

# Talmud Torah Tiferes Shlomoh

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number	302/6106
Unique Reference Number	131121
Inspection number	296878
Inspection dates	21-22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

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

## Information about the school

Talmud Torah Tiferes Shlomoh was established in 1995 as an independent Jewish school for boys aged from 3 to 12 years. It serves the ultra orthodox, burgeoning, *Chasidic* community, situated in North West London, and is tailored to their specific religious and educational needs. The accommodation is currently provided by a series of linked single storey prefabricated buildings, but there are future plans for a new building. In September 2006, the roll was increased to include a Year 7 class and there are now 132 pupils on roll, with 29 part time in the nursery. The school is guided by the principles of Torah and rooted in an ethos of Torah values. The school aims to help pupils feel successful, to have a sense of self-worth and to take pride in their heritage.

## Evaluation of the school

The school certainly meets its aims and provides a good quality of education. A passion for learning and a love of *yiddishkeit* (Jewish way of life) produces a good curriculum overall, which is outstanding in *kodesh* (Jewish Studies) with good quality teaching and assessment. Personal development is outstanding and care is good because of the dedicated commitment of the *menahel* (head teacher) and all the staff. It is clear that each child is nurtured individually and all the parents agree, which is why they chose the school. The accommodation and resources present limitations, but do not have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Policies and procedures are evolving but many do not meet the latest regulations.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is highly relevant to the religious and cultural needs of its pupils and makes an outstanding impact on their personal development. The school has placed a strong emphasis on teaching the Torah, Talmud, Jewish history, literacy and numeracy. Science, art and design technology are all integrated into the curriculum, however, information and communication technology (ICT) is not taught and other resources to support teaching and learning are limited. Nevertheless, the school uses the resources it has extremely well. A key strength is that the teaching day is extended to provide extra learning time, which enables other subjects such as physical education (PE) to be fitted in. As a result, pupils make good progress in all subjects taught.

There is a clear written curriculum policy for both the religious and secular curriculum. The policies for English and mathematics are particularly well thought out, giving clear practical guidance to teachers on the use of resources. There is no written policy for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and there is no timetabled provision for teaching this. However, PSHCE permeates across every aspect of the school's work and is seen particularly strongly in its caring ethos and the teaching of *middos* (moral values). An excellent range of visits and celebrations of festivals, enrich learning and promote exceptional enjoyment. In *Chol*, (secular subjects), satisfactory schemes of work are in place.

The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes (Foundation Stage) is very good. Staff plan a wide range of learning experiences in all the six areas of learning for children of this age. The children develop skills in three languages, a sense of belonging within the school community and develop their social skills very effectively, as they enjoy learning through play. The limitations to the outdoor environment and large play equipment restrict the range of outdoor learning. This is being addressed as part of the future building plans.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are making at least good progress academically and outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a very wide range of learning activities that enable children to make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are outstanding and this leads to an extremely positive climate in classrooms, which promotes learning most effectively. As a result, pupils always listen carefully, co-operate with others, respond well in all lessons and they try their hardest. Teachers promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy effectively, through, for example, question and answer sessions and a consideration of chronology in religious lessons. Although, computers are not used, other technological aids such as videos and tape recorders enhance the teaching and learning, particularly for those pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties.

In nearly all lessons, teachers use their very good knowledge of pupils to clarify any misconceptions, and good links are made to previous learning. The *kavona* (spiritual learning) shown during *davening* (morning prayers) is exceptional, where individual pupils lead the session, with the whole class singing and chanting. The oral memory of the pupils is outstanding and their love of learning shines through.

In a few lessons, pupils are provided with the same task to do, which limits their learning. The school is aware of this inconsistency and addressing it through improved planning. Good use is made of the limited range of resources available within the secular curriculum to promote learning effectively, although there are gaps in provision, for example, no football posts, something the boys specifically requested. There are enough textbooks, fiction and non-fiction reading material.

The school has outstanding systems for assessing the *kodesh* curriculum. It also makes very good use of national assessments, optional tests and teacher assessments to measure and record pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. Very good procedures are also in place to assess the progress of children in the Foundation Stage against national expectations. Teachers in the Foundation Stage have a very good knowledge of children's learning. They use this very effectively in lessons to improve their performance, and enhance their progress. Throughout the school, pupils' work is marked consistently but comments which would help pupils to improve their work are not always included. Homework is set and this is marked so pupils' learning is consolidated and this has a positive impact on their achievement.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. The considerable emphasis placed on the moral and social aspects of their education, with the ethos of Torah values, leads to pupils' growing understanding of justice, right and wrong and respect for all. These aspects are taught very well and contribute to the very good attitudes and excellent behaviour of pupils both inside and outside the classroom. A wonderful example of 'judging each other favourably' is when each boy writes down one positive comment about every member of the class. Every pupil is then presented with a copy of his 'virtues' which is displayed around the school.

Pupils are acquiring a sense of responsibility for themselves, others and their surroundings. The school provides an environment in which pupils feel safe, happy and respected which is greatly appreciated by parents. The pupils have very upbeat views about their education and inspectors were impressed by their enthusiasm when talking about the school. They said they loved the learning and the inspector believed them.

There are many aspects of school life which give pupils the opportunity to make a contribution to the school community, for example, they help in the office, sort out the money collected for charity and organise the banking. The school is also part of the local community. Teachers make use of the wider community to develop pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures. The majority of pupils walk to school and visit, for example, the local fruit shop to celebrate *Tu' Bishvat* (New Year For Trees) to collect 15 different kinds of fruit. Older pupils engage in teamwork and independent research by collaborating to produce a booklet for the local *shuls* (synagogues).

It is to be celebrated that boys study in three different languages, English, Hebrew and Yiddish. The study of *Mishneh* and *Gemorrah* (Talmud), with their emphasis on discussion and analysis gives the pupils a range of transferable skills not only for life but also for their future economic well being within their own and the wider community.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes good provision to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. A detailed range of policies is in place to promote the safety and well-being of pupils in all circumstances, including first aid and fire procedures. Parents, staff and pupils report that they appreciate the warm, family atmosphere provided by the school. However, the *menahel* who is the designated person for child protection has not received recent formal training. Hence, the school does not meet the regulation in this area.

Healthy living is in keeping with Torah values, and this is an integral part of school life. Clear policies to promote good behaviour ensure that pupils learn in a calm, positive atmosphere. Rules are simple and clearly understood by all. The school has procedures for dealing with poor behaviour but because of the close attentiveness to personal care, particularly for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, such incidents are avoided.

Although attendance is good, the admissions and attendance registers are not kept in accordance with regulations. The school takes seriously its duty with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has a clear plan for the new building.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school does not have a secure staff appointment system which ensures all appropriate checks are undertaken before staff are appointed, including those from overseas. In particular, the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff and adults in contact with children have not been completed.

## School's premises and accommodation

Every effort has been made to repair the poor conditions in the Portacabin style premises, and the accommodation is just about satisfactory. Problems with the flat roof and the inclement weather produced leaks which were quickly dealt with but the problems remain. The classrooms are small and cramped, and are not all appropriate in size, especially for the older pupils. However, this does not have a negative impact on teaching and learning and there are lively displays which celebrate the pupils' achievements. There is no medical room. There are detailed plans to replace the existing building as soon as possible with high quality accommodation that is appropriate as a place of learning and which will also be used by the local community.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Almost every parent responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and they are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's work. They wrote the most pleasing comments, such as; *'It is a real pleasure to send my son to school every day. He leaves with a smile and comes home beaming, full of songs, stories and activities.'*

Although, all of the necessary information is available to parents and prospective parents through the school office, the school does not make it clear which information is available and that it may be requested. However, good, informal lines of communication between parents and staff are always open in this close knit community. As a result, parents feel well informed.

Private meetings between the school and parents are encouraged, in addition to bi-annual parents' evenings and termly reports both in *kodesh* and *chol*.

In the younger classes, daily notes are pinned up on the wall, under each child's name. There are regular newsletters informing parents of all aspects of school life.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has revised the complaints policy and it meets all of the regulations. Parents and prospective parents will be advised of this. There have been no formal complaints from parents.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that the named person for child protection undertakes the relevant training (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- maintain the admission register and the attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that, prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, CRB checks are completed (paragraph 4(b))
- ensure that prior to confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm identity, medical fitness, previous employment history and all references (paragraph 4 (c))
- ensure that staff who are foreign nationals are subject to checks for overseas teachers as set out in DfES guidance: *Child protection: preventing unsuitable*

*people from working with children and young persons in the education service* (DfES 0278/2002) (paragraph 4(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- ensure the school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind and moisture from the ground (paragraph 5(f))
- ensure all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, so that health and safety is not compromised (paragraph 5(j))
- ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide to all parents and prospective parents the following information:
  - the full name and address of the proprietor for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he may be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
  - the name and address for correspondence of the chair of governors (paragraph 6(2)(c))
  - a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims (paragraph 6(2)(d))
  - particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
  - particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of SEN and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).
- make it clear to all parents and prospective parents that the following information is available and may be requested:
  - particulars of the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6 (2)(g))
  - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
  - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
  - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))



- the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Consider ways to introduce ICT to enrich teaching and learning.

## School details

Name of school	Talmud Torah Tiferes Shlomoh
DfES number	302/6106
Unique reference number	131121
Type of school	Jewish Day School
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1995
Age range of pupils	3 - 12
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Total: 132
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Total: 29
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2820
Address of school	37 Elmcroft Crescent London NW11 9TB
Telephone number	020 8458 1074
Fax number	020 8731 9565
Email address	ttts37@aol.com
Headteacher	Rabbi Jacob Moskovitz
Proprietor	Mr S Zalcborg
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher AI
Dates of inspection	21-22 March 2007