

Yavneh College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134985
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	360666
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	711
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Nyman
Headteacher	Dena Coleman
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 30 lessons, taught by 25 teachers. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at its documentation, including policies, plans and evaluations as well as the questionnaire responses from 67 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective is the school's use of assessment data in planning and delivering well-tailored provision for all groups of students?
- What is the level of achievement of gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and is teaching sufficiently challenging for these groups?
- How well does the school analyse the needs of its sixth form students and is provision sufficient to ensure their good progress?

Information about the school

Yavneh College is a Modern Orthodox Jewish school. It is smaller than average for a secondary school. Most students are from a White British heritage and there is a much lower than average proportion of students from minority ethnic groups. There are lower than average proportions of students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have specific learning difficulties. There are a few students who speak English as an additional language. The school opened in September 2006 and the first full cohort of students has now reached Year 11. There is a smaller than average sixth form that takes students from other Jewish secondary schools as well as from Year 11 of this school. The school has specialist status in business and enterprise.

Running concurrently with this inspection was a section 48 inspection into the religious activities at the school, which are reported separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Students' achievement is outstanding and they attain highly, making excellent progress across Years 7 to 11, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few who speak English as an additional language. In the small sixth form, progress is good.

Students at Yavneh receive very high quality care and support and their lessons are generally highly stimulating, challenging and enjoyable. The previous inspection report indicated that students were not always given opportunities to work independently but this has been fully rectified. Students work very effectively on their own and in teams, and there are high levels of cooperation and mutual support between them. Their attendance is high with most saying they enjoy the challenges and variety of the excellent curriculum. The school's specialist status has helped it to develop very good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and many activities have an enterprise element to them. Students are adept at supporting charities and community groups, some of them in Israel, for example. Those who are gifted and talented are further challenged through stretching activities in lessons and through the extensive enrichment curriculum. All students learn Hebrew but able linguists take this further and may tackle Yiddish as well.

Leaders and managers collect and use the results of regular student tests very effectively so lessons are well targeted to learners' needs. Lessons always have extra challenges for the more able and excellent support is provided for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Planning is rigorous, as it has had to be with a school growing rapidly in size, year on year. Senior leaders have ensured its energetic team of teachers has enabled both the school and its students to grow in ambition. The accuracy of its self-evaluation has led to improvements in assessment and students regularly evaluate their own work with their teachers, outlining how they are going to improve further. The success of curriculum development in the main school and the consistently high quality of teaching means the school has an outstanding capacity to improve. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and evaluates its performance well, but does not always fully challenge it and hold it to account.

Sixth form students were not always placed on appropriate courses in the first year of this phase, so they did not all stay on to complete their courses. This has improved markedly now that the sixth form is in its third year. Students' progress is rising and this is confirmed by recent results from examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in the sixth form by September 2013, by ensuring all courses are fully matched to the needs of students.

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- Ensure the governing body challenges the school, as it expands, and holds it to account in all its activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students make outstanding progress in Years 7 to 11. They arrive with above-average attainment and receive excellent teaching and support resulting in outstanding achievement and high attainment. The results of regular, externally moderated assessments carried out by the school are well-above average. Students are encouraged to work independently and to take on leadership roles. This helps them develop self-confidence in their own abilities and many express their love of their school for providing them with so many memorable experiences and chances of success.

Students from all ethnic backgrounds develop their basic skills in English and mathematics very quickly when they arrive in Year 7. They are encouraged to find their voice and many lessons help build skills in speaking and expression. Students use ICT regularly and confidently, frequently working within the specialism areas of business and enterprise. Projects often have built in enterprise elements, such as teamwork and encouragement to place learning into context. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because their needs are diagnosed early and extra support is put in place, often one to one. They achieve well in formal assessments and those in Year 11 have already proved their excellent progress, leading up towards their GCSE examinations. Students' attitudes and excellent behaviour mean that learning is rarely interrupted. Cooperation within work in small groups is a feature and less-able students are helped by the 'can do' attitudes shared by students and teachers.

Students' moral values are very strong and expressed through their opportunities for public speaking. For example, work towards GCSE English is encouraging students to challenge preconceived ideas about being Jewish. Students are confident in showing what they have learned during lessons and they ask difficult questions of their teachers when they are stuck or do not agree with an aspect under discussion. This is underpinned by challenging activities designed to develop extended writing skills, or further ways to use a mathematics formula or theory, for example. Achievement in English and mathematics is high across the school. Many students are confident speakers of modern foreign languages; all learn Hebrew. More-able science students take part in competitions as well as following very successful triple science courses.

The trip to Israel for all Year 9 students has helped develop awareness of that culture and this is augmented through exploration of the arts through music and drama. Students' artworks decorate the school and many are keen and talented musicians. Three charities are chosen every year for special support and students take part in conservation projects. The many sports clubs and enrichment activities ensure students develop excellent understanding of how to live healthy lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons are at least good, so securing outstanding learning and progress. Teachers have high expectations of the students and good relationships with them. Lessons are frequently inspirational and enthusiastically received so learning moves forward apace. Students engage well with opportunities for independent learning and ICT resources make a strong contribution to the quality of learning. Assessment is consistently well used across all departments. Teachers make excellent use of questioning, marking to provide formative feedback and ongoing assessment throughout lessons. Checking of progress through the simple, but highly effective use of mini whiteboards ensures teachers and students share how much they are learning.

Students with specific learning difficulties make outstanding progress because teachers and learning assistants have excellent understanding of their needs. These students receive valuable extra help both in and outside the classroom.

The curriculum is very well organised and exceptionally well matched to students' needs. It provides opportunities for rapid learning and progress, as well as memorable experiences - for example, simulating the orbit of planets around the playground, attending an interview day or in public speaking. Specialist status helps ensure financial capability, with work-related learning enriched through sessions across the curriculum and, for example, through discussions following work experience. There is scope for learning two modern foreign languages and time is regularly allocated to Jewish studies. The

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popular range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities effectively extends the curriculum, often through collaboration with other schools and organisations. Enrichment happens every day in Key Stage 3, so all students have the chance to sample a very broad range of experiences, in readiness for the next stage of their learning.

Provision for the potentially vulnerable or those with additional needs is highly tailored and supported by learning assistants. Those who are more able have their needs carefully mapped across the provision, so there are extra challenges in, for example, mathematics, music and creative writing.

The school supports its pupils at transition times, sometimes through the auspices of guidance organisations, so students report few worries. There is effective careers advice and help towards next-step choices and the pastoral managers ensure students receive appropriate care and support when required. Excellent attendance levels are maintained through rigorous monitoring and support for families. Where students do miss school, there are catch-up sessions and support to ensure progress is not slowed down.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her senior team have empowered all members of staff and all work closely together, sharing the ethos and the school's evident ambition. Teachers are monitored regularly and held to account for the progress of their students. As the school has grown, planning has developed the resources to provide for the challenges this has created. As departments have expanded, teachers have taken on new responsibilities, such as for the sixth form that is set to grow rapidly when the current Year 11 makes its way there. Successful evolution has made Yavneh an exciting place in which to teach.

Parents and carers have multiple ways of communicating with the school, through a virtual learning environment - which is making a significant contribution to high attendance, regular newsletters and surveys. They can always find out how well their children are progressing. Many give generously of their time and professional expertise, such as through coming in to talk about employment and giving practice interviews. They help with shows and come to consultancy evenings enthusiastically and in large numbers.

The school has engaged very effectively with its partners, such as with a neighbouring school to challenge stereotypes. It has helped neighbouring institutions with their ICT provision and safeguarding training. The school has excellent links with social care and educational partners that assist students with additional learning needs and problems at home. Behaviour is supported through anger management services and potentially

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vulnerable students are effectively helped to stay in school when this could look difficult to accomplish. The school's regular visits to Israel have helped build confidence among students in tackling projects away from home. Here they have engaged with social initiatives, such as environmental work on the Jordan River, and reports of this trip's significance for students are numerous and convincing.

The governing body is supportive and understands the challenges facing the school. It has been omnipresent over this recent period of expansion but does not always fully challenge the school effectively and hold it to account where there are perceived shortcomings. The governing body ensures students are kept in a safe and highly secure environment by a dedicated site team and all procedures to ensure safe recruitment of staff are exemplary. The monitoring of all systems and policies for safeguarding are robust and partnership links with outside agencies have ensured potentially vulnerable students are actively supported through their time at Yavneh.

The school informs itself very well about the communities which it serves. Students are provided with opportunities to learn about and engage with other communities around the country, such as through a multi-faith group with another school and arts experiences. Their understanding of the rest of the world and its cultures is further enhanced through the excellent range of learning opportunities available. The high sense of community within the school is reflected in students' excellent community contribution and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The current outstanding quality of learning and personal experiences ensures students have equal opportunity to thrive and achieve. Outcomes for all students in the sixth form have not been as exceptional, however, and this means the effectiveness of the school's work towards equality across the whole school is good, rather than outstanding. There is no evident discrimination and students attest to the excellent opportunities their education provides.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Sixth form

Students currently enjoy very small class sizes, and this ensures they receive focused teaching. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects and make excellent role models. Lessons are challenging and assessment is well used to ensure students are very clear about their progress. They are supported effectively and receive good advice about how to make the best of their academic chances, such as through re-sitting modules where it is clear they could have done better. Academic outcomes are generally good and the wide range of excellent opportunities afforded through responsibilities for involvement in the main school mean that students' personal development is also good.

The curriculum is very broad, in preparation for the increase in intake next year, and the balance of academic subjects is good, meeting the needs of most students. Some, however, in the first group to go through, did not achieve the success the school had come to expect from its main school activities. The leaders of the sixth form have now ensured that students are taking appropriate courses and recent formal assessment results are strong indicators of higher achievement this year.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' response to the questionnaire was below that of most secondary schools. However, the inspection found that parents and carers are regularly surveyed for their opinions and ideas and have what constitutes a permanent opportunity to communicate with the school via the virtual learning environment and email. There is a high level of response to such means of communication. Those parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, did so very fully with detailed comments about the school. Most responses were favourable regarding how much their child enjoyed school, how safe they were and how well informed they were about progress. There was a small minority who felt the school does not deal with poor behaviour and that their suggestions and concerns were not taken account of. The inspection found that behaviour is outstanding and that the school holds regular consultancy meetings and has a broad range of means by which parents and carers can make their thoughts known.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Yavneh College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 711 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	49	31	46	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	73	15	22	0	0	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	55	30	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	49	23	34	10	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	34	35	52	6	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	31	35	52	10	15	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	34	37	55	5	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	37	29	43	6	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	34	38	57	5	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	36	28	42	11	16	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	30	25	37	15	22	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	36	31	46	5	7	5	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	45	30	45	6	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is 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. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Yavneh College, Borehamwood, WD6 1HL

Thank you very much for making the inspection team so welcome when we recently visited your school. You were very helpful to us, showing us where to go, holding conversations with us, explaining your work and discussing it with us. We found that your school is outstanding, particularly in the academic and personal outcomes it helps you achieve. You reach high levels of attainment and make outstanding progress. Those of you in the sixth form are making good progress and you have good opportunities to develop personally, as individuals.

Your school provides you with an interesting and broad curriculum and most lessons are challenging and enjoyable. The school's leaders are continuing to develop Yavneh as it grows in size and they have clearly shown how ambitious they are for you. Your school community is strong and vibrant, providing plenty of opportunities for you to contribute, both to it, and to the wider community. Teachers provide excellent guidance and support for you all and there is always care on hand, when you need it.

We have asked your school to make a few changes so that it can continue to improve even more than it has since its last inspection.

We have asked the school to:

- raise achievement in the sixth form by making sure all students take courses that fully meet their needs and aspirations
- ensure the governing body always challenges the school and holds it to account.

You can help by continuing to work to the best of your ability in every lesson, and by supporting your school as it grows further.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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