



# Pardes House Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 133364  
**Local Authority** Barnet  
**Inspection number** 294078  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jane Wotherspoon HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hendon Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Finchley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		London N3 1SA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys	<b>Telephone number</b>	02083433568
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	189	<b>Fax number</b>	02083434804
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Sprong
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sean Lawlor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2003		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This Jewish Orthodox Voluntary Aided (VA) primary school for boys was established in 2001. It offers the Kodesh curriculum alongside the National Curriculum. Each curriculum is taught by a separate set of teachers. The headteacher is responsible for the National Curriculum and other statutory duties. The Menahal is responsible for the Kodesh curriculum. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals but the school feels that some parents do not claim their entitlement. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. Many come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. About a fifth speaks English as an additional language though only a few are at early stages. A small number come from minority ethnic groups.

Falling rolls have resulted in significant changes during the last year and with the exception of Year 6, pupils are organised into one class per year group. These changes led to redundancies for five members of staff. The school has been without a permanent headteacher for several years and is currently led by a temporary executive headteacher for two days a week and an acting deputy headteacher. They are assisted by an associate deputy headteacher seconded from a local school whose brief is to support improvements in the quality of teaching.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

Pardes House is not as effective as it could be. Inspectors do not agree with the school's own judgement that it is satisfactory. Pupils do not achieve as much as they could or should, given their capabilities. This is because of weaknesses in the quality of education provided, notably in the teaching and the curriculum. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Many weaknesses identified at the last inspection remain. Leaders and managers, including governors, have been too slow to remedy difficulties in providing enough time to teach the National Curriculum. The limited range and depth of the boys' secular studies impinge on their academic progress and personal development. Weaknesses in teaching have not been tackled with sufficient rigour until very recently. Currently, teaching is inadequate. One of its main weaknesses is that teachers in Years 3 to 6 underestimate the capabilities and potential of many boys. Expectations are too low. The boys are given too many mundane tasks that do not challenge them enough and limit opportunities for them to develop independence. Teaching is satisfactory in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2, where boys respond with enthusiasm.

Pupils get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class. Within the constraints of the available time, the boys experience activities in all areas of learning and make satisfactory progress. The school's performance data shows that pupils' achievement from Year 1 onwards is erratic and this can be traced back to inconsistencies in teaching quality from year to year. Until recently, this information has not been used in a systematic way to identify where boys could be doing better. Teachers do not use this information well enough to adapt activities to meet pupils' learning needs. Mathematics remains the strongest subject. To a large extent, the boys' good standards in maths by Year 6 have masked a declining trend in results in science and erratic attainment in English. Writing is a significant weakness, as it was at the last inspection.

Pupils are polite and courteous, especially to visitors. Inspectors enjoyed meeting them and hearing their views of the school. Although the boys are generally content at school, their enthusiasm and enjoyment depends considerably on what they are learning. Some expressed a view that staff do not always listen to their concerns about playground incidents.

The executive headteacher has acted decisively to restructure the school and to turn around the financial deficit. The new senior leadership team knows what needs to be done and its members are determined to make the necessary improvements. They are taking some appropriate actions but evidence of improvement is limited. Systems to monitor what is working well and what needs further improvement are developing but are not yet robust enough to check that actions are having the expected impact on pupils' achievement.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and science
- Improve the quality of teachers' planning of activities to meet pupils' needs, with appropriate pace and challenge for their differing abilities
- Use the information from the school's assessments to make sure that all work is pitched at the right level to support pupils' learning, to monitor and track the progress that all pupils make and to identify where they could be doing better
- Rigorously monitor the quality of provision, including the planned changes to the curriculum, and evaluate the effectiveness of actions by their impact on pupils' learning and progress.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Standards are broadly average at Year 6 but have been higher in the past. The school did not meet its statutory targets in 2006. Results have been erratic between the subjects with the greatest decline in science. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 have been falling since 2003 and were low in the most recent tests, despite pupils making good progress during Year 2. This weakness in writing follows pupils through the school.

Pupils' achievement over time is inadequate. Data shows that no specific group underachieves more than any other. When they start school, the children's skills and abilities are generally higher than those of typical four-year-olds. Children in the Reception class are achieving satisfactorily as are those in the current Years 1 and 2. During the inspection, pupils made too little progress in lessons where the teaching failed to engage them in appropriately demanding tasks. Pupils generally achieve well in number work though they have too little opportunity to apply and practise these skills in problem solving activities. Their progress in science is affected by the lack of time in the curriculum and the style of teaching which prevents pupils from gaining a clear understanding of the necessary skills in experimentation and scientific enquiry. Progress in writing is limited by the absence of a systematic approach to teaching writing skills. This is beginning to be tackled but is undermined by weaknesses in teaching.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. The way staff approach pupils is the basis for the satisfactory relationships. Pupils respond with appropriate attitudes and satisfactory behaviour in lessons and around the school. Most work hard and want to do well. Their enjoyment of lessons is variable depending on the quality of the teaching and this affects their achievement. Attendance is satisfactory though unauthorised absence is high due to families taking long holidays. Pupils understand the importance of eating

healthily though the limited time for physical education restricts their opportunities for exercise. They are aware of the dangers of smoking and know how to keep safe. Members of the school council choose fund-raising events. This helps to develop a sound sense of responsibility for the community and some measure of confidence. However, weaknesses in some basic academic skills and the absence of opportunities to work together in groups or as part of a team in lessons limit their preparation for adult life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

In the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory and activities are often presented to pupils in interesting ways that capture their enthusiasm. For example, Year 1 pupils were engaged thoroughly by their teacher's description and role play of how to give a friend directions to school. This kind of approach contrasts markedly with that in Years 3 to 6 where teachers too often adopt a didactic approach that offers too few opportunities for pupils to work independently or to take the initiative in their learning. Here, the level of challenge is often too low. This is because teachers are not yet secure in their knowledge of National Curriculum levels of attainment. Neither are they using information from assessment to be sure that the work is pitched at an appropriate level for pupils' abilities. Tasks are frequently modified for pupils with learning difficulties but rarely set a challenge for those who could achieve more. Too often, this modification relates to the amount rather than difficulty of work to be completed. The quality of marking, especially of pupils' writing, is too variable. Some is poor and does little to signal to pupils that their efforts are valued or tells them what to do to improve. There are, however, signs of a positive response by some staff to the new marking policy.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate. English and mathematics receive the minimum recommended time but other subjects do not. Many do not meet statutory requirements. Discussions with pupils indicate they have very limited experience of geography, music, art and design, design and technology and physical education. This limits their achievement as well as their personal development. A major weakness is the lack of curriculum planning to take account of different groups. The more able pupils do not have a sufficiently challenging curriculum. There are some appropriate examples of teachers linking subjects through topics. For example, the ancient Greeks links English, information and communication technology, and history but these are isolated instances and there is no coherent approach to planning curricular links or to making links with the Kodesh curriculum. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to encourage a better balance between the Kodesh and secular studies. However,

governors' agreement has only very recently been reached with the intention to implement a broader National Curriculum from January.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

The day-to-day care of the boys is satisfactory though the boys report some inconsistencies in the way teachers deal with their concerns. There are weaknesses in the systems for safeguarding pupils. The building is assessed for hazards, but not frequently enough to keep on top of defects such as cracked panes of glass. Although there is a rolling programme of refurbishment within financial constraints, the building is unkempt and does not promote a pleasant learning environment. Some classrooms are sterile, though staff in Reception to Year 2 work hard to provide a stimulating environment. Here, pupils' work is displayed and their efforts are celebrated. The academic guidance for pupils is inadequate. Until recently, their progress has not been analysed effectively to identify where they could be doing better and to target them to achieve their potential. The process of setting them targets is at an early stage of development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Governors have been unable to secure a permanent headteacher to provide strong leadership. This is affecting the school's capacity to improve. Too many priorities for improvement from the previous year have been carried forward because they were not tackled sufficiently in the past. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are not rigorous enough. The executive headteacher has taken clear and decisive action to restructure the school and to turn around the financial deficit. The new senior leadership team knows where the school's weaknesses lie and recognises the mountain they have to climb. They show determination to get the job done. Some very recent actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching, to improve assessment practice and to introduce target-setting are appropriate in beginning to set the school on the right path, but are too new to have had an impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	4

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you what we found. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you think of your school. We have judged that the school requires 'special measures'. This is because things are not as good for you as they should be. This means that inspectors will be visiting the school again to check that things are improving.

You work hard but we think that many of you could be doing better than you are. Your number work skills are good but you need more help to improve your writing and you need more time to study science. You told us that you don't often do art, music, DT, PE and geography although you enjoy these subjects when you get the chance. We have asked the school to make sure you get more opportunities to learn these subjects.

We think that some of your teachers could be giving you harder work and also giving you the chance to work in different ways. Some of you said that teachers put comments on your work and you like that because it tells you what to do better but some of you were not sure if your work was good or not.

We think you are polite, courteous and friendly. You seem to get on well with each other but we were sorry to hear that some of you feel that staff do not always listen to your concerns about playground incidents.

You have some new staff leading the school and they are starting to make changes. We have asked them to make sure that the work you do is right for you and to keep checking that you are doing as well as you can.

With best wishes

Jane Wotherspoon

HMI