

Bnois Jerusalem School

Independent school progress report

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Inspection number	345982
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Reporting inspector	June Woolhouse

Age group: 3-16

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Purpose and scope of the visit

This inspection visit was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005².

The visit was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Bnois Jerusalem School is an orthodox Jewish (Charedi) Hassidic school, founded in 1965, whose girls are drawn almost exclusively from Stamford Hill in London, with a few girls travelling in from Golders Green. They come from Yiddish-speaking homes and speak English as an additional language. Their families do not access secular media such as national newspapers, radio, television or the internet. The girls are from mixed socio-economic backgrounds and large families. The age range is from 3 to 16 years. There are 122 girls in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom receive public funding. One girl has a statement of special educational needs and a few girls have specific learning difficulties relating to communication. The school aims to give its pupils a broad and balanced education in Yiddish, *Kodesh* (religious studies) and secular subjects within the framework of their home culture. Its all-female environment aims to develop girls' *middos tovos* (positive character traits) to encourage them to live true *Torah* (law and teaching) lives and to emerge as mature, contributing members of society.

Context of the visit

The school was last inspected on 16 September 2008. The school later submitted an action plan indicating how it intended to meet regulations that were not met at the time of the inspection. The evaluation of the school's action plan was accepted in April 2009. The purpose of this first monitoring visit was to check whether the school had taken appropriate steps to address the weaknesses identified in the inspection report and to assess the amount of progress made in meeting the regulations.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

At its previous inspection in 2008, the school had weaknesses in curriculum planning for science and physical education (PE). Year 11 students were not taught science and pupils made limited progress in PE in all classes. There were weaknesses in the provision for careers guidance and in quality, quantity and range of educational resources.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

There were weaknesses in the quality of the premises that posed a potential health and safety danger and in some fire safety procedures.

At its previous inspection the school had a number of weaknesses relating to the fabric of the building and its facilities. There were weaknesses relating to: the washroom facilities; the quality of the kitchen environment; flooring and; the general state of decoration. The facilities for pupils who were unwell were inadequate.

The school has made satisfactory progress in remedying the weaknesses in curriculum planning. Schemes of work are in place for science in the senior school and for PE in all classes. Year 11 pupils are now taught science along with all other year groups in the senior school and use new text books appropriate for Key Stage 4. Some references to human biology have been blanked out in accordance with parents' wishes not to teach any aspect of sex education. Appropriate amounts of time are assigned to PE in Year 11, and dance sessions take place at lunch and break times twice a week. Physical education provision has improved overall and girls now wear appropriate footwear for outdoor games.

The school has made satisfactory progress in providing a suitable programme of study for careers guidance and personal, social and health education (PSHE), taking account of its religious ethos. Girls in Year 11 are taught specific skills for possible future careers, for example, personal skills and those secretarial skills necessary to gain employment. There are good links to the Seminary, to which girls transfer at 16, to continue this training. In addition, a Business Studies course enables girls to apply their mathematical knowledge in preparation for the world of work. An improved course of study in a weekly PSHE lesson is planned to start in September 2010 for the other year groups in the senior school.

The school claims that the provision of resources remains constrained by available funding. New text books are being used for Year 11 science lessons, and there are some consumable materials in most classes. There is no science laboratory and the school's priority is refurbishing accommodation to manage its rising roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage and upgrading teaching spaces. Resources and materials for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are very limited with too few toys or equipment suitable for this age group. There is no strategic plan for improving resources in a systematic way over time.

Although many weaknesses in the fabric of the building and Health and Safety requirements have been rectified, the school does not meet all of the premises regulations. A professional structural survey carried out in early 2009 identified all the necessary repairs and many were completed by April 2009. Although there is now hot running water in the main house, there remain too few toilets and wash basins for the number of pupils. The school is aware that a rising roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage will mean increasing these facilities. Work has started to remedy this deficit. A dedicated medical room is not yet in place. Proper provision for storing medicines is not available. There have been some improvements to the

decoration of the school and some very attractive art work is on display. Overall, however, the buildings remain below what is expected for a learning environment in terms of decoration and general standards of cleanliness.

Although not an issue identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection, checks undertaken relating to the schools safeguarding procedures showed that the school has not recorded all the required information on the checks it has undertaken on the school's single central register.

While some progress has been made the school has not made sufficient progress in implementing all of its action plan. A number of regulations remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection visit, the school must take action to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003³ as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- continue to improve the range and quality of resources and equipment for all pupils, especially indoors resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- provide all the necessary information in the school's single central record and show the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph (4)(C)(2) and (3)) and (paragraph (4)(C)(6) and (7))
- increase the number of toilets and wash basins (paragraph (5)(k))
- provide a separate medical room and appropriate storage for medicines (paragraph (5)(l))
- improve the quality of decoration and cleanliness of the premises and accommodation (paragraph (5)(q)).

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

School details

Name of school	Bnois Jerusalem School		
DCSF number	204/6242		
Unique reference number	100291		
Type of school	Jewish		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1965		
Age range of pupils	3–16		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 481	Total: 481
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0 (voluntary contributions)		
Address of school	79-81 Amhurst Park London N16 5DL		
Telephone number	0208 211 7136; 0208 802 7470		
Fax number	n/a		
Email address	n/a		
Headteacher	Mrs S Sonnenschein, Mrs Katz		
Proprietor	Mr Grunfield		
Reporting inspector	Mrs June Woolhouse		
Dates of inspection	19 January 2010		