

SACKS MORASHA JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority Barnet
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach
Inspection dates 25th – 26th February 2015
Lead Inspector Dr Leon Bernstein

This inspection of the school was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of school Primary
School category Voluntary aided
Age range of Pupils 4–11
Gender of Pupils Mixed
Number on roll 176
Appropriate authority The Governing Body
Chair Jason Marantz
Headteacher Hayley Gross
Date of previous inspection N/A
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Introduction

Inspection team

Leon Bernstein Lead Inspector
Sharon Raphael Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days. The inspectors visited 15 classes from Reception to Year 6 for lessons and parts of lessons, including *tefillot* (prayers). Some of the lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies curriculum and the school's self-evaluation document for *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies). The headteacher and Head of Jewish Studies played a full and active part in this inspection, including attending team meetings and conducting discussions with inspectors.

The inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- The Jewish education curriculum
- The progress pupils make in Jewish education
- The quality of teaching in Jewish education
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship.
- Leadership and management of Jewish education

Information about the school

- Sacks Morasha is a one-form entry, Modern-Orthodox, Jewish primary school.
- The school opened in September 2008 with seven pupils. This number has grown quickly to its present size of 176.
- This is the first *Pikuach* inspection for the school, which became voluntary aided in 2013.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of learners have special educational needs.
- The school aims 'to inspire pupils with a love of Judaism, and to develop them into responsible, committed members of our community and society at large.'

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
The achievement of pupils in their Jewish education	2
The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education	2
The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the duty to fulfil the daily act of collective worship	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish education, including through partnerships	1

Overall Effectiveness:

The quality of Jewish education provided in Sacks Morasha School is good because:-

- The school has set high expectations for all pupils, aiming for excellent Jewish literacy as well as basic skills, delivered through an enriched, creative curriculum.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because the staff and pupils show great respect for each other and for the ethos of the school. The quality of *tefillah* (prayer) is good. It is especially strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 3 and 4, preparing pupils well for involvement in community prayer.
- The curriculum provision is outstanding. It enables pupils to link Jewish learning to their everyday lives. The teaching of *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) contributes to the Jewish life of the school by promoting the use of Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people.
- Teaching overall is good and relationships are excellent, modelling the Jewish ethos and values of the school.
- Partnerships with parents and the wider community are outstanding, with the great majority of parents showing their support of the school, its ethos and its policies. For example, the choir visits a number of institutions to perform and the school has links with other Jewish and non-Jewish schools. There have been links with schools in Ghana and the United States, and the Head of *Kodesh* is currently exploring possibilities of establishing a link with a school in Israel.

- The school offers a range of Jewish educational experiences so that the pupils are well prepared for the future stages of their Jewish life and education. The wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, include *Torah leyning* and *Megilla leyning*. School trips are planned throughout the year.
- The school has various *Tzedakka* (charity) drives for both Jewish and non-Jewish causes. For example, there is a food bank. The school has in the past been involved with 'Sandwiches for the Poor' and their current *Tzedakka* projects are in aid of Chai Cancer and Diabetes UK. External speakers have visited the school and have spoken to the pupils. For example, a vet came from 'Medivet' and a visitor came recently from the Jewish Blind and Disabled Society.
- There is a consistently, outstanding atmosphere in the school with the displays in classrooms and around the whole site, clearly linked to *Kodesh* and *Ivrit*.

It is not yet outstanding because:-

- Much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects of the Jewish curriculum is good but not yet outstanding.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies. Not all marking shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- There is not yet a reliable tracking system embedding all areas of the Jewish curriculum to show measurable impact over time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of lessons displaying outstanding features, ensuring all teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils and that engagement in lessons is maintained, in some cases, with greater pace and effective questioning.
- Ensure that marking is consistent in showing pupils what they need to do to improve and that teachers set achievable targets for pupils.
- Develop and implement tracking systems to cover the whole of the *Kodesh* curriculum so that leaders have a clear picture of how pupils build on what they have learnt before and the progress they have made over time.

Achievement of pupils in their Jewish education is good because:-

- Taking into account their starting points, the proportion of pupils making or exceeding the progress expected of them is high.
- Progress in a wide range of subjects across the Jewish curriculum is consistently strong and evidence in pupils' work indicates that they achieve well. The Jewish curriculum spans

across subjects such as *Chumash* (Bible), *Mishna* (The Oral Law), *Tefillah* (prayer), Hebrew reading and writing, Jewish general knowledge and Israel. The Jewish studies curriculum and secular curriculum are integrated so that learning in all subjects contributes to pupils' Jewish education.

- Pupils acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in the range of subjects covered in the Jewish curriculum. This was seen particularly in the way they answered inspectors' questions about what had been learnt previously and how this linked to what was currently being learnt. Pupils were confidently able to articulate knowledge and understanding of material appropriate to their age.
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator meets with *chol* (secular) and *Kodesh* teachers termly to set targets. Every child with special educational needs is given four targets: two targets *for chol*; one *Kodesh* target and 1 well-being target. Inspectors found this impressive as it helped the pupils to see their current progress and how to plan for the future. In addition, these pupils were making good progress and showed levels of achievement appropriate to their age and abilities. Their *Kodesh* targets are centred on Hebrew reading, which is supported through a multi-sensory approach and one-to-one reading.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 2 and 6. In both groups, inspectors were impressed with the tenacity of those who found certain words challenging, and the thought processes of those who made good progress in blending consonants and matching vowels. In some cases, pupils were able to translate Hebrew words into English and all pupils confidently navigated both the *Chumash* and the *Siddur*. A number of pupils were particularly complimentary and grateful towards their teachers for having taught them how to read Modern Hebrew. Inspectors found reading across the board to be of a very good standard.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education is good because:-

- Teachers get on very well with the pupils and this contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils like their teachers and want to please them and consequently are motivated to listen, volunteer answers and try their best.
- Much of the teaching is good, and there was evidence of outstanding practice across all key stages. This was particularly evident in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. Pupils were fully focused as teachers skilfully guided them through PowerPoint presentations and shared with them a mutual enthusiasm. In particular, inspectors were impressed with the level of questioning, which encouraged all pupils to progress from one point to the next with both ease and confidence.
- Teachers use a wide range of resources to promote engaging learning activities which the pupils enjoy. Excellent use is made of the latest technology. The pupils routinely use tablet computers to complete work, which is sent to the teacher. Particularly impressive is the written dialogue, in some cases between teacher and pupils, who can send their work electronically, direct to the teacher. The teacher, in turn, marks the work, makes comments and sends this back electronically to the individual child.
- Teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question pupils during lessons

in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning. In one Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher relentlessly encouraged a child to 'have a go' at answering a question, and sensitively guided the child towards reaching the correct answer.

- Teachers plan lessons to accommodate classes and groups of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs. Inspectors noted examples of outstanding practice with respect to provision for these pupils. This allows the pupils to work at a level appropriate to their age and ability.
- In every class, work is well matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Teachers know their pupils well and adapt their teaching accordingly. Pupils expressed their enjoyment both of *Kodesh* lessons and of the work they were given.
- Because teachers make learning interesting and fun, even the youngest children maintain concentration for quite long sessions without becoming restless.
- Good support is provided by learning support assistants, who play a full part in the lesson.
- Marking of pupils' work is generally good, but is not consistent throughout the school. Not all marking gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, or sets targets for pupils so that they know how to move their work on to the next level.

The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding because:-

- The curriculum demonstrates both breadth and balance. It includes Hebrew reading and writing, *tefillah*, *parshah* (the weekly *Torah* portion), *chagim* and Jewish way of life. It expresses the Jewish values of the school and is well structured to meet the particular learning needs of all pupils.
- The school's Jewish curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development and well-being. For example, in a formal assembly celebrating *Chagigat Chumash*, (presentation of their first *Chumash*) an enormous amount of information was being transmitted in an informal way. For example, an ancient parchment was displayed which promoted discussions on history, geography, mathematics and science, and this was integrated into the Jewish curriculum. There was much emphasis on the chain of Jewish tradition, and grandparents, parents and pupils all participated in an enriching and memorable activity which brought all families close together.
- There is excellent provision for the pupils to learn about the Jewish calendar and the Jewish way of life. The successful outcomes of these aspects are evident in the pupils' personal, spiritual and social development and in their deep connections with Israel and its people.

- The Jewish curriculum is integrated within the National Curriculum so that *Kodesh* themes permeate the pupils' learning. For example, lessons on *Purim* were linked to themes of freedom and national pride. The school makes every effort to ensure that such links are genuine rather than tenuous.
- There is great harmony between the Jewish Studies staff and all other colleagues, who are keen to promote the school's ethos. For example, a member of staff who was keen to ensure accuracy in a display in Hebrew took great pains to take photographs of the original Hebrew so that it could be written accurately at a later stage.
- The curriculum progressively builds on what pupils have previously learnt, deepening their understanding as they progress through the key stages. For example, pupils learning about *Purim* in the Reception class hear the story of *Purim*, sing songs about it and are given essential general information about it. As they move through the key stages, facts become more abstract and promote higher level thinking skills, for example understanding the concept of *Hashgachah Pratit* (*Hashem's* providence) within the context of the *Purim* story.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because:-

- The school meets legal requirements for collective worship through daily *tefillah* and other opportunities to recite *brachot* (blessings). They take part in these with enthusiasm, singing and reciting the daily prayers and *brachot*, and learning about what they mean.
- Daily *tefillah* makes a good contribution to pupils' reading skills, as they follow and read the prayers.
- Pupils are helpful to each other. For example, in Year 1, one girl was observed helping her partner to find the last example of *patach genuvah* (a rule of vowel pronunciation) on the worksheet.
- Pupils show respect to each other and to staff at all times.
- Teaching and support staff are excellent role models, demonstrating valued attributes and behaviour in the way they relate to the pupils and to each other. There is a shared respect amongst staff and this is mirrored by the pupils.
- Displays across the whole school in classrooms and circulation areas are varied, interesting and appropriate. They fully integrate the whole *chol/Kodesh* learning environment and ethos, including displays about bullying, friendship and helpfulness, incorporating Jewish themes as appropriate.
- Pupils express their interest and enjoyment in *Kodesh* and their learning experiences.
- The inspectors had the delight of attending a Year 2 *Chagigat Chumash*

celebration, to which families had been invited. This was a true family learning experience and demonstrated the school's commitment to Jewish learning and ethos.

- Inspectors met the School Council, which represents pupils in Years 3 to 6. All members were very positive about their school experience and Jewish Studies in particular. Comments made included: 'This school is really good because it is very supportive and safe'; 'We've had around six new people in our class and they've settled down in about two weeks'; 'You get a really good education and learning through fun lessons, *chagim* and outings'.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish education is outstanding because:

- The school deserves praise for giving the pupils a first-rate start to their Jewish journey in life.
- Senior leaders, as well as governors, have a clear and shared vision of the school. This is articulated superbly in the school's self-evaluation of Jewish Studies.
- The headteacher is an outstanding and inspirational leader. She sets high standards and believes in nurturing not only the pupils but also the staff, encouraging everyone to achieve their full potential. She has played a key role in supporting the Head of *Kodesh*, who has been in post for one year. She works relentlessly and with great passion to lead the school and steer it on its successful path.
- The Head of *Kodesh* works tirelessly and with great fervour to drive all aspects of Jewish life in the school. His meticulous approach, coupled with his sensitive and empathetic style, make him admired by colleagues and pupils.
- There are effective professional development arrangements for teachers, organised by the Head of *Kodesh* and the headteacher. An excellent schedule of performance management has been developed by senior leaders, and particularly by the Head of *Kodesh*. A teacher profile clearly shows staff at different levels of current achievement, and targets are discussed with a view to constant improvement of performance.
- Members of staff feel very well supported professionally, and they greatly appreciate the work of the senior leadership team. Induction procedures for new staff are well organised.
- The Honorary Principal is relatively new to the position. He is the school's authority on religious issues. He regularly visits the school in an advisory capacity and plays a full and active part in the life of the school.
- The Governing Body carries out its duties very effectively and offers good support while fulfilling its responsibilities as a 'critical friend' to school leaders and staff. It has a 'hands on' approach and is fully cognisant of all aspects of the school. Governors summed up their vision and ambition in describing Sacks Morasha as 'a school which empowers, enriches and nurtures our pupils to become holistic, Jewish 21st century citizens'.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Sacks Morasha School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. These were very positive. The comments below encapsulate their delight, and clearly depicts a very happy school:

'The children are prepared extremely thoroughly for all *chagim* and approach each *chag* with great enthusiasm as a result of what they do at school.'

'My child says *Kodesh* is his favourite lesson!'

'We find the teachers to be very conscientious and hardworking.'

'Both of our children continue to thrive in both their *chol* and *Kodesh* studies due to the nurturing environment and expert teaching that the school provides.'

GLOSSARY

GRADE	JUDGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not 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.