

# Beis Yaakov Primary School

373 Edgware Road, London NW9 6NQ



Inspection report of Limmudei Kodesh (Jewish Studies) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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**Inspection dates** 4-5 Kislev 5782 – 8-9 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** Previous inspection: Outstanding 1

This inspection: **Outstanding 1**

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**Leadership and management:** Outstanding 1

**Quality of Jewish education:** Outstanding 1

Intent – curriculum design

Implementation – teaching, assessment, curriculum delivery

Impact - achievement

**Quality of provision for pupils:** Outstanding 1

Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (SMSC), including the statutory requirements for a daily part of collective worship

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## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is an outstanding school.**

- The leadership and management of the school expertly led by the Menahel, share a dynamic vision for development, which they communicate effectively to all stakeholders.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, by providing outstanding resources to support teachers.
- Leaders' work to construct a wholesome and comprehensive Limmudei Kodesh (Jewish Studies) curriculum, is innovative. They consider carefully the sequencing of the teaching of different topics and have a clear rationale for this. The curriculum provides a healthy mix of knowledge development and skills building within each Limmudei Kodesh subject. The innovative new Chumash (Pentateuch) curriculum and Kriah (reading) programme are "state of the art" and have a big impact on pupil progress.

- Leaders carefully monitor all aspects of the education provision through effective performance management, lesson observations and pupil progress meetings. There are robust systems for induction in place, and staff feel very supported.
- The Menahel and the senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas of development, which are shared with colleagues within a comprehensive school improvement plan.
- The leadership and management team have created a positive and harmonious working environment, wherein staff are fully committed and proud to work in.
- Governors, expertly led by the Chair, are very knowledgeable and offer a good balance of support and challenge.
- Pupils are supported outstandingly well, both academically and emotionally, including pupils with SEND.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils is outstanding, including the daily act of collective worship. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect upon and internalise lessons taught and they daven (pray) with good concentration.
- Staff present themselves as good role models and the middos (good character traits) programmes in the school are well planned, pervading all aspects of school life.
- Extra-curricular events are carefully planned so that pupils are provided with memorable, and enriching experiences.
- Pupils enjoy Limmudei Kodosh lessons and behave well in these lessons. They make outstanding progress in all key stages including the EYFS, due to effective teaching and high quality resources. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Parents are very supportive of the school with the overwhelming majority of the 83 completed questionnaires presenting parents' appreciation of the way the school provides an excellent education for its pupils.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

To maintain and further improve on the current position the school should:

- Ensure that those teachers who are not delivering outstanding lessons are provided with further ongoing support and training, including the opportunity to observe lessons given by colleagues.
- Ensure that the teaching of Yedioh Klolis (Jewish general knowledge) leads to a greater understanding in this subject by providing more detailed teacher guidance and building into the well-presented workbooks more opportunities for pupils to add their own written work, to facilitate retention.

## Information about this Inspection

- 21 Kodesh lessons were observed (four of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team) and three classes were visited during a learning walk.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, Senco, members of the teaching staff, and representatives of the governing body.
- Pupils across the age and ability range were tested on their knowledge and skills, in the core Limmudei Kodesh subjects, and discussions took place with pupils which focussed upon their experiences within Limmudei Kodesh.
- In the core subjects, the school's assessment and tracking systems were scrutinised, as was work in pupils' Kodesh books, in most year groups.
- The inspectors considered the views of 83 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire provided by the inspection team.
- The inspectors perused documentation and policies, including the school improvement plan and the school's evaluation of its work. Minutes from governor body meetings were also considered.

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school catering for girls from *chareidi* (Orthodox Jewish) backgrounds. Few girls live in the immediate vicinity of the school and they attend from a wide area of North West London.
- In the Early Years, children attend the two Nursery and two Reception classes, on a full-time basis.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school was founded in 1972 and its mission is to "serve the *chareidi* community by offering a broad, balanced and inclusive education, rooted in an ethos of Torah values, which prepares its pupils well for life within modern Britain".
- At the end of Key Stage 2 the overwhelming majority of pupils graduate to Beis Yaakov Grammar School, Menorah High School for Girls or Tiferes High School.
- Since the last inspection the school has completed a number of major building projects. These include a large hall, a newly refurbished library, and playground space on the roof of the building.

## **INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

### **The effectiveness of Leadership and Management of Limmudei Kodesh** is outstanding

- The leadership team, expertly headed by the Menahel and ably supported by his Deputy, provide excellent leadership for the school and its pupils. They share a dynamic vision for development which they communicate effectively to all stakeholders. This ensures that the systematic development and wellbeing of pupils is always at the heart of school improvement planning. The leadership team facilitate the excellent pastoral care provided for pupils at the school.
- The leadership and management team work relentlessly to create a positive, respectful, and harmonious working environment, where the work life balance of staff is fully recognised and supported. Consequently, new initiatives have been introduced, whilst still maintaining the high morale of staff. An example of this is the innovative Chumash curriculum, which has been well received by staff, despite it being quite challenging to implement.
- The school has an outstanding Limmudei Kodesh curriculum, which has been carefully and expertly planned. The curriculum takes into account the knowledge and skills required in each topic and subject. Particularly impressive is the Chumash curriculum Year Two to Year Four, which has already made a major impact. This is soon being rolled out in the top two classes. The Kriah programme is very effective and is supported by specialist teaching, and regular precise tracking of pupil progress, so that pupils who struggle are provided with support. Parsha (weekly Torah portion) is taught systematically with clear progression planned into the depth of Divrei Torah (insights from the Torah), as girls move through the school.
- Resources prepared to support teaching are exceptional. However, in Yedioh Klolis, although workbooks are presented beautifully, there needs to be clear guidance provided to teachers, so that they can provide precise lessons to pupils.
- Leaders carefully monitor all aspects of the education provision through effective performance management, lesson observations, work scrutiny and progress meetings. The leadership team should now systematically plan these management activities and share them with staff at the beginning of each term, within a pre-planned calendar.
- There are good systems for induction in place and almost exclusively Limmudei Kodesh teachers begin working at the school as teaching assistants and then graduate to teach. This provides a good introduction to teaching.

- The Limmudei Kodesh leadership team work very closely with their Chol (secular studies) colleagues. This has facilitated many positive developments, for example, within the Nursery, safeguarding, PSHE and cohesive behaviour management systems.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas of development for the school. This was evident by the outcomes of joint observations coordinated during the inspection, and through discussions about the school improvement plan.
- Governors, expertly led by the chair of governors are very knowledgeable of the school's strategic areas of development. They offer a good balance of support and challenge and are ambitious for continued improvement.

### **The Quality of Jewish Education for Pupils** is outstanding

- The curriculum intent offers memorable and enriching experiences for high quality learning for all pupils, including those with SEND.
- There is a clear rationale for the sequence of topics taught and skill development, in Limmudei Kodesh subjects.
- During this inspection there was a special focus (deep dive) on the following subjects: Chumash, Kriah, Yedioh Klolis and PSHE.
- For all these four subjects the curriculum provides a healthy mix of knowledge development and skill building. The innovative Chumash curriculum is planned precisely to build independent Chumash skills, beginning in Year Two. There is a good focus upon building vocabulary and grammatical skills. As pupils progress through Year Four they develop their skills of being able to work out Pesukim (Biblical phrases) independently. Teacher resources provide staff with a complete overview of what to teach to pupils. The school is now planning to complete this curriculum for Year Five and Year Six.
- The recently introduced Yedioh Klolis programme provides a glossy and engaging workbook within each year group. This subject is based upon songs linked to each theme. Although this is a positive approach, there are gaps in the information provided by staff to pupils. In addition, more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to add more of their own written work within these workbooks to facilitate retention.
- Extra-curricular activities are carefully planned so that pupils have memorable activities linked to the Jewish calendar and mitzvos (commandments). Every Rosh Chodesh (start of the Jewish month) there is an exciting activity provided, which links to the month or upcoming Yom Tov. These activities create achdus (unity) and sensitivity towards others. Examples include fruit baskets on Tu B'Shvat (festival of fruit), an exciting water boat activity on Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan (eighth Jewish month) and decorating the school for Chanukah. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these extra-curricular activities, which are creative and meaningful.

## **The Quality of Teaching and Learning** is outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning is generally outstanding which enable pupils to make accelerated progress. In the outstanding lessons, activities are available to challenge the more able pupils, and teachers take every opportunity to imbue values and life skills. For example, in a Year Six Chumash lesson the teacher wove into the lesson in a most creative fashion, respect for Talmidei Chachomim (Wise Rabbis).
- Teachers skilfully question individuals and groups of pupils during lessons. In the outstanding lessons teaching consistently deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding, and teaches them a range of skills, including Kriah, Ksivah (writing) and Chumash. Teachers share their love for Limmudei Kodesh with their pupils, which motivates and instils in them a desire to learn.
- Teaching staff receive copious notes from the SENCO regarding the pupils of their class. These notes are updated termly and include strategies and targets for each child. This empowers teachers to cater for all the pupils within their class, who are also well supported by teaching assistants. In addition, there are a number of specialist support staff, who teach pupils individually and in small groups, and offer quality support.
- Teachers' resources provided by subject leaders are superb, and noteworthy in Chumash and Kriah. In addition, teachers use creativity and innovation in preparing resources to help pupils understand more complex concepts. For example, in a Year One lesson, pupils were transfixed by the way that the teacher used a balloon to demonstrate the Brocha of Asher Yotzar (blessing after using the washroom), within the context of the miracle of our digestive system.
- In these lessons where teaching is less than outstanding, it is in subjects such as Sedra and Yedioh Klolis where teachers on occasion do not give over the precise background to the topic.

## **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS IN THEIR LIMMUDEI KODESH EDUCATION**

### **Curriculum Impact**

- Pupils enjoy their Limmudei Kodesh lessons and are able to reflect upon and discuss Torah values and Mitzvos. In discussions with pupils, several reported how they found Limmudei Kodesh lessons to be exciting and that these lessons helped them to prepare for the future.
- Pupils practise the good middos and Torah values that they have learnt. Inspectors observed a culture of respect and care amongst pupils, which is also well modelled by staff.

- Pupils develop an outstanding level of knowledge and skills and achieve well in all subjects in relation to their starting points. This is particularly so within Kriah, Chumash and Parsha, where progress is outstanding. Progress in Yedioh Klolis is good.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education ladder.

## **The Quality of Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development** is outstanding

- Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding. Staff present themselves as excellent role models and take every opportunity to imbue values and good middos in their pupils. A wonderful example of this was demonstrated within a Reception class lesson, wherein the teacher shared with pupils the concept of learning from her own mistakes as a springboard for growth.
- Pupils feel most supported as demonstrated by a Year Six pupil who expressed that “teachers help us so much for now and for the future.”
- The middos programmes in the school are well planned and pervade all aspects of school life. An example of this is the Bas Melech awards in which pupils’ portrait photos are displayed in a prominent position, celebrating their outstanding middos. During the inspection, pupils were involved in collecting Tzeddoka (charity), through bringing in toys to be sold for Camp Simcha.
- The school has adopted three key principles; respect, love of learning and resilience, and this is encouraged by all staff. An example of beautiful middos was displayed within a Year Five lesson in which pupils clapped for a classmate when she correctly answered a challenging question.
- The school meets the legal requirements for collective worship, through daily Tefilla (prayer sessions), bentching (grace after meals) and other opportunities to recite brochas (blessings). Through all these sessions, behaviour is excellent, pupils are well focused and read with concentration. The school has put a lot of effort into making Tefilla meaningful and relevant. In conversation about Tefilla with one of the inspectors, a pupil commented “I really like davening because it makes me happy when I daven for others”.
- The curriculum is immersed in spiritual and moral growth, which encourages pupils to reflect upon and internalise lessons. An example of this was within a Year Three Chumash lesson, in which pupils were encouraged to consider the feelings of others, through emulating the ways of Avrohom Avinu (Abraham).
- The quality of the classroom displays and around the school underpins the strong Kodesh learning environment.

## School details

Unique reference number	133365
Local authority	London Borough of Barnet
Lead Inspector	Rabbi Dr Yonoson Yodaiken

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of school	Primary School
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Gender of pupils	Female
Number of pupils on the school roll	472 (including Nursery)
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Mr Andrew Cohen
Menahel	Rabbi Yitzchok Weitz
Headteacher	Mrs E Bialoglowski
Date of previous school inspection	19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
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