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Mrs Clare Neuberger
Acting Headteacher
Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls School
Egerton Road
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Dear Mrs Neuberger

Special measures monitoring inspection of Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls School

Following my visit with Carolyn Dickinson, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 13 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2018.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hackney. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2018.

- Leaders and governors must ensure that:
 - they fulfil their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They should provide pupils with access to appropriate independent and confidential advice. They should ensure that pupils are taught how to keep safe in the wider community
 - decisions on the running and development of the school are in accordance with statutory requirements
 - they meet their statutory duty to provide high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance so that pupils understand the full range of options available to meet their academic needs and aspirations
 - they give high priority to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that pupils can routinely learn about different cultures, faiths, viewpoints and beliefs
 - they engender pupils' respect and tolerance for all members of society
 - they review the leadership structure so that roles and responsibilities are clear and
 - leaders can be held to account if they do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities
 - they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development
 - the school meets the requirements of the national curriculum
 - they review and extend the range of texts and resources available to pupils in order to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Governors must ensure that:
 - they set appropriate targets for the principal's performance and hold the principal stringently to account for his decision-making and the quality of provision.
- Leaders must improve teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are given further support, guidance and experiences to improve their practice
 - ensuring that the school's assessment policy is used effectively
 - providing planned opportunities for pupils to undertake more demanding work
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work, including the

quality of handwriting

- ensuring that all staff have high expectations of what pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities can achieve academically and support them to do so.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13 December 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal, the headteacher and senior leaders. They also met with middle leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body, governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors visited eight lessons, some jointly with leaders, across different subjects and year groups. Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documents in relation to safeguarding including policies and the single central record (showing the checks made on the suitability of staff to work with pupils).

The inspection focused on the progress leaders and governors have made in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. This included the extent to which pupils are provided with access to appropriate independent and confidential advice. Inspectors also looked at how well leaders and governors ensure that pupils are taught how to keep safe in the wider community.

Context

Yesodey Hatorah Senior School is a smaller-than-average 11 to 16 orthodox Jewish maintained voluntary-aided girls' secondary school. The school's intake is exclusively from the Charedi community in Stamford Hill, Hackney. The school is currently consulting with the Department for Education to become a member of a multi-academy trust.

Since the last inspection, there have been some changes to staffing. The substantive headteacher remains on leave but one of the deputy headteachers has become the acting headteacher. She runs the school day to day, with the director of religious studies, the menaheles. A retired headteacher is employed as a consultant and works at the school for three days each month. The principal has responsibility for safeguarding and oversight of the school's ethos

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The post-Ofsted action plan, drawn up jointly with the local authority, provides an appropriate programme for improvement. It identifies the areas for improvement accurately. Outcomes are broadly measurable but dates for completion are not always specific enough. The plan provides a suitable mechanism for governors to hold leaders to account for their work to improve the school. As a result, the action plan has led to noticeable progress in developing the arrangements to keep pupils safe.

Governors have made important improvements to the way they work. They have set up an executive committee that meets each week to oversee progress in meeting the action plan's objectives. This is proving an effective strategy and is

helping to ensure that governors hold leaders to account more thoroughly than in the past. For example, minutes of meetings show that senior leaders report to governors regularly on progress. Nevertheless, governors recognise that they need to be even more methodical in their work in order to drive improvement. The school has employed a new clerk to ensure that minutes of meetings are detailed. In addition, governors have arranged for the clerk to receive ongoing training.

Significant progress has been made in ensuring that staff and governors receive up-to-date training in safeguarding. For example, all staff have received level 1 training in safeguarding. Training about the government's 'Prevent' duty took place in December 2018. Staff have also received and confirmed that they have seen and read the relevant sections of 'Keeping children safe in Education 2018'. In discussions with them it was clear that staff have a secure understanding of how to recognise the signs of abuse and know the procedures for reporting any concerns. They are able to name the leaders responsible for safeguarding and when it might be necessary to contact the local authority designated officer directly. Governors, too, have received appropriate training in safeguarding.

The school's procedures for vetting staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils are comprehensive. The single central record is very well maintained and fully up to date. The school keeps appropriate records of those pupils who have been referred to the safeguarding team and the actions taken. Where appropriate, cases have been followed up diligently. As a result, the school's work to ensure that pupils are kept safe while at school has a positive impact. It is clear that pupils are safe at school.

The safeguarding policy has been updated to include reference to the most recent guidance. It provides a thorough range of information and advice about how to spot signs of abuse in pupils and how to refer concerns. The policy includes references to the 'Prevent' duty, serious violence, honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. This has a positive impact on staff understanding of safeguarding.

Teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe and healthy has improved well since the previous inspection. The school's programme for assemblies shows that road safety, keeping healthy, bullying and cyber bullying are planned throughout the year. Pupils are given information about the safe use of the internet. The new personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is a significant step forward and covers a wide range of topics so that pupils can learn about how to keep themselves safe in the wider community. However, leaders and governors recognise that there is still more work to do to ensure that the PSHE programme covers areas such as relationships.

The school is currently working with the government to become part of a multi-academy trust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The inspection did not focus on this aspect of the school. Although inspectors visited eight lessons during the day, they were not able to evaluate the progress made by leaders to improve teaching and learning. However, it was clear from looking at work in books that there has been progress in boosting the quality of pupils' presentation and handwriting. This was confirmed by pupils in key stage 4, who noted that this was a significant change since the previous inspection.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive and while they can be noisy in corridors, they conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils are keen to learn. They take part in the class question and answer sessions readily. Relationships between teachers and pupils encourage respect for others. As a result, pupils show consideration for each other and adults. Pupils are clear about the school's reward and sanction system. Pupils say that bullying 'never happens' but if it did, they are confident that it will be dealt with well.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They mentioned, particularly, that security staff are at the gate and in the roads around the school at the start and end of the day. Pupils spoke of the support provided by the school counsellor and that they are given information about independent, confidential helplines, most notably Childline.

The new PSHE programme and the assembly programme provide pupils with information about different cultures, faiths, viewpoints and beliefs in a structured way. Pupils are able to talk confidently about different religious beliefs and cultures, and how these differ from their own lives. They learn about how democracy works and understand the rule of law. However, the programme still does not cover all viewpoints. As a result, pupils lack awareness of the full range of lifestyles represented in modern Britain.

Outcomes for pupils

Inspectors did not consider pupils' achievements in depth. Nevertheless, work in pupils' books and examination results, especial in English and mathematics, indicate that standards are above average. Leaders have identified those subjects where performance is less good and have taken appropriate action to improve outcomes. In art, for example, leaders have used expertise in local schools in the borough to help teachers develop their practice.

Despite these positive aspects, pupils' achievement in science remains incomplete. This is because the school does not teach biology. As a result, pupils are unable to make the connections between physics, chemistry and biology as required by the national curriculum.

External support

The local authority (LA) has given considerable support to the school since the previous inspection. It has been highly influential in getting governors to set up the executive committee to oversee improvements. In addition, the LA has provided staff and governors with a wide range of safeguarding training. This has had a positive impact on the school's progress in making the improvements. The LA are clear, however, that further improvement is needed for the removal of special measures.

Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen the governing body further so that it is better placed to hold senior leaders to account and evaluate the impact of the actions taken to improve the school.
- Ensure that the improved procedures for safeguarding are implemented effectively across the school.