school are a priority for the staff and pupils alike. This ensures lawfulness and respect for other people and property. Behaviour is good as a result of healthy, strong relationships with teachers and effective incentive programmes both within each individual class and school-wide. Attendance is good.

Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to show initiative by arranging school activities such as the 'Chanukah Fair', presenting project work, producing magazines and participating in collections for charity. Year 6 pupils are involved in the 'Planning Committee' that contributes to the activities and running of the school. Pupils are taught to understand how they can contribute to community life through many aspects of the *kodesh* curriculum and through the good examples set by their teachers. The school's ethos and specific project work stresses and supports, respect for others, especially parents, elders and the law.

The school provides its pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England through the curriculum and through the effective teaching of related aspects of the *kodesh* curriculum. The school assists pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in ways that promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions through their interactions with workers, neighbours and through project work. An example of the warm, respectful relationships that the pupils develop with others is the letter of appreciation that the 'lollipop man' sent the pupils upon his retirement. Often, cultural issues are discussed in classes with the *kodesh* teachers and the respect for people of different faiths and cultures is an important part of the philosophy of the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. Staff know all of the pupils and their families very well, and so swiftly address any concerns they may have about pupils' well-being. For example, any attendance issues identified by senior staff are readily resolved through prompt meetings with parents. The few behavioural issues that arise are quickly dealt with. The school is proud of its inclusive approach to welfare. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are comfortable

sharing any personal problems with staff. The school promotes healthy lifestyles particularly through exercise and swimming. It is less successful in encouraging pupils to make healthy choices in their diet.

Procedures to safeguard pupils and for child protection are good. All relevant policies, including those for child protection, are in place and staff are suitably trained. There is impressive provision for first aid, with four highly trained staff on call at all times, supported by specialist equipment. All necessary risk assessments for the premises and school trips are routinely carried out. Fire checks and drills are also regular events. Admission and attendance registers comply with requirements. The school has a clear policy to support its provision for pupils with disabilities but does not have a three-year plan to outline its intentions, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school is very thorough in its vetting of staff and all other adults who work in the school. They are all checked for their qualifications, experience and suitability for working with children. The records are kept scrupulously up-to-date and are kept securely on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school provides satisfactory accommodation for pupils' education on both sites. There is an adequate number of classrooms and a few other rooms suitable for small-group work. The girls' school has a multi-purpose hall which is used for assemblies, lunch and physical education. The hall at the boys' site is temporarily unavailable, as it is currently being refurbished. There are suitable rooms to support pupils when they are ill and need to lie down. The playgrounds are safe and provide adequate space for pupils at break times. However, the buildings and outside areas are not positive learning environments. Many classrooms are poorly decorated and unnecessarily cluttered; some are dirty. Both playgrounds are unkempt with too much litter, especially around the perimeters.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides clear and helpful information to parents. The prospectus gives parents a good overview of the school's provision, and is supported by other information about the teaching staff and the curriculum. Annual reports give detailed indications of pupils' progress and standards compared to the expectations for their ages. Because the parental community is very close-knit, there is a natural, free flow of information between parents and staff. In their questionnaires, parents raised no concerns about the quality of information they receive.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a comprehensive complaints policy which meets all of the necessary requirements. It is made known to parents.

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.³

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

- improve the maintenance of the classrooms and other parts of the school and ensure that they are kept in a tidy, clean and hygienic state (paragraph 5 (n)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.⁴

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Enrich the curriculum by:
 - incorporating lessons and project work on healthy lifestyles and healthy eating into the curriculum for every year group
 - planning more educational visits.
- Improve teaching by ensuring work is well matched to pupils' individual learning needs and encourage the use of imaginative teaching methods.

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

Name of school	Gateshead Jewish Primary School		
DCSF number	390/6004		
Unique reference number	108416		
Type of school	Jewish		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1953		
Age range of pupils	6–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 208	Girls: 253	Total: 461
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 4	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3,432		
Address of school	18-19 Gladstone Terrace Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE8 4EA		
Telephone number	0191 4772154		
Fax number	0191 4900842		
Email address	info@gjps.org.uk		
Headteacher	Rabbi A Hammond		
Proprietor	Committee of Gateshead Jewish Primary School		
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin		
Dates of inspection	17–18 November 2009		