

Bnos Zion of Bobov

65–67 Ravensdale Road, Hackney, London N16 6TJ

Inspection dates	10–11 July 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Leaders and managers have a firm and accurate grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Since the last inspection, there has been a determined drive to improve the quality of teaching and the pupils' experience of learning. There is a clear vision for the longer-term development of the school.
- Pupils' achieve well and make at least good progress, especially in their Jewish studies and in English and mathematics. Pupils also make excellent progress in their social skills.
- The quality of teaching is typically good, and sometimes outstanding. Staff are imaginative in the way they manage resources to help pupils understand their work.
- Pupils are exceptionally well behaved both in classrooms and around the school. They feel very safe because of the school's untiring efforts to ensure their welfare.
- Children in the Reception class have a good start to their schooling. For older pupils, the balance of subjects successfully integrates the religious education programme with that for secular studies.
- The school is deeply embedded in the local community. Partnerships with parents and carers are very strong and they greatly appreciate the staff's work to support their children's development.
- The proprietor and governors are ambitious for the school and support it well financially with contributions from the community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not enable all pupils, especially the most able, to make outstanding progress as targets are not always challenging enough.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics, although good, is not as rapid as in reading, writing, spelling and grammar. Their experience of new technologies is limited.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day’s notice. The inspectors observed 14 parts of lessons. The inspectors looked at pupils’ work and held meetings with the headteacher and senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff members, and spoke informally with pupils.
- The inspectors looked at documentation including policy statements, schemes of work, teachers’ planning and records of pupils’ progress and of staff training.
- They considered the response of 71 parents and carers who had completed Ofsted’s parents’ questionnaire. Inspectors considered two responses to the staff questionnaire. The inspectors also evaluated the school’s request to extend the upper age of the pupils from 12 to 13.

Inspection team

Sheila Nolan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ron Cohen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bnos Zion of Bobov is an independent primary and secondary day school providing education for girls aged between three and 12 years. It is owned and operated by the local Bobov community.
- The school building is formed from two adjacent houses in the Stamford Hill area. It serves the ultra-orthodox Jewish Bobov community. Yiddish is the main community language.
- The school is registered for 165 pupils. Currently there are 158 pupils on roll, all girls.
- One student has a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils have a home language other than English but only the youngest children are at the earliest stages of learning English.
- The school aims to deliver a first-class education, firmly based on Torah principles but taking account of the National Curriculum. The school highlights the importance of the '5 Cs' with all members of the school community: contribution, challenge, caring, consistency and communication. It sets out to develop in each girl her Charedi Jewish identity alongside an understanding of British values and institutions.
- The school has drawn on support from the local authority learning trust to guide it in developing the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve even further the quality of teaching and pupils' rates of progress by:
 - ensuring that staff systematically plan work to challenge all groups of pupils, especially the most able
 - assisting staff in taking note of pupils' targets and using them to inform their planning,
 - encouraging even more, pupils' confidence in speaking in public.
- Sharpen the school's focus on the pupils' progress in mathematics so that it matches the fast rate of progress in English and Jewish studies by:
 - deepening teachers' understanding of how to assess pupils' misunderstandings and misconceptions in lessons
 - making sure that pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematics in genuine problem-solving situations.
- While remaining within the school's particular remit, provide more of the possible experiences of new technologies that are acceptable to the community.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- Pupils achieve well at all key stages within the school. Numbers in any year group are small so that attainment on entry fluctuates depending on the cohort. In most year groups, however, pupils begin school with above average social skills so that they are well prepared for learning.
- The overwhelming majority of the pupils make excellent progress in their Jewish studies. Pupils take these very seriously, applying themselves to all aspects of their work, oral, written and practical.
- In the Nursery, most children are at the early stages of learning English. All rapidly develop fluency in English and become bilingual with Yiddish as their first language. A number are multilingual. By the end of Reception, most children have made good progress and exceed a good level of development. Language and communication skills are a particular strength. They are well prepared for Year 1 as the school follows closely the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.
- As pupils proceed through the school, they make at least good progress in reading, writing and spelling and grammar. In the most recent standardised tests, for example, at the end of Year 6, pupils did particularly well with many comfortably gaining high or close to full marks in the Level 5 band.
- Pupils' grasp of spelling and grammar is excellent and this is clearly demonstrated in their progress in writing, including in Year 7. They make very effective links between English and their other languages, finding helpful ways to aid their understanding of words and expressions. The school has had a planned emphasis this year on the pupils' literacy skills and this has slightly distracted staff from having a similarly strong focus on mathematics.
- Although pupils' progress in mathematics is good, it is not as fast as that in English. Pupils are able to follow patterns and are very competent in calculations. However, their progress is limited by their lack of experience of applying their basic mathematical skills to problem solving. This is particularly so for the most able who have too few opportunities for investigative tasks.
- In Year 7, pupils extend their learning to all the required areas of experience. They have achieved well in textiles, for example, in a short period. Their work in science, however, shows less attention and care than in English and mathematics.
- Although the pupils achieve well overall, their opportunities to excel in new technologies are still fewer than is necessary to comply with the ethos of the community.
- The very few pupils with special educational needs also make fast progress, as the school makes every effort to help them to manage and overcome their difficulties. Support staff are very effective with those who need one-to-one attention. Any child with a statement is well catered for and currently makes very good progress in integrating into mainstream lessons. The school fulfils meticulously its obligations in this area.
- Although pupils are generally confident in their routines and in their work, some become reticent when responding orally in class or when performing in public. In these situations, they can rush their speech or mumble a response and mask their really good achievements.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because not all pupils, particularly the most able, make the progress of which they are capable.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Good quality teaching helps the pupils to achieve well. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils support the pupils' willingness to ask questions, admit a lack of understanding at times, and above all, concentrate outstandingly well on the work in hand. High expectations of the pupils' responses from all staff mean that the pupils invariably try to do their best.
- Teachers plan very diligently for work that mostly builds well on previous learning, including for

any pupil with special educational needs. Support staff are well deployed in those classes where they are needed. However, there are times when the challenge for the most able is not stretching enough.

- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers sometimes fail to spot the underlying misconception in the pupils' questions. Also, teachers do not always give pupils the confidence to articulate their thinking. This is more so in mathematics than in other subjects.
- Resources are often very creative and imaginative. In Jewish studies, for example, pupils followed the examples of their teachers and drew on everyday packaging to create genealogies of their families. They proudly displayed these in the corridors. In another Jewish studies session, the pupils were delighted to celebrate finishing a section of learning and were really keen to show off their knowledge as a group.
- The school has had a sharp focus on developing pupils' communication skills in both Yiddish and English. Year 3, for example, were observed in their afternoon English poetry performance for their mothers. They recited poems of their choice, often accompanied by dramatic resources and costumes of their own making and choosing. In the morning they had celebrated, equally proudly, their work in Jewish studies.
- Older pupils in English were preparing a diary entry in one session and carefully drafted their possible entries before recording them in their workbooks. Systematic teaching and deep learning were evident in the pupils' accurate spelling and grammatical constructions as well as in their imaginative writing.
- Generally work is well marked and pupils are very responsible in responding to teachers' guidance and in correcting mistakes. Staff record carefully and regularly the pupils' attainment and have a clear picture of how well each pupil is doing.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also good. In the Reception class, for example, pupils in their choice of play were working on their fine motor skills. Children used well the various opportunities provided to form letters in both English and Hebrew. They were clearly at ease in the routines and were able to share the checks on their work with their teachers.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- The exceptionally positive attitude of the pupils to learning and their real joy in coming to school make for behaviour that is truly outstanding. Their attendance and time-keeping are also excellent. Good manners and courtesy characterise their everyday approach. They are mindful of how to manage scarce resources and always willing to help.
- Pupils are really clear as to the school's expectations with regard to behaviour and to learning. They are very cooperative, doing their best to please others. They consistently adhere to the school's rules and respect the environment very well. Classrooms, corridors and their attractive play area are all well looked after by pupils and are as tidy after breaks as before.
- Although pupils concentrate very seriously in class, they play joyously at breaks and get on very well with each other. They know about bullying and have prepared their own little booklet about what it means and how to manage it.
- The school's care for its pupils is genuinely exceptional. It places a high priority on safeguarding them and has excellent procedures and practices to ensure they are safe.
- Respect and tolerance within the school community are very effectively promoted and no discrimination is tolerated or likely to take place. Pupils are taught to understand that there are different faith and cultural traditions outside of their own community and that their beliefs must be equally valued. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding.
- Political issues are dealt with in a very balanced way and extremism is not tolerated should it exist. During local elections, potential councillors were invited into the school to explain our democratic processes and to present their manifestos at a level suitable for the young people. Pupils know about the main British institutions and make what contribution they can through their local community.
- Generally, the children are protected from malign influences and experience little or no exposure

to risk in their daily lives. They feel very safe, secure and well cared for.

- Parents and carers are universally positive about the school and deeply involved with the children's education. Given the number of families in the school, the number of returns was very high. Almost all commented on how much their daughters loved going to school and hated to miss any time.

Leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the senior staff have striven to meet all the requirements for independent schools. A striking characteristic of school leaders is their willingness to engage as far as their remit allows with colleagues from the maintained system. This is clearly seen in the improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, where the school has worked closely with a representative from the local authority to ensure that the required programme and practice are in place. Further, the school has taken part over several years in the national assessments at the end of Year 6, in order to benchmark the outcomes for the pupils.
- There is a real sense of teamwork among staff, all stemming from the example of cooperation between the headteacher and other senior leaders. There is an undisputed expectation of the highest professional standards, setting challenging targets for staff and the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of classroom work. Senior staff know the quality of teaching very well in both Jewish and secular studies and do their best to provide training where needed. Self-evaluation is accurate and used genuinely to move forward.
- The proprietor, governors and staff are proud of what they have achieved. Governors clearly understand the school's strengths and the strategies needed to secure the school's future. They strive within the limited financial resources available to ensure that no child is excluded on the grounds of cost.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders have not secured enough outstanding teaching to ensure all pupils make the progress they are capable of, particularly the most able.
- A real strength of the school is the strong partnership with parents and carers. The school is deeply embedded in the local community. Governors know well the parents' and carers' views of the school and their wish for it to grow and prosper. Reporting to parents and carers on pupils' progress is regular and detailed. Although formal reports take place twice a year, there are many informal opportunities because of the close personal contacts.
- The school's complaints policy is effectively implemented and well promoted through the prospectus and personal contact. This is consistent with the way the school ensures that the views of all members of the school community are taken into account.
- The range of subjects meets all the regulations required for independent schools. However, senior staff acknowledge that the pupils would benefit from more visits outside of school and form greater access to new technology but still within the bounds of the school's remit. Pupils do have opportunities to consider a range of occupations and employment but tend to remain within their own traditions.
- Within this small school, all staff have responsibility for elements of school life and learning so that leadership and management are shared at all levels. As a result, staff have a very good understanding of the school's work.
- Safeguarding is given high priority both in the main school and in the Early Years Foundation stage. All staff training is up to date with regard to child protection. Recruitment procedures follow requirements and the single central record is well maintained.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	136015
Inspection number	422821
DfE registration number	204/673

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Jewish girls primary and secondary
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	3–12
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr M Rothfeld
Chair	Mr C Lipschitz
Headteacher	Mrs S Horowitz
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 November 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	No Fees – the community supports the school
Telephone number	020 8211 1945
Email address	office@bzdebobov.org.uk

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