

Leeds Menorah School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	383/6099
Unique Reference Number (URN)	108110
URN for registered childcare	EY245579
Inspection number	344447
Inspection dates	23 to 24 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Yodaiken

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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.¹

Information about the school

Leeds Menorah School is an independent Jewish day school situated in the grounds of the Bet Hamedrash Hagadol Synagogue in Moortown, a suburb of Leeds. Some pupils travel each day from Hull and Sheffield. The school was established in 1978 and moved to its current premises in October 2004. The school is on a split site, with the secondary school for girls situated a short distance away. There are 41 pupils on the school's roll between the ages of three and 17, 10 of whom attend the secondary girls' school. Of the 14 children who are in the Nursery and Reception classes of the Early Years Foundation Stage, none are in receipt of nursery funding. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school's aim is 'to produce educated and well-adjusted observant Jews who will become an integral part of and contributors to modern society.' The last inspection took place in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Leeds Menorah School provides a good quality of education and is successful in meeting its aims. Pupils make good progress, although weaker aspects of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage means its effectiveness is only satisfactory. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say they are happy to be at the school and appreciate the support provided by their teachers. Safeguarding procedures are secure in most respects, but recent training for the person with overall responsibility for child protection has still to be completed. The school has made steady progress since the last inspection and now complies with all but one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good, as is the curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils. Pupils of all ages have access to a full range of learning experiences, although in the Early Years Foundation Stage children currently have limited access to organised outdoor learning activities. The school commits itself to providing pupils with an education which helps them to reach their full potential. It is divided into two parts: kodesh (religious) studies and chol (secular) studies. The well-planned kodesh

curriculum is a major feature of the school's provision. The spiritual ethos permeates the whole school. It successfully promotes progression in knowledge and understanding of all relevant aspects of the Jewish religion. The chol curriculum is broadly based on the National Curriculum with appropriate time set aside for literacy and numeracy every day. Art is taught mainly through the kodesh curriculum. The kodesh and chol curricula are effective in the secondary school and nine subjects are available for students to undertake at GCSE level. Throughout both the primary and secondary phases the pupils' personal, social and health education is taught effectively through the kodesh curriculum. Citizenship is taught throughout the school as a dedicated subject and in a cross-curricular way in history and kodesh studies. The curriculum is further enriched through visits, shows and projects. The older girls go weekly to a home for the aged which the girls say they enjoy. Careers education for older students consists mainly of advising girls as to which seminary would be most appropriate for the next stage in the ascent of their educational ladder.

Teaching and assessment are good overall, although they are only satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff are at an early stage of regularly assessing and recording how well children are doing. Teachers have high expectations of attitudes to learning and behaviour, consequently, pupils make good progress in their learning. By the time they leave school pupils achieve highly in national tests at Key Stage 2 and in the number of GCSEs gained in the secondary school. The small class sizes and excellent relationships create a calm environment in which pupils can concentrate, be creative, reflect on what they have learned and ask questions to help them deepen their understanding. Teachers use questioning strategies very effectively and generally challenge pupils to develop enquiring minds. The pupils are supported well within the small classes but teachers' planning does not always identify in advance the expected learning outcomes for the different pupils. Where teaching is weaker, the pace is slower and questioning less effective. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. Individual education plans for pupils with statements of special educational needs are well prepared and appropriately detailed.

The teachers' good understanding of the abilities of their pupils is supported by regular assessment. Because the school is small, informal discussions between teachers and pupils about their work are frequent. Good records are maintained of the good progress made by pupils. The information derived from assessments is often used to inform planning to meet individual learning needs. However, this practice is not consistently good in all subjects throughout the school. Parents are kept well informed of pupils' progress in the annual reports. The life skills learnt within the kodesh studies, literacy and numeracy, including good language and communication skills, are well embedded through the range of learning opportunities provided. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

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 encouraging the pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils discuss issues in a mature way which helps prepare them very well for their future lives as upright members of the community. Pupils say that they enjoy school and that much of the learning is 'exciting'. They feel like 'one big happy family'. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged to be kind to each other and their personal development is enriched within an environment where they are valued.

Pupils are encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong and to respect the law as part of their religious objectives 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 staff and pupils alike. Behaviour is outstanding as a result of very positive relationships with teachers and effective incentive programmes within each class and throughout the school. Attendance is satisfactory and has been affected by the recent bad weather. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to show initiative by arranging activities such as producing magazines and acting as 'big buddies' for younger children. Pupils are taught that they can contribute to community life, through many aspects of its kodesh curriculum, through citizenship studies and through the good example set by their teachers.

The school provides its pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England through the curriculum. The school assists pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in ways that promote tolerance. The school's ethos and specific project work on diversity stresses and supports respect for others, especially parents, elders and the law. Cultural issues are often discussed in class with the kodesh teachers, and 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 school makes satisfactory provision for the welfare, health and safety of all pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school encourages them to eat healthy food and to enjoy physical activities such as swimming. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. Staff know all the pupils very well, and swiftly address any concerns that they may have about their wellbeing. Procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection are met in most respects, but the appointed child protection officer has still not completed recent training for safeguarding as required. The school now fulfils its responsibility with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act. 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.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school implements safe recruitment procedures and carries out all of the required checks on the suitability 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. Records are kept scrupulously and securely on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school provides good accommodation for pupils' education on both sites which enables effective learning to take place. There are an adequate number of classrooms and areas suitable for small-group work. There is an appropriate room to support pupils when they are ill and need to lie down. The playground is safe and provides ample space for pupils to play at break times. Classrooms are well decorated and the premises and accommodation are maintained well and meet all the regulations.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school makes appropriate provision for the dissemination of information to parents, carers and others. The prospectus provides a range of information which includes the school's policies and contact details, in addition to information on its ethos and curriculum. Parents are invited to see all policies which are held in school. Annual school reports provide clear information to parents on their children's progress, attainment, behaviour and social skills. Nearly all of the completed parent questionnaires returned for the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school.

Procedures for handling complaints

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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Relationships between adults and children are good. Consequently, children settle quickly and feel safe in their surroundings where they are cared for well. Learning and development are satisfactory and children enjoy their time in school. There is a satisfactory balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, enabling children to make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. They do particularly well in their personal development.

All staff have high expectations that children should behave and get on well together, which they do. Children are kind and readily take turns. They thrive in an environment where they are highly valued. While some of the resources are dated, there is a suitable area outdoors. However, staff are aware that they are not making sufficient use of this outdoor environment as a stimulus for learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff have yet to access up-to-date training for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, they readily take the children's interests into account when planning new activities. Staff are at an early stage of regularly assessing and recording how well children are doing, so that at times they do not move children on quickly enough to more challenging activities in order to meet their individual needs. The school has yet to compile effective records to share fully with parents, so that they may become more involved in helping their children make better progress.

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.⁵(delete if not applicable)

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

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidelines Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF-04217-2006) by ensuring all staff receive the appropriate level of child protection training (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:

- improve the quality of provision and use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure that all staff working in the Early Years Foundation Stage are sufficiently well trained and knowledgeable about the planning and assessment requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?			✓	
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?			✓	
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?			✓	
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?			✓	

The quality of boarding provision *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision				
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School details

Name of school	Leeds Menorah School		
DCSF number	383/6099		
Unique reference number (URN)	108110		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY245579		
Type of school	Jewish day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1978		
Age range of pupils	3-17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 13	Girls: 23	Total: 36
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0.00 to £3,500		
Address of school	(Secondary) 2 Sandhill Lane Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 6AG	(Primary) 399 Street Lane Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 6HQ	
Telephone number	01132 697709		
Fax number	01132 942485		
Email address	jrefson@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Refson		
Proprietor	Rabbi Refson		
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Yodaiken		
Dates of inspection	23-24 February 2010		