

Bnois Jerusalem Girls School

77–81 Amhurst Park, London, N16 5DL

Inspection dates

17–18 September 2014

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring inspection was undertaken at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to evaluate the progress made by the school in the implementation of its action plan.
- The school provision was last fully inspected on 7 and 8 February 2012 when all the regulations were met and the quality of education was judged to be good.
- The school made a request to the Department for Education in November 2013 to increase the number of pupils on role to 850. A material change visit, at the request of the Department for Education, took place on 20 December 2013 to check the suitability of existing and the new premises from 71–81 Amhurst Park, London, N16 5DL, and to evaluate the maximum capacity of the school. This found weaknesses in the school's welfare, health and safety provision, together with shortcomings in the premises and accommodation and that eight of the independent school standards were not met.
- The Department for Education was advised to request information from the school regarding the planning permission related to the buildings that are currently used for education.
- The Department for Education (DfE) asked the school, in January 2014, to submit an action plan detailing the steps it would take to meet all of the independent school standards. The school subsequently submitted an action plan which was evaluated on 26 March 2014. The action plan and timescale for implementation were found to be satisfactory, subject to satisfactory implementation which was required to be checked. This was the purpose of the progress monitoring inspection reported here.
- At the request of the DfE, inspectors also reviewed the school's request to increase the number of pupils to a maximum of 850 that could be taught in the adjacent premises and outbuildings located at 71, 75, 77, 79 and 81 Amhurst Park.

Main findings

- The material change visit in December 2013 identified a number of shortcomings in the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. These related to the training requirements for the designated person for child protection, the implementation of the school's health and safety policy, and risk assessments for fire safety. The school was asked to produce an action plan detailing how these weaknesses would be remedied
- The school's action plan outlines the steps to rectify each of the independent school standards failures which were identified in the material change inspection of December 2013. The action plan and its proposed timescales were accepted as satisfactory.
- The result of this inspection, to monitor the school's implementation of its action plan, is that progress is inadequate. This is either because the necessary action has not been taken within the accepted timescale, or because the action has not had the desired impact on raising the quality of provision to meet the independent school standards.
- This inspection also identified further independent school standards which were unmet. These relate to poor practice in staff recruitment and inadequate safeguarding procedures at the

school.

Pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety

- The December 2013 inspection found that the training for the designated child protection officer was out of date. It recommended that additional staff should receive this training, because of part-time working arrangements, the number of pupils on roll and the number of buildings used for education. This training has now been undertaken and is providing better cover across the school day and school site for child protection. Staff have received recent update training for child protection. However, the school was not aware of the Secretary of State's most recent guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, published in April 2014. Consequently, the staff have not read part one of this guidance, as required. Staff are confident in identifying and acting on obvious concerns, but they are less secure in recognising the wider range of safeguarding risks. While child protection records are kept, the quality and approach to recording vary unduly across the four sections of the school.
- Some revisions have been made to child protection and recruitment policies and procedures. There is more work planned, but the current policies have the following serious shortcomings:
 - no reference is made to dealing with allegations against any of the four heads of school
 - no reference is made in respect of reporting of allegations made against staff
 - the role of the proprietorial body in relation to safeguarding is not detailed
 - it is not made clear how the policy will be monitored and evaluated
 - there is no reference to what or how pupils of different ages will be taught to understand risk and learn how to stay safe
 - there is no guidance in the policy for staff about listening to the child, confidentiality and recording procedures
 - the expectations for staff training expectations are not given
 - there are no links made to other policies such as anti-bullying
 - the revised recruitment policy details most, but not all, of the required checks.
- At the time of the December 2013 inspection all of the vetting checks on members of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children had been carried out. However, this monitoring inspection revealed that the school's single central register of staff recruitment checks was incomplete and out of date. Some members of staff did not appear on the register; others, who had left, had not been deleted. Furthermore, the evidence on the register shows that the school has not been robustly undertaking the required vetting checks on staff suitability to work with children. Omissions include: checking that staff have not been barred from working with children whilst awaiting criminal record checks; not obtaining criminal record checks within reasonable timescales; and not ensuring that references have been obtained prior to the member of staff taking up their appointment.
- Some, but not all, of the members of the proprietorial body have undergone the required checks. There is inconsistency between the various parts of the school in following up on the checks and recording them on the school's single central record as required. Records of staff recruitment are not well kept, paperwork is held in different places and interview notes are not routinely made or kept. As a result this inspection judged that a significant number of the independent school standards for the suitability of staff are not met. This, together with the shortcomings in the arrangements for child protection and ensuring pupils' health and safety on the school site, discussed below, indicates that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are inadequate.
- In December 2013, inspectors found that while the school had a written health and safety policy, it was not implemented effectively. Limited action has been taken. Some basic checks continue to be conducted on the premises in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some risk assessments for the premises have been put in place. However, they are neither sufficiently robust nor specifically tailored to the different areas of the school premises, age groups and activities to be effective.

Premises and accommodation

- The inspectors visited all areas of the premises with school leaders to check the suitability of all the existing buildings, to evaluate if sufficient progress had been made in addressing the issues raised in the December 2013 inspection, and consider the capacity of the school. The school has increased its numbers since the last inspection, with more than 100 pupils above the school's registered capacity. The school has yet to acquire planning permission for number 71 Amhurst Park. Nonetheless, it built an extension to three of the classrooms in order to provide additional space. Pupils are using these rooms, although flooring has yet to be put down and decoration completed.
- Across the school there is overcrowding in most rooms, with insufficient room for pupils to move around within most classrooms and the narrow corridors and stairs. Some classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are particularly overcrowded, which limits the range of activities for children. Many parts of the building are in a poor state of repair with damaged flooring and walls requiring plastering; virtually all are in need of painting. Across the school, dirt is ingrained, including in rooms where very young children play on the floor. It was stated in the last report that there are plans to redecorate, but this has not been carried out.
- The school's main play area is used by pupils of all ages. Pupils were seen to behave responsibly and get on well, but there are few resources and activities particularly for younger pupils including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A number of health and safety concerns were noted. The school acted to remedy many of these during the inspection, including smoothing over uneven surfaces and removing rubbish. However, most of these actions are temporary and require longer term solutions. Consequently, both the independent school standards in relation to pupils' health and safety and the maintenance of school premises, accommodation and facilities remain unmet.
- The last fire risk assessment for the premises at number 71 was undertaken in September 2012, and at numbers 75 to 81 Amhurst Park in October 2012. These identified a large number of recommendations for the school to act on. The school has no records of how it has been addressing these and inspectors found that recommendations, such as ensuring fire doors close easily, had not been rectified. While fire fighting equipment is tested annually, there are no recent records for testing the fire alarm and emergency lighting systems in either premises, or of appropriate fire safety training for staff. Despite advice given to school leaders in December 2013, they have yet to conduct a robust risk assessment on the premises and resources to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. As a result, the independent school standard in relation to fire safety remains unmet.
- The inspection team saw evidence of rewiring and the installation of a new fire alarm system at numbers 75 to 81 Amhurst Park. There is some evidence that the electrical testing of appliances in order to confirm they are safe to operate requested at the time of the last visit has not been carried out. Despite requesting to see evidence of renovation work plans, certificates of testing and details of planning permission, none were produced.
- At the time of the December 2013 visit there were two facilities for pupils to go to when they are ill or injured. However, neither had a washing facility and neither was located reasonably close to a toilet. The medical room at number 71 Amhurst Park is no longer in place due to the recent extension work. A small hand basin has been installed in the corner of an office at number 81 which has an adjacent toilet. However, on arrival, the room was not suitability equipped or set up for use in case of a pupil falling ill. Thus the independent schools standard concerning facilities for the care for sick or unwell pupils remains unmet, and there is no suitable accommodation to cater for pupils' medical needs.
- It was noted in December 2013 that while pupils aged 11 years or over receive physical education in school there was no changing accommodation or showers for them. The school has taken some action on this matter, but it is insufficient to meet the requirements of the standard. A small area has been tiled adjacent to three toilet cubicles and a communal hand basin. Two showers are installed and working. However, there are no curtains or partitions and no changing accommodation. The school has not given sufficient consideration to the use and

number of these showers for class groups of up to 24.

- The provision of toilets and washbasins was viewed as adequate for staff and the current number of pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the December 2013 inspection. On this inspection it was noted that while cubicles for staff and pupils are separate they share the washing facilities, which does not meet the standard. Furthermore, there was no hot water available in the taps, the washbasins were very dirty and used for other purposes, such as washing paint pots.
- The condition of the toilets and toilet cubicles was poor, including for the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some floors were damaged and there were cracked tiles, posing a health risk. In three toilets there were no toilet seats. The school did act to rectify this once it was pointed out, but had no mechanism for identifying and checking that routine maintenance is carried out. In many there were no supplies of toilet paper. Consequently, the independent schools standards for the provision of suitable toilets for the sole use of pupils and that washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water are no longer met. It was not clear whether there is any hot water, but the school is not ensuring, should it be provided, that it does not pose a scalding risk to users; consequently, this standard is also not met.
- In the December 2013 visit it was noted that drinking water was not available to pupils. The school has taken action by labelling taps across the school with drinking water signs. However, these taps are the ones located at the communal washbasins, which are adjacent to the lavatories and in a poor state of cleanliness. Consequently, this does not meet the independent schools standards that require supplies of drinking water to be provided in a separate area from the toilets and clearly marked.

Leadership and management

- The inspection raised concerns about the quality of leadership and management in the school. The four heads of schools manage their own areas and are strongly focused on the curriculum, quality of teaching and on recruiting staff. They do not have any involvement in health and safety, beyond reporting odd items that need repair or replacing. There is no single person in charge of the whole school or to ensure that policies and practices are consistently implemented or to take final responsibility for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Although staff are concerned for pupils' welfare, and both pupils and parents are strongly supportive of the school, there are many weaknesses in the arrangements for ensuring routine welfare, health and safety. School leaders have not instilled in staff sufficient understanding, awareness and level of vigilance to ensure the welfare, health and safety of all pupils across the school premises throughout the school day.
- Three of the proprietors visit school regularly to check on its work, and one in particular provides very regular support. However, this focuses on day-to-day operations of the school and in providing education for Jewish girls. The proprietors say there is great pressure on them to take more girls. However, they do not provide sufficient strategic direction to move towards this in a planned way. They rely too much on the volunteer building manager to maintain the premises and manage improvement, and respond to reported issues or requests for works such as shelving. There is no follow up to check that the work is completed, that pupils' health and safety are ensured and suited for the intended purpose. Senior leaders and proprietors are not checking that the school is meeting the independent school standards, including the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, because their knowledge of them is very limited. Senior staff have not attended the required training on the recruitment of staff in order to meet the independent school standards.

Material change

The school applied for a material change to raise the number of pupils it admits and to extend its premises. This change is not recommended because there are weaknesses in the school's current safeguarding, welfare, health and safety provision, together with shortcomings in the premises

and accommodation.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and that such arrangements have regard to the recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (Paragraph 7)
- Ensure that the written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety laws is drawn up to reflect all areas, activities and age groups across the school and that it is effectively implemented through thorough risk assessments, monitoring and the planning of remedial and improvement work. (Paragraph 11)
- Ensure that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹ is complied with by undertaking fire risk assessments, acting on recommendations and carrying out routine checks on equipment. (Paragraph 13)
- Ensure that no members of staff are barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006² or carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act³ or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction. (Paragraph 19(2)(a))
- Ensure that appropriate checks are undertaken for each member of staff to confirm their:
 - identity;
 - medical fitness;
 - right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - where appropriate, qualifications. (Paragraphs 19(2)(b)(i), 19(2)(b)(ii), 19(2)(b)(iii) and 19(2)(b)(iv))
- Ensure an enhanced criminal record check is made by the proprietor for every member of staff and the resulting enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after the person's appointment. (Paragraph 19(2)(c))
- Ensure that in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (Paragraph 19(2)(d))
- Ensure the above checks are completed before a person's appointment. (Paragraph 19(3))
- Ensure that each member of the proprietorial body of the school, other than the Chair:
 - is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; and
 - does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction. (paragraphs 21(6)(a)(i) and 21(6)(a)(i))
- Ensure that the Chair makes the following checks for the other member of the proprietorial body
 - an enhanced criminal record check;

¹ S.I. 2005/1541, to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations.

² 2006 c.47.

³ 2002 c.32.

- checks confirming the member’s identity and right to work in the United Kingdom; and
- where, by reason of member’s living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish member’s suitability to work in a school, further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate are undertaken. (Paragraphs 21(6)(b)(i), 21(6)(b)(ii) and 21(6)(b)(iii))
- Ensure that a single register is kept which shows all of the required recruitment checks and that it is completed as staff are recruited. (Paragraph 22(3))
- Ensure in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1st May 2007, that the following information is recorded in the single central register including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - identity checked;
 - a check was made to establish whether the person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 or is subject to any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that the person had the relevant qualifications;
 - an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained;
 - further checks were made if needed;
 - a check of the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - details of further checks if they were deemed appropriate by the proprietor.
 (Paragraphs 22(3)(a) to 22(3)(g))
- Ensure that in relation to each member of the proprietorial body in post on or after 1st May 2007, whether the required checks were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained is recorded on the single central register. (Paragraph 22(6))
- Ensure that in relation to each member of the proprietorial in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007 whether the required checks were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained is recorded on the single central register. (Paragraphs 22(7)(a) and 22(7)(b))
- Ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided and that they are for the sole use of pupils. (Paragraph 23A(1)(a))
- Ensure suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education. (Paragraph 23A(1)(c))
- Ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils in both buildings. (Paragraph 23B(1)(a))
- Ensure that suitable accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility is provided and in use at both buildings. (Paragraph 23B(1)(b))
- Maintain the school premises and the accommodation and facilities are to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (Paragraph 23C)
- Ensure that suitable drinking water facilities are provided and are in a separate area from the toilet facilities. (Paragraph 23F(1)(a))
- Ensure that washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. (Paragraph 23F(1)(b))
- Ensure that cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking, are separate to toilet facilities and are clearly marked as such. (Paragraph 23F(1)(c))
- Ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to

users. (Paragraph 23F(1)(d))

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Flora Bean

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Bnois Jerusalem Girls School is an orthodox Jewish (Charedi) Hassidic school which is registered for 658 pupils aged from three to 16 years. The school is located in Stamford Hill, London, and opened in 1962.
- There are currently 780 girls on roll, including 161 in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom receive public funding. Four girls have a statement of special educational needs.
- The girls come from Yiddish-speaking homes and speak English as an additional language. Their families do not access secular media such as national newspapers, radio, television or the internet. The girls are from mixed socio-economic backgrounds and large families.
- The school aims to give its pupils a broad and balanced education in Yiddish, Kodesh (religious studies) and Chol (secular subjects). Its all-female environment aims to develop girls' middos tovos (positive character traits) to encourage them to live true Torah lives and to emerge as mature, contributing members of society.
- The school is divided into four phases, each with its own head of school. A deputy headteacher for the senior school and whole school special educational needs coordinator have recently been appointed.
- There is no alternative provision made for pupils.
- The school's last full inspection by Ofsted took place in February 2012 when it was found to provide a good quality of education and all the regulations for registration were met.

School details

Unique reference number	100291
Inspection number	446178
DfE registration number	204/6242

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Jewish
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–16 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	780
Proprietor	Mr Weider
Chair	Mr Weider Mrs Grunfeld
Headteacher	Senior school: Mrs S Sonnenschein 8–11 year olds school: Mrs Getter 5–8 year olds school: Mrs Kuflik Early years Foundation Stage: Mrs Landau
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 February 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0 (voluntary contributions)
Telephone number	0208 800 5781
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