

Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School

Parkside Dollis Hill London NW2 6RJ

Section 48 Kodesh Studies Inspection

Inspection dates	23-24 Iyar 5782 24-25 May 2022
Overall effectiveness	Good

Leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of Jewish education	Good
Intent – Curriculum Design	Outstanding
Implementation – Teaching and assessment	Good
Impact - Achievement	Good
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitude	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

- The veteran *Menahel* (Principal) ensures that pupils benefit from an effective *kodesh* (Jewish studies) department, staffed by a highly professional and capable team of *rebbees* (*kodesh* teachers).
- The school has an interim SENDco at present, but an appointment has been made for a School Inclusion Manager and the school is in the process of recruiting a *kodesh* SENDco to commence at the start of the new school year.
- The pupils are friendly and welcoming. They behave very well and they are enthusiastic to learn.
- The governing body provides rigorous oversight of all aspects of the *kodesh* department and strong support for school improvement.

- Many improvements have been made since the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching, in the breadth and depth of the *kodesh* curriculum and in the behaviour and attitude of pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is currently no *kodesh* SENDco at the school, which means that pupils with SEND do not always receive the professional help that they require.
- The new high-quality bespoke assessment system for *kodesh* is not yet fully embedded across all classes and all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Eighteen lessons were observed and all *kodesh* teachers were observed teaching at least two subjects. Samples of pupils' written work were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the *Menahel*, his deputy, the Head Teacher, the Head of Nursery, with representatives of the Board of Governors and with groups of boys across the age range of the school.
- Pupils of Years 2, 4 and 6 were tested on their *kerioh* (Hebrew reading) skills and on their knowledge of *chumash* (Bible), *gemorroh* (Talmud), *mishna*, and *yedioh klolis* (general knowledge).
- The inspector considered the views of 78 parents and carers who responded to a parental survey (conducted by the school for the purpose of this inspection) concerning the *kodesh* provision. He also considered the views of six *rebbe*s who responded to a staff survey.
- All classes were observed during *shacharis* (morning prayer), and the inspector observed a *mincha* (afternoon prayer) service.
- There was no allowance made for the time that the school had to be shut due to the Covid pandemic. This is because the school worked very hard to maintain contact with its pupils during the lockdown, and assessment records testify that the pupils did not suffer noticeably due to the pandemic.

Inspector

Rabbi Nathaniel Lieberman MA.

Full report

Information about this school

- Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah is an orthodox Jewish primary school, catering for 3-11-year-old boys. There are 207 students on roll and there is a waiting list of pupils who wish to join the school.
- It aims to meet the needs of orthodox Jewish families in the North West London area by providing a dual curriculum - both a high-quality National Curriculum secular tuition and an orthodox Jewish education which imbues pupils with a love of *torah* and *mitzvos*.
- *Kodesh* studies are taught during the first lesson daily and represent more than 50% of lessons. As the school delivers an holistic, cross-curricular education, and pupils are at school for 7-8 hours daily and on Sunday and Bank Holiday mornings, it is able to provide a full National Curriculum alongside its *kodesh* provision.
- There is one pupil with an Educational Health & Care Plan and the percentage of those on School Support (19%) is above average for a primary school. There are 37 EAL pupils listed on the school's Provision Map/Inclusion Register.
- The school employs all its *rebbes* on a full-time basis, which enables the most and least able pupils to receive extra support.
- The school's computerised records and programmes were hacked earlier this year and the school has been unable to retrieve all the missing or corrupted files. This has been taken into account when passing judgement on the school's curriculum and its assessment procedures.
- The school's last Section 48 inspection was in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Engage the services of a dedicated *kodesh* SENDco and sufficient LSAs to cater fully for the needs of the 22% of pupils who are on the SEND register.
- Provide training for all *kodesh* staff in the use of the high-grade assessment programme, and encourage *rebbes* to make full use of this excellent facility.

Inspection judgements

Leadership and management

- The quality of leadership and management of *kodesh* studies is outstanding. The *menahel* and his deputy have spearheaded noticeable improvement to the quality of the school's *kodesh* provision since the last inspection.
- The *kodesh* leadership have an accurate picture of the current state of the *kodesh* provision and a clear vision of how to take the school forward to the next level.
- The leadership has improved the standard of teaching via the targeted professional development of *rebbes* and via the appointment of several high-quality new members of staff.
- New procedures enacted by leaders across the school have led to an improved attitude of pupils towards their learning and towards their behaviour.
- The *menahel* ensures that there is mutual respect and full co-operation between the *kodesh* and *chol* departments of the school, which is of great benefit to the pupils. *Kodesh* and *chol* class teachers meet formally at the beginning of every week to plan activities together and to ensure that all pupils receive the pastoral care that they require.
- The school uses a cross-curricular 'Palm Tree' behaviour system effectively in Early Years and KS1. Pupils behave extremely well in the older classes, where there is no noticeable behaviour system.
- Despite the dual *kodesh* and *chol* curriculum, and a dedicated *rebbe* for each class, nevertheless all the *rebbes* are full-time employees. The generous non-contact time allows *rebbes* to assist each other and provide support for the least and most able pupils, it accords them space and time to prepare and mark lessons, and enables them to focus on pastoral care for the pupils.
- The leadership have improved the *kodesh* curriculum. Notable developments include an upgraded and sequenced *yedioh klolis* (general knowledge) curriculum, complete with songs and pupil booklets. The *millim* (vocabulary) curriculum has also been graded, so that pupils build on prior knowledge as they move through the school.
- The school's SMSC provision is cross-curricular and is led by the *kodesh* department. For example, both *kodesh* and *chol* staff organise extra-curricular activities together, and promote the 'Whole School Holding' holding hands display that encourages good relationships with peers.
- During the months that the school had to close due to Covid, great care was taken to keep in contact with all pupils via telephone lessons and personal conversations. Accordingly, the level of *kerioh*, for example, did not suffer during the time that pupils were away from school. Furthermore, extensive monitoring by senior leaders and outside professionals, plus input from the school's *Shema Koli*

programme, has facilitated a return to pre-Covid levels of mental wellbeing within the pupil body.

- The overwhelming majority of parents/carers who responded to a recent questionnaire felt that the *kodesh* department encourages high standards in *kodesh*, that their child is making good progress in his *kodesh*, that he enjoys his *kodesh* lessons and that the school gives its pupils a good appreciation of *Torah* life (life according to the Bible). Typical comments were: 'Our son thoroughly enjoys his *kodesh* learning and is making excellent progress.' 'My children love learning and love their *rebbes*.' 'The *Torah* education is alive and meaningful.'
- The governing body has an excellent understanding of its dual role of holding school leaders to account and providing support for school improvement. It provides rigorous oversight of the *kodesh* department and its members have a clear view of how to take the school forward to the next level. Individual governors are generous with both their time and with their financial support for new projects.
- The governors work together with the *menahel* in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They discuss school issues regularly, both on a formal and informal basis.

The overall quality of *kodesh* education is Good.

The Intent (curriculum design) of the *kodesh* education is Outstanding.

- The school's bespoke *kodesh* curriculum has been created by the *menahel*, the deputy *menahel* and subject leaders.
- The curriculum is ambitious in both its breadth and depth, with the *chumash* curriculum, for example, incorporating both skills and knowledge and featuring thoughts and ideas from the *Ramban (Nachmanides)* and other major commentaries.
- Pupils are taught to read in a structured manner, using the tried and tested commercial *kerioh ne'imoh* system.
- The *millim* curriculum features an impressive 120 words for Reception boys, and it has been upgraded recently to include levels, to enable boys to pass from one level to the next in sequence.
- *Yedioh klolis* has a three-pronged approach, with the knowledge taught via song and embedded via pupil booklets and the commercial *chayeinu* workbooks.
- The school's relationships, fundamental British values and healthy lifestyle curricula, as well as the PSHE curriculum, are all *kodesh*-based and taught in a cross-curricular fashion by both *rebbe*s and teachers.
- *Rebbe*s create their own high-quality booklets for the teaching and reinforcement of *chumash*, *mishna* and *gemorroh*.
- The pupils *davven* (pray) *shacharis* (apart from Year six) and chant the *bentching* (grace after meals) in acts of collective worship. KS2 pupils also *davven mincha* together.

The Implementation (quality of teaching) of the *kodesh* education is Good.

- The quality of teaching is outstanding.
- The *rebbe*s are enthusiastic and excellent role-models for the pupils, with whom they enjoy a close and caring relationship.
- *Rebbe*s make very good use of class time, and lessons move along swiftly.
- They use a range of techniques to maintain the attention of the boys, and organise their lessons to ensure that there is continually something fresh and exciting happening. One example was in an Early Years setting, where the *rebbe* had a different activity on each table and the children moved from one activity to the next whilst the *rebbe* practised *kerioh* with the boys at his table. At the upper end of the school the *rebbe*s interspersed formal frontal teaching with *chavrusah* (partner) learning, with worksheet activity, questions and action at the SMARTboard.
- The pupils are well-drilled in class routines and there is minimal disruption even when changing subjects in the middle of a period. One

class sang a calm tune as they changed seamlessly from one subject to another. By the time the singing drew to a close, the boys were keen and alert – in perfect shape to start the new subject.

- Technology is used effectively to create Powerpoints and bespoke booklets that explain complicated topics and help pupils focus on the subject matter in hand.
- *Rebbes* boost the pupils' confidence and levels of enthusiasm through targeted compliments and skilful questioning.
- SEND pupils are assisted by differentiated work and by sessions with other *rebbes* in their non-teaching time. However, the school does not currently have a *kodesh* SENDco on site, which is detrimental to those pupils with SEND issues.

The Impact (achievement) of the *kodesh* education is Good.

- The ambitious curriculum results in pupils getting off to a flying start in their *kodesh* education. For example, during a lesson in the Nursery class, a child was able to respond to the *rebbe's* question and say that the word *tallis* in Hebrew starts with the letter *tes* rather than with the letter *toff*. A Year One *sedra* lesson was observed where the *rebbe* taught information that might be appropriate for upper KS2 in other schools.
- By the time the pupils reach the end of Reception most are proficient in 120 Hebrew vocabulary words, and they demonstrate the ability to incorporate this knowledge into unseen texts.
- The pupils are enthusiastic about their *kodesh* studies. Within a few moments of engaging a pair of Year Four pupils in conversation in the corridor, they excitedly volunteered to sing a selection of *yedioh klolis* songs to this inspector. Similarly, as the end of the school day arrived, the pupils of Year Four were literally begging the *rebbe* to allow them to go through further *yedioh klolis* routines, despite the fact that it was time to go home for the day.
- Year Six pupils demonstrated confidence and ability in tackling unseen *chumash* texts, and even Year Four pupils were able to demonstrate a remarkable degree of success in doing so.
- *Kerioh* assessments are carried out three times a year in a systematic and rigorous manner. This ensures that pupils quickly learn to read Hebrew with confidence, and that those pupils who are struggling receive targeted assistance.
- Pupils' written work is at a high standard. This is evidenced by the work in their books and by their work that is displayed in the corridors and on the classroom walls.
- There is a comprehensive assessment system incorporating ladders that records every pupil's achievements in both skills and knowledge across the entire curriculum. The system is computerised and operates

- in tandem with the school's *chol* assessment programme. However, not all *rebbes* are up to date in recording their assessment information.
- There is no *kodesh* SENDco to take ownership of those pupils who are struggling with various forms of SEND. This inspector was shown evidence of plans to engage a SENDco specifically for *kodesh* issues next term, together with a team of LSAs who will implement the SENDco's recommendations.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of the pupils is Outstanding

The personal development of the pupils is Outstanding.

- The *kodesh* provision at Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School provides an outstanding platform for its pupils to develop into confident and productive members of the Jewish community in Britain.
- Pupils gain a rich Jewish experience through a combination of formal teaching, informal education and direction from the outstanding role-models who teach them and care for them at school.
- Fundamental British values are taught seamlessly within the *kodesh* curriculum in general, and within PSHE in particular, and pupils are very well-prepared for life in Britain today.
- Collective worship is taken seriously, as pupils participate well and maintain excellent decorum.
- Pupils benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are centred around on the Jewish calendar. During the inspection the school was preparing for a special *ovois u'vonim* (fathers and sons) programme, for pupils to spend time learning at school with their fathers during the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday break.
- Other extra-curricular programmes include the activities every day of *Chanukah*, the *brochos shuk* in honour of *Tu b'Shevat*, a talent show before *Purim*, the baking of matzos prior to *Pessach* and a visit to London Zoo on *lag b'omer*.
- Boys have involved themselves with the wider community by raising funds for farmers who observe *shemitta* in Israel, for the Kids Meal Appeal charity that supports poor children and for Ukranian refugees.
- Displays in the corridors and around the school feature a rich mix of pupils' work and educational posters, covering a wide range of Jewish topics. There are details of the various current and future motivational programmes that encourage pupils to improve their *middos* (character traits) and their focus on learning.

The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is Outstanding.

- The pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They move around the school in a purposeful, sensible and orderly manner.
- New procedures enacted by the school over the past year have had a most positive impact on the general decorum around the school.
- Pupils are positive and enthusiastic towards their studies – they palpably enjoy their learning.
- During lessons the behaviour is impeccable, as pupils cooperate willingly with class procedures and follow instructions with alacrity.

- Pupils of all ages behave in a friendly and respectful way towards strangers. For example, a couple of Year Three boys went out of their way to ensure that this inspector was seated comfortably in their classroom, without receiving any instructions from an adult.
- Pupils are happy to undertake duties around the school, with one boy voluntarily replacing all the chairs in the storeroom following the *mincha* prayers.
- Pupils support and care for each other - there was a boy waiting to be fetched in the middle of the school day, and several other boys wandered over to check that he was feeling fine.
- Pupils are very positive about their learning and they speak highly of the *kodesh* provision that they receive at school. They were keen to engage positively with the inspector both formally and informally.
- The pupils are adamant that there is no bullying going on at school, and that any minor incidents are dealt with competently by members of staff.

School details

Department for Education number	304/3603
Unique reference number	131916
Local authority	London Borough of Brent

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

Type of school	Voluntary aided
School category	Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting Chair of Governors	Mr Charles Halvieim
Principal	Rabbi E Klyne
Date of previous school inspection	January 2015
Telephone number	020 8450 4377
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