

# Beis Ruchel Girls' School

Independent school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	352/6050
Unique Reference Number (URN)	130256
Inspection number	344452
Inspection dates	2 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan

For use on Light Touch Inspections from January 2010

## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002<sup>1</sup>, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, 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.

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

Beis Ruchel Girls' School is an independent Jewish day school, located on two sites in North Manchester, for 285 girls aged from three to sixteen. The school, established 18 years ago, serves families from the religious Satmar Orthodox Chassidic Communities in Manchester and Salford. Their principles and customs underpin the educational provision of the school. The school offers both a religious (Kodesh) and a secular (Chol) curriculum. Although the majority of pupils are from Satmar families, a small number have Litvish and Sefardi backgrounds. Most pupils are bilingual, speaking both Yiddish and English. Increasingly, pupils at the early stages of learning English join the school throughout the year. Currently, there are four. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, but 22 girls do have specific barriers to learning, including visual impairment. Fifty children aged three and four are funded under the Nursery scheme. The school aims to prepare the girls for their long-term roles as fully-functioning members of their community. It places a 'high emphasis on teaching spiritual and moral values' and expects 'high standards of behaviour and mutual respect'. The school was last inspected in April 2007 and was judged as providing a good education.

## Evaluation of the school

Beis Ruchel Girls' School meets its aims well and provides a good quality of education for its pupils and for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment is good throughout the school and, together with the pupils' high motivation to learn, accounts for their good academic progress. Similarly, those new to the school rapidly acquire fluency in English because of good individual support and their enthusiasm for study. The school has outstanding provision on both sites for the welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding of the pupils. The provision for their spiritual, moral, cultural and social

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

development is outstanding. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding and by the time they leave they have developed into mature, thoughtful and responsible young women. The school has addressed efficiently the issues from the last inspection and now meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained a good curriculum that balances successfully religious studies with a secular programme that meets all of the regulations. Pupils are served well by the good curriculum that matches the aspirations of the parents and students. In their responses to the parental questionnaire, all of the parents indicated a high level of trust and satisfaction with the school. Well-considered, personal guidance, together with an in-depth study of Jewish history, culture and religious practice are at the heart of the pupils' genuine sense of responsibility in preparing for their futures within the community. They explore fully all the rituals and traditions that they will need to manage their roles within the family. All pupils progress to further education and training within Jewish seminaries. The school successfully guides able girls to higher studies so that they gain appropriate qualifications.

Pupils follow a very full programme and spend mornings on Jewish studies, conducted wholly in Yiddish. Afternoons are devoted to subjects within the National Curriculum, including a range of GCSE courses for older girls. These areas, however, are limited by the subject expertise of teachers available from within the community. Science, for example, is limited to Years 7 and 8 although some aspects are covered within food and nutrition for older girls. Well-developed schemes of work ensure that both the Kodesh and Chol strands of the curriculum are organised effectively to ensure progression from year to year. Links with other local institutions afford pupils good opportunities for technology, mainly food and textiles, and physical education. Additional activities, such as cultural visits, widen the pupils' perceptions and understanding of circumstances and events outside of their community. Other enrichment activities involve pupils in feast day celebrations, in drama and in enterprise. Girls take responsibility, for example, for organising all aspects of school productions. Pupils encounter aspects of citizenship throughout many areas of the curriculum but these are not yet co-ordinated fully into a comprehensive programme of study. Personal, social and health education is otherwise very well integrated across the curriculum and the impact is evident in the pupils' excellent personal development.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and results in good progress for the overwhelming majority of pupils. Results in GCSE examinations have risen since the last inspection. Pupils are particularly successful in mathematics and art. Year 6 pupils also progress well in English and mathematics. This is because teaching is systematic, knowledgeable and well-focused on reaching the highest available grades. Regularly, teachers demand much of their pupils who respond

enthusiastically to challenges, not least because relationships between staff and pupils are excellent at all levels of the school. Inspectors visited mainly lessons in Jewish studies as Years 7 to 11 were involved in pre-planned examinations of secular subjects on the day. There were a number of very successful lessons where the monitoring of the pupils' work was particularly thorough and where helpful guidance supported them greatly in completing their work. This was very clear in a Year 8 lesson on prayer, where the careful match of activities to earlier learning ensured each pupil understood and enjoyed the tasks. Pupils with specific learning difficulties, including visual impairment are helped individually to overcome the barriers they face, be they educational, medical or physical. Those at the early stages of learning English also benefit greatly from carefully planned sessions and thus make rapid gains in fluency.

Assessment is good. The school has sustained its good practice found at the last inspection. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and they are given very helpful guidance on how to improve. Homework is marked rigorously and monitored carefully. Very regular formal assessments reflect the pupils' progress at key points of the year. They also helpfully and regularly inform parents of the pupils' progress.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, including those within the Early Years Foundation Stage, is outstanding, as is their personal development. This is similar to the last inspection and fully reflects the school's aim for excellence in providing a moral education based on Chassidic Jewish principles. The spiritual development of the pupils and of the children in the Nursery and Reception is outstanding because collective worship and shared values are at the heart of the school from the earliest years. Staff lead by example. Moral teaching permeates every aspect of the school so that pupils of all ages have a keen sense of right and wrong. Behaviour is outstanding, as is the pupils' participation in a range of social and charitable events. Their response to class rewards is very positive and encourages their cooperation in communal projects.

Pupils expressed a genuine delight in coming to school. 'It is the best school in the world' wrote one, reflecting the views of many. All pupils indicated that they feel safe in school. They treat adults and one another with great respect with even the little ones offering to help a pupil-neighbour struggling with sticking together a collage. Pupils are taught to respect others, regardless of race, religion or background. They learn about other cultures through history and through visits and visitors. They are well-versed in English public institutions and services. Attitudes to work and attendance are also excellent and the older pupils are content that they are prepared well for their futures.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Overall, this aspect of the school's provision, as at the last inspection, is outstanding. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place so that pupils truly feel safe. Parents confirm that the school has a genuine family atmosphere, coupled with high expectations of the pupils. Girls are at ease with staff and know they can raise any matters of concern.

Staff are carefully checked for their suitability to work with children through the Criminal Records Bureau and details are accurately recorded on the single central record. School managers are aware of their responsibilities and are meticulous in ensuring that risk assessments, child protection, first-aid training and policies are up-to-date. Since the last inspection, the school has addressed the environmental issues noted in the junior building although the décor remains shabby. This is in vivid contrast to the new senior site which has been very tastefully refurbished.

Pupils are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, not least through the emphasis on food and nutrition in the curriculum. Families are responsible for their children's nutrition within the school day and the school provides guidance on appropriate lunches. Pupils enjoy a good range of physical activities and many use their well-supervised breaks efficiently in planned games. Hygiene and general health and environmental issues are important to the girls. Their understanding is bolstered by themes within the Jewish studies curriculum. The school meets its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the setting is good. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in both the Nursery and Reception and demonstrate good achievement by the time they transfer into Year 1; the children are prepared well for their entry into formal education.

Children settle quickly when they join the school because staff get to know them very well and provide good care and support that meets their needs. Relationships are excellent and as a result children behave exceptionally well. They rapidly become confident, sociable and independent learners. By the end of the Reception Year, the vast majority of the children exceed the expected Early Learning Goals in many areas with personal development being the strongest feature.

All children have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Great care is taken to ensure they are safe, and they are encouraged to eat a balanced diet and to take regular exercise. They thrive through making their own choices from the accessible and generally well-resourced provision. However, some books are worn and need replacing and there is not enough large equipment to fully develop skills such as balancing and climbing.

Teaching is good. As staff work alongside the children, they question them well to develop problem-solving and thinking skills. The provision, and leadership and management are good. Staff work together successfully to evaluate and set priorities for future development, although plans are not formally recorded. The assessment of children's achievements and the planning of their next learning steps is organised well.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005. It also complies with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Extend the study of science as soon as possible to Years 10 and 11.
- Take forward plans to introduce discrete citizenship lessons so that there is a clear audit of pupils' learning about public life in the United Kingdom.
- Replace the worn books within the Early Years Foundation Stage and explore ways to provide balancing and climbing equipment.
- Formulate a written development plan 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?		✓		

## School details

Name of school	Beis Ruchel Girls' School		
DCSF number	352/6050		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	130286		
Type of school	Jewish Day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1992		
Age range of pupils	3-16		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 281	Total: 281
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 4	Total: 4
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,144-£2,912		
Address of school	1-7 Seymour Road Manchester Lancashire M8 5BQ		
Telephone number	0161 795 1830		
Fax number	0161 740 2331		
Email address	beisruchelmanchester@tiscali.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs E Krausz		
Proprietor	Mr B Krausz		
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan		
Dates of inspection	2 February 2010		