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Mr Leach
Pardes House Primary School
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Dear Mr Leach

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 December 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to the governors, the local authority representative and to those pupils who spoke to me about the school.

As a result of the inspection on 9 December, the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of teaching to ensure the boys make consistently good progress, particularly in writing
- extend the influence of subject leaders so that they play a more significant role in longer-term planning for improvement.
- develop effective links between the Kodesh and secular curricula in order to enhance the broader knowledge, skills and understanding of the boys
- increase the range of opportunities for boys to develop a greater awareness of other and wider communities.

Since the previous inspection there have been considerable changes to staffing. A comprehensive restructure has taken place with newly defined roles and responsibilities. The local authority (LA) has worked closely with the school providing a good level of support. This has included help from specialist staff, funding, rigorous evaluation of the school's work and challenge to improve further.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements, and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and knowledge that are expected for their age. They get a positive start to their schooling and by the end of the Reception Year the majority are working securely within the Early Learning Goals. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 improved in 2009, although it remains significantly below the national average for writing, and this has been the

case for the last four years. No boys achieved the higher levels in writing and mathematics in 2009. This is as a result of weaknesses in teaching and instability in staffing in the past years.

Inspection and school evidence indicate an improvement in standards in Key Stage 2. The 2009 unvalidated national test data indicate significant improvements in the mathematics and science results. The school's focus on writing has been beneficial, although writing at the higher level remains a relatively weaker area. The school continues to have the development of writing as a priority in the improvement plan.

Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average and the majority of boys are now making at least satisfactory progress; for many it is now good. Currently, the rate of pupils' progress is increasing because of improvements to teaching, and to behaviour. Progress is beginning to accelerate because of changes to staffing. The school now uses the core of experienced senior staff to provide effective support to colleagues in each year group, enabling them improve their practice.

Monitoring of teaching by the school and the local authority indicates that all teaching is now at least satisfactory or better, and improving. Inspection evidence supports this. There is a steadily growing proportion of good lessons. In the lessons observed, teachers have clearly taken on board the new initiatives introduced by the school. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm and industrious places in which to work. These have a language-rich environment, are well organised and have high-quality work on display. The most significant improvement is that teachers have higher expectations of pupils, particularly in their acquisition and use of vocabulary. Pupils are finding the lessons more interesting and they enjoy the activities. The more focused teaching is starting to have a positive impact on progress. Good questioning linked to the learning objectives, and a practical and interactive teaching approach, support the good pace of learning in the better lessons.

The governors have secured the services of a consultant, who is an experienced ex-headteacher, with extensive knowledge of the Kodesh and secular curricula, who together with the Menahel and senior leaders are working together to develop links between the two curricula. This helps the boys to better understand their Hebrew textual work as well as using the grammatical language needed for writing and developing well-structured pieces of work in English.

The headteacher provides a clear direction. He has established high expectations and has worked tirelessly to good effect to improve this school. The headteacher has used the challenge and support provided by the local authority to help create a leadership team, now including the Menahel, which has grown in its authority over the past few months and is committed to improving further all aspects of the school's work. The many changes in staffing have hindered and slowed the pace of developments in the school. Currently, staffing is stable and the school has worked hard to develop the contribution of middle managers to school improvement. For example, they are now involved more effectively in monitoring the school's work.

Senior leaders have very recently started to make use of the Kodesh department to support the promotion of respect, tolerance and understanding between different ethnic and cultural groups. For example, internal staff meetings to share ideas and a meeting with headteachers of Jewish schools are scheduled. The school is also beginning to develop links for pupils with other local Jewish schools.

The school's sound capacity for further improvement is underpinned by a shared culture of driving forward improvements which have, during the past few months, delivered satisfactory progress in the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Senior leaders have worked successfully to establish an ethos and environment in which the boys feel cared for and safe. The challenge for the school now is to ensure that the rate of improvement seen on this visit is maintained and that the promising elements of practice and future planning are delivered and embedded consistently across the school.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector