

Independent Jewish Day School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101343
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	307658
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Debbie Meyer
Headteacher	Miss Amanda Lando
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2002
School address	46 Green Lane Hendon London NW4 2AH
Telephone number	020 8203 2299
Fax number	020 8202 1142

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement in writing and the school's provision for writing, wider curriculum opportunities, the strengths of academic guidance, the impact of the school's leadership on raising achievement and pupils' behaviour. Evidence was gathered from discussions with senior staff, governors and pupils, school documentation and observations of lessons and other features of the school's work. In addition, the inspector analysed questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

The school is committed to a modern Orthodox and Zionist education and all pupils are from similar religious backgrounds. Jewish studies are taught by a team of specialist teachers from Israel. Most pupils are from relatively advantaged circumstances and come from a wide area. Most pupils are of White British heritage although some come from other White backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. There has been considerable staff upheaval in recent times.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'All our children are happy, inquisitive and able students as a result of the wonderful, productive and fulfilling time they have spent at the school', commented one parent echoing the views of many. Indeed, pupils and most parents are rightly proud of their school because it is outstanding. Exceptional leadership ensures that it combines a caring and nurturing environment for pupils with high expectations of their academic achievement. Warm relationships between adults and pupils pervade the school. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers respect us and we respect them.' Consequently, pupils of all abilities thrive in this atmosphere and achieve exceptionally well.

A remarkable feature of the school is the way in which the curriculum seamlessly integrates Jewish studies with the secular curriculum. Following the last inspection, school leaders have worked hard to ensure that these links are at the heart of the curriculum. From the Nursery onwards, pupils become fluent, bilingual learners and move effortlessly between English and Hebrew. In a Year 6 Jewish studies lesson, for example, pupils were developing their understanding of the features of journalistic writing in Hebrew, which supported their learning in the secular curriculum. The school has become much more outward looking since the last inspection and has done much to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and to promote community cohesion. Pioneering and innovative links have been established with a nearby school, which involve pupils joining in with the celebration of festivals from other religions. In turn, pupils from the other school visit to learn about aspects of the Jewish faith. Pupils greatly enjoy this work and one remarked thoughtfully that it helped them to 'hear things from another point of view.'

Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage and pupils of all abilities continue to make very good progress as they move through the school. This is because of exceptionally good teaching, pupils' obvious enthusiasm for learning and very effective use of targets which challenge every pupil to achieve as well as they can. Teaching and learning is supported by highly effective systems to track pupils' progress, which allow additional support to be provided when any potential underachievement is identified. By the age of eleven, standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, they were exceptionally high with four out of five pupils reaching the higher level. The current Year 6 pupils are attaining at similar or even higher levels. These high standards, together with pupils' good skills in information and communication technology, ensure that pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary education and the world beyond.

Whilst most pupils reach national expectations for their age in writing, a few of the most able seven and eleven year olds did not do as well as expected in 2007. The school has identified that they were not always clear about what they needed to do in order to reach the next level. This issue is being addressed throughout the school, with the result that pupils are now much clearer about how to achieve their targets in writing. Teachers' marking has also developed and now ensures that pupils have a clear idea of what they need to do in order to improve. As a result, the school's records show that pupils' progress in writing has already accelerated and many more are working at the higher levels.

Pupils are bubbling with enthusiasm for the school and are very appreciative of the very wide range of additional opportunities they are offered. They now have many more opportunities to play musical instruments and to perform both in school and further afield. The many physical activities, in particular, enhance their exceptionally good understanding of the need to adopt

a healthy lifestyle. Pupils feel very safe and secure and have great confidence in the adults around them. They take their responsibilities as prefects, for example, very seriously, and the charity committee, consisting entirely of pupils, directs the school's fund raising efforts. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. This is not the view of a few parents who have concerns about behaviour. A few pupils do present challenging behaviour from time to time. Very good systems are in place, however, to help these pupils to cope and play a full part in lessons and to ensure that learning is not disrupted.

Despite its success, the school is not content to rest on its laurels. This is reflected in its rather modest self-evaluation. The headteacher is an outstanding leader, who is ably supported by a very effective senior leadership team and a knowledgeable and committed governing body. The effectiveness of leadership at all levels is reflected in the way that weaknesses from the last inspection, in the Foundation Stage and the curriculum, for example, have been transformed into considerable strengths of the school. In view of this, the school has outstanding capacity for yet further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding Foundation Stage provides children with a vibrant and exciting start to school life and prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. One parent of a child in the Nursery commented, 'We could not wish for a warmer and more professional environment for our daughter'. Another rather envious parent remarked, 'I wish I was a child in Reception!' The learning environment is rich and stimulating and has been transformed since the last inspection, both inside and out. From generally above average starting points, pupils make rapid progress in all areas of their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes to reach standards that are consistently well above average by the time they enter Year 1. Children's interests are often at the heart of the work. For example, in the Reception class, when a child brought a rocket to school, a moonscape was created and children were invited to discover 'what we can find on the moon today.' In the Nursery, the theme of rain and water provided the children with many opportunities to explore the world around them. Many of these activities are chosen by the children themselves. However, very detailed assessments by all staff ensure children's progress is monitored carefully so that they can be directed to particular activities in order to develop their skills in all areas of learning. The highly effective team works very well together under the inspirational leadership of the Foundation Stage leader.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of the most able pupils in writing even further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Independent Jewish Day School, London, NW4 2AH

You may remember that I came to your school recently. I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed my day at IJDS and I thought you would like to know what I found out.

You and most of your parents are right to be proud of the school because it provides you with an outstanding education. You told me what a caring place it is and how much you enjoy all aspects of school life and, in particular, the many additional activities you have in sport and music for example. You also appreciate the opportunities you have to learn about other cultures through your close links with another local school.

I was really impressed by your politeness and good behaviour and your enthusiasm in lessons. Well done! The school has done a lot to make sure that your Jewish studies and your other lessons fit together so well. I think it is really impressive that you are fluent in two languages by the time you leave. I apologise to Year 6 pupils for my rather feeble attempt to greet you in Hebrew!

You told me how much you like your teachers and how they help you to improve. You get off to a flying start in the Foundation classes and make very good progress as you move through the school. By the time you leave, you are reaching high standards and are well prepared for secondary school.

Your headteacher is an outstanding leader who gets lots of help from all the teachers and the governors. Together, they have done a lot to improve the school since the last inspection and are determined to make it even better. I have asked them to help some of you to do even better in writing than you are at the moment.

Best of luck to you all.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector