

# HASMONEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority      Barnet

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates      Wednesday 1 July – Thursday 2 July 2015

Lead Inspector      Dr L Bernstein

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of Pupils	3-11
Gender of Pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	240
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chairs	Neil Nachshen
Headteacher	Alan Shaw
Address	8-10 Shirehall Lane Hendon London NW4 2PD
Telephone number	020 8202 7704
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@hasmonean-pri.barnet.sch.uk">admin@hasmonean-pri.barnet.sch.uk</a>
School website	<a href="http://www.hasmonean-pri.barnet.sch.uk">www.hasmonean-pri.barnet.sch.uk</a>

## Introduction

### Inspection team

**Lead Inspector:** Dr L Bernstein  
**Additional Inspector:** Rabbi J Spector

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days. The inspectors visited 10 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, groups of pupils and also met parents. 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 *Limudei Kodesh*. The Headteacher and Head of Jewish Studies played a full and active part in this inspection, including attending team meetings and discussions with inspectors.

### The inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- The Jewish Studies 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

- This Jewish Orthodox school is average in size when compared with other primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and so eligible for additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The Nursery caters for 30 pupils on a full-time basis. The afternoon class is run as a private facility.
- The school has experienced a number of staff changes over the last 18 months, including at senior leadership level. The Headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and the Deputy Headteacher from September 2014. The Head of *Limudei Kodesh* was previously a teacher in the school and has now joined the Senior Management Team.
- The school also hosts a privately run, pre-Nursery which is inspected separately.

## 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	3
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	2

### Overall Effectiveness:

**The quality of Jewish Learning provided in Hasmonean Primary School is good GRADE 2 because:-**

- Teaching overall is good and pupils enjoy their *Limudei Kodesh* lessons.
- There is a positive attitude towards learning which ensures pupils achieve in their Jewish education.
- Pupils and particular groups of pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs, achieve well and have highly positive, Jewish educational experiences at school.

### It is not yet Outstanding GRADE 1 because:-

- Not enough teaching is good or outstanding over time.
- The school's *Limudei Kodesh* curriculum needs to be updated and embedded in teachers' planning.
- Senior leaders, although aware of the above issues, have not yet had sufficient time to implement the changes and interventions required.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement a robust system of the monitoring of teaching and assessment in all subject areas
- Review and implement the *Limudei Kodesh* curriculum, with monitoring procedures to ensure the effective delivery of the overall curriculum.
- Implement and monitor the *Limudei Kodesh* marking policy and ensure effective marking strategies are carried out.

## Achievement of pupils in their Jewish Learning is Good GRADE 2 because:-

- High levels of Hebrew reading were observed across the year groups and ability ranges. There is an efficient system of tracking and monitoring which has been developed to oversee this.
- When inspectors heard pupils read from Years 2 and 6 they were impressed by 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 into English and all pupils confidently navigated both *Chumash* (Bible) and the *Siddur* (prayer book).
- Taking into account their starting points, the proportion of pupils making or exceeding the progress expected of them is high.
- Achievement is tracked by the Head of *Limudei Kodesh*, who oversees each child's progress over time via a system with attainment levels for *Chumash* and Hebrew reading.
- 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 pupils answered inspectors' questions about what had been learnt previously, linked to what was currently being studied. Pupils were confidently able to articulate knowledge and understanding of material appropriate to their age.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) keeps a robust account of pupils on her register and drives staff to ensure that these pupils meet their expected targets.
- Inspectors observed high levels of achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils progress well from their starting points, and show solid development in the 'seven areas of learning', i.e. communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

## The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish Learning is good GRADE 2 because:-

- Inspectors found the level of teaching overall to be good. Where teaching was good with some outstanding features it was the result of carefully structured and engaging lessons. There were a number of lessons, however, which required greater pupil engagement and pace.
- Teachers get on very well with the pupils and this contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Because they like their teachers and want to please them, pupils are motivated to listen, volunteer answers and try their best.
- Lessons are planned to accommodate classes and groups of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs.
- In the best lessons, work is matched to pupils' different abilities.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) pupils were given a certain freedom to explore and express themselves, while at the same time were guided to completing challenging activities which stimulated them and enabled them to make rapid progress.
- Good support is provided by Learning Support Assistants, who play a full part in the lesson.
- Teachers know their pupils well and adapt their teaching accordingly. Pupils expressed their enjoyment of *Kodesh* lessons and the work they were given.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills across the Jewish curriculum. These skills include analysis, deduction and comprehension.
- In some lessons, teachers made excellent use of IT (Information Technology). In a Reception class, for example, one group, each with their own laptop, made their own pictorial representation of the week's *Parsha (Balak)* by constructing an animated donkey which jumped around the screen! When asked why they were drawing donkeys they were very articulate, confident and polite in answering that it was *Bilam's* donkey in this week's *Parsha!*
- Some teachers use carefully planned strategies to break down the work into small component parts. In a Year 2 class, for example, there was a most effective system of sequencing: after class reading from the *Chumash* (Bible), 'crib' cards helped pupils to be more fluent and accurate in their reading. Linear translation sheets were then given out to ensure understanding of the text, and this was followed by choral singing on the carpet, where pupils chanted grammatical rules of Biblical Hebrew.
- Marking of pupils' work is an issue that requires attention. Marking needs to be robust and to give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, or set targets for pupils so that they know how to move their work to the next level. Inspectors noted that there was, in many cases, an absence of marking, and that which was marked needed greater rigour.
- The lack of marking and overall monitoring in all areas of the *Limudei Kodesh* curriculum requires improvement so that teaching staff and senior leaders can accurately assess progress over time over the whole range of subjects taught.

- The school has an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Jewish Studies coordinator who encourages the use of ICT to enhance both the teaching and learning in lessons, and supplies support and training to other Jewish Studies teachers. Most lessons observed effectively used ICT and many resources have been created for the school using iPads and Smart boards to make learning easily accessible and fun for the pupils. For example, the pupils won an inter-school *Shabbat* project by making the most appealing iPad movie. They also have made radio shows and Powerpoint presentations to enhance their learning.
- The school effectively tracks progress in Hebrew reading and *Chumash*. A new system of assessment for Key Stage 1 was successfully implemented in January 2015. This enables teachers to reflect on what is usually good progress and helps them more easily spot any child who may need further intervention. Progress in Hebrew reading is good and the vast majority of pupils meet the school's expectations of being able to read fluently. This is aided by a parent body that is supportive by regularly listening to reading at home.

### **The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs requires improvement GRADE 3 because:-**

- The Jewish Studies curriculum does not currently reflect the ambition of the school. It lacks detail and depth and needs further improvement which is reflected in the school's own self-evaluation. There is little guidance, for example, for teachers as what specifically should be taught for *Parsha* and *Chagim*.
- Teaching needs to go above and beyond what is prescribed in the curriculum. It has been designed by staff who have all since left the school and would greatly benefit from being updated and streamlined into one cohesive document. This would enable senior leaders and staff to match more closely the curriculum to the ambition of the school.
- Informal Jewish education promotes the Jewish ethos of the school. This can be seen in the great variety of activities regularly taking place and enjoyed by the pupils. Some examples of these are:
  - Assemblies – these include *leyning* (reading from the *Torah* scroll), *Sedra* summaries (the weekly *Torah* portion), *divrei Torah* (short talks about an aspect of the *Torah*) and 'Good news from Israel' by Y6. Assemblies also have weekly announcements of class charity collections (e.g. *Magen David Adom*) and termly visiting speakers from supported causes. Pupils enjoy singing in the 'Zemirot Club' and learn different songs to sing around the *Shabbat* table.
  - There are *chessed* (kindness) awards (one per class) which earn the pupils tea with the Headteacher. Pupils win a 'Golden Sash' (one per class) for special effort/achievement and *davening* (prayer) charts for holidays.
  - Pupils visit Day Care centres such as the Sam Beckman Centre and Residential Care Homes such as the Hannah Levy Home. They have performed at the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony at the Metropolitan Police Peel Centre. These activities gives pupils an opportunity to give to others and demonstrate care for the wider community.

- There are Shabbaton and Melava Malka events for Y5 and Y6, monthly 'Avot Uvanim' evenings, participation in Shabbat UK and 'Generation Sinai' events. One major impact of these events is the creation of a greater sense of Jewish identity and recognition of the importance of family.

## **The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is Outstanding GRADE 1 because:-**

- The school meets legal requirements for collective worship through daily *tefillah* (prayer) and other opportunities to recite *brachot* (blessings). Pupils take part in these with enthusiasm, singing and reciting the daily prayers and *brachot*, and learning about what they mean. Inspectors observed very good practice when a member of staff introduced each part of the morning *tefillah* with a brief introduction to its meaning. This helped pupils to focus and understand what they were doing.
- All the pupils seen by the inspectors seemed happy to be in the school. Pupils showed respect to each other and to staff at all times. They were also very courteous to the inspectors.
- Teaching and support staff are excellent role models, demonstrating valued attributes and behaviours 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.
- When inspectors interviewed pupils, they unanimously expressed their interest and enjoyment in *Limudei Kodesh* and its associated learning experiences.
- Pupils are helpful to each other. In one class for example, when a girl arrived late, she was met by a group who took her, with the teacher's permission, to the interactive white board, and helped her to catch up on what she had missed.
- Pupils have a genuine thirst for knowledge, nurtured by their teachers. One child, for example, postponed his *Tzedakah* (charity) duty to find out an answer to a question he had during morning *tefillah*, and approached the Head of *Limudei Kodesh* for the answer. The Head of *Limudei Kodesh* encouraged him to find out the answer for himself, which he did by asking one of the inspectors!
- Displays across the whole school in classrooms and circulation areas are varied, interesting and appropriate. They integrate the whole *chol/Kodesh* learning environment and ethos, including displays about friendship and helpfulness, incorporating Jewish themes as appropriate.
- The school is involved in a large number of charities. This year charities include Camp Simcha, Poppy Appeal, *Hatzolah*, Jewish Child's Day, *Chai* Cancer Care, Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Zion Orphanage in Jerusalem. Pupils are therefore aware of, and play an active part in, caring for others and appreciating the plight of those who may be less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils have positive views of their school, describing it as a very friendly place where the pupils look to include others. When asked to summarise their school, one child said he felt



Hasmonean Primary had the "...perfect balance between *Kodesh* and secular studies in a friendly environment." Pupils have a keen interest in, and show a deep respect for other people around them, who are from their own and diverse cultures.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish learning is Good GRADE 2 because:**

- Senior leaders are working tirelessly to address issues such as improving the *Limudei Kodesh* curriculum, marking and monitoring. The Senior Management Team (SMT) is relatively new, but has made a positive impact in a short amount of time which has been reflected in improved teaching strategies and achievement of pupils.
- Senior leaders need to take the information from the current main resource, i.e. worksheets, and weave this into a carefully planned out, spiralling curriculum (i.e. one that builds on knowledge and skills in each successive year) linked to up-to-date schemes of work for each Year Group. They do, however, demonstrate the potential capacity to secure improvement in the school and this is a work in progress.
- Self-evaluation is for the most part realistic and there is evidence that it is contributing to some useful feedback for leaders to consider in their forward planning, but it needs to be more analytical and show impact.
- Members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) have all previously been Heads of *Kodesh* and share a similar aim and understanding regarding the ethos of the school, working together for the good of *Limudei Kodesh*. This helps to foster a professional synergy which promotes healthy debate about school improvement.
- Senior leaders, as well as governors, have a clear and shared vision of the school.
- Senior leaders, including those responsible for governance, communicate expectations and ambition in maintaining and improving the quality of the Jewish education that the school provides.
- The Head of *Limudei Kodesh* and Headteacher observe colleagues and give feedback on strengths and areas for development. This is linked to an in-house Performance Management schedule which informs strategic planning for the future.
- The Headteacher and the Head of *Limudei Kodesh* acknowledge that *the Limudei Kodesh* curriculum needs updating so that it reflects a spiralling sequence of topics throughout the Year Groups. In addition, the issue of effective marking systems requires reviewing. Both senior leaders recognise this and are currently addressing these as a work in progress.
- The governing body carries out its duties 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 Hasmonean Primary as a school whose principle is '*Torah im Derech Eretz*' and whose mission is: "To give pupils the tools they need to leave the school with the skills and love of *Yiddishkeit* (Judaism) and what it is to be Jew in Britain."



## Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Hasmonean Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. Parents' views about the Jewish Education provision were mixed, including 80% of parents agreeing with the statement:

'The school encourages high standards in Jewish Studies/Limmudei Kodesh',

and 60% agreeing with the statement:

'I am satisfied with the amount and range of work in Jewish Studies/Limmudei Kodesh that my child has to do at home.'

The comments below encapsulate their views:

"My child loves Yiddishkeit and it permeates the school"

"My child is thriving in her Jewish studies. Excellent teaching"

"A lot of emphasis on translation and grammar which can be dry."

"In order to maintain the best level of Jewish involvement into the future, a positive and high quality level of *Limudei Kodesh* needs to be maintained."

# GLOSSARY

## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>JUDGEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupil's 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.