



Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girl School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133599
Local Authority Hackney
Inspection number 294097
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Lynes HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Egerton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	11–16		N16 6UB
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	020 8826 5500
Number on roll (school)	233	Fax number	020 8826 5505
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Joe Lobenstein
		Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Pinter
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	12–13 September 2006	294097

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Yesodey Hatorah serves the Orthodox Jewish Charedi community of Stamford Hill. The Charedi community do not have access to television, the internet or other media. All members of the community aim to lead modest lives governed by the codes of Torah observance. The school moved into superb new accommodation in September 2005, a year before this report was written.

Yesodey Hatorah was founded in 1942 as an independent school with separate sections for boys and girls, and with junior and senior departments. The girls' senior department became a Voluntary Aided maintained school in September 2005.

The school is much smaller than average and has a relatively small number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. It has about the national average number of students who are at the early stages of learning English. There is little economic deprivation and there are some pockets of prosperity.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Yesodey Hatorah is an outstandingly effective school. This is mainly due to two factors. Firstly, a singular ethos that unifies the secular and faith elements of the school into a whole that is far more than the sum of its parts. Secondly, the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the staff and the students. This creates an atmosphere in which students thrive. Their academic achievement is outstanding, but so too is their development into lively, confident young people who are making a genuine contribution to their community.

First and foremost students really enjoy all aspects of their education. They work, play and learn in close harmony. They have a deeply ingrained sense of their responsibility to both themselves and their community. They undertake these responsibilities with a sense of real joy. This is a happy place in which to learn and grow. They achieve exceptionally high standards both in examinations and in terms of personal growth. Students leave school with both the academic and personal tools to make significant contributions to their community.

The headteacher sets high standards for herself and expects the same of staff and students. Her senior team value her drive to follow things through, and the way in which she enables them to do the job. Her acute understanding and commitment drives the school forward. A good example of this is her desire to improve the achievement of the more able students in English. The real mark of her excellent leadership is the recent appointment of senior leaders who will continue to improve teaching and learning within the school's particular context.

The governing body is still developing. It understands that, with the support of the local authority, it will be better placed to undertake the role of 'critical friend' more expertly. The school provides excellent value for money and has outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the governing body's role as a 'critical friend' in order to fully support and challenge all aspects of the school's work
- Raise the achievement in English of the more able students

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students start school with above average attainment. Test results in Year 9 and examination results in Year 11 are exceptionally high. This is an outstanding achievement.

Students begin school at higher levels in mathematics and science than those found nationally, but at about the national average in English. By the end of Year 9 students have continued to achieve high standards in mathematics and science and are above

the national average in English. By the end of Year 11 almost 90% of students leave with 5 A*-C grades at GCSE. In the 2006 GCSEs four students were in the top 10 nationally in business studies, geography and citizenship. Students are set challenging targets which are regularly reviewed. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to other students due to the exceptional support that they receive. However, more able students do not achieve as highly in English as they do in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development and well being is outstanding. Their spiritual moral, social and cultural development is excellent and reflects the ethos and practices in the school. This was clearly demonstrated in an inspirational assembly in which students' spirituality seemed almost tangible. This helps to develop excellent behaviour and attitudes to their work, to each other and to other people.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted by the community ethos which encourages an active and participative lifestyle. The school plans to improve this aspect of its provision further by taking part in the Healthy Schools initiative and introducing additional opportunities for physical exercise. Students report that they feel very safe in school and have absolute confidence that any problems will be promptly and effectively dealt with.

All students take part in activities to support others in the community, such as helping elderly people or mentoring younger children. The school's curriculum supports them in developing economic awareness and prepares them well for their future education and role in their community. The development of economic well-being is well supported by the very high number of students achieving 5 A*-Cs which include mathematics and English. Work-related learning is a developing strength.

Students really enjoy school: attendance is well above the national average; behaviour is superb; in a student questionnaire over 90% stated they liked learning, and above all their joy is obvious.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons are exemplary. They work hard in and out of lessons and respond well to teachers and to the variety of activities. Students of all abilities are very confident to take an active part in lessons and make excellent progress.

During the inspection the majority of the teaching seen was outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons well and use skilled questioning to check students' understanding. In the best lessons the pace is very brisk, but enables all students to succeed. In the

few weaker lessons seen neither the pace nor the level of challenge were appropriate to the needs of all students. However, students' own strong sense of responsibility for their learning ensured that they still made progress. The leadership team of the school have an exceptionally clear understanding of how teaching can be further improved. They have already set up strong systems of support to help develop the skills of less experienced teachers. There is a clear understanding, shared by all staff, that satisfactory teaching is not good enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It has strong coherence because it is underpinned by the school's values. Students take a broad range of secular subjects as well as following a programme of Jewish studies that makes clear contributions to their general skills and to specific aspects of their secular work. The planning is thorough and detailed. Links between subjects are exploited to make maximum use of the time available. The curriculum is very well tailored to the needs of the community that the school serves. The school is committed to meeting statutory requirements, while recognising that some aspects of the National Curriculum have to be carefully delivered to avoid conflicting with the values of the school and its community. There are strong elements of work related learning, which are being further developed. There are many opportunities for extra-curricular activities, in which large numbers of pupils participate with enthusiasm. Indeed, the annual show, which is devised and managed by the Year 11 students in out of school time, is deliberately designed to involve every single student.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given by the school are exemplary. Students feel safe and the arrangements for safeguarding them are excellent and highly effective. They are confident that they can speak to teachers openly, and students state that any problems are always dealt with effectively. There is good extra help for students with personal or additional learning needs. Parents are very appreciative and proud of the school, as evidenced by the very high response to the parental questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection.

The school tracks student achievement very closely and both parents and students are regularly informed of progress. Students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. They know that they will get help when they need it, but they also have a highly developed sense of responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Her commitment to realising the school's vision to provide a broad education which sits in harmony with the values of the community is both innovative and inspirational. She has clear insight to both the school's and her own strengths and weaknesses. This has enabled her to make excellent key appointments to the senior leadership team. Since moving into the new premises the senior leadership team have made remarkably quick progress in adapting to the requirements of the maintained sector. The high standards they set permeate every aspect of school life, motivating and inspiring both staff and students. Students take on leadership roles in and outside the classroom by leading prayers, taking full responsibility for school productions, and in teaching parts of lessons.

The governing body ensures that it meets all statutory requirements. However, it is relatively new. It is highly supportive of the school, but is still developing its capacity to offer critical challenge to the leadership team. Systems for managing the performance of the headteacher and other staff are developing. The school provides outstanding value for money.

The impact of this leadership at all levels can be seen both in the exceptional examination results and in the confident, happy young people that the school develops. There is outstanding capacity to make further improvements.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team that recently visited your school to tell you of our findings.

It was a great pleasure to visit the school and to meet some of you. We were really pleased by your superb behaviour and your strong desire to learn. The ways in which you take responsibility and show leadership, both in the classroom and outside of it, are really impressive. You should be proud of yourselves and of your school.

We have judged your school to be outstanding. This is not just because of your fantastic examination results but also because of the ways in which you develop and grow into exceptional young people. We have asked the school to improve two things:

- the achievement of the more able students in English
- to develop the role of governors.

Thank you for making us feel welcome and I wish you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Lynes

Her Majesty's Inspector