

NORTH CHESHIRE JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Ann's Road, North Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 4RZ

Inspection report of Jewish Studies under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

School details

Unique reference number	106113
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection dates	8 - 9 November 2018
Lead Inspector	Rabbi Dr Y Yodaiken

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	223
Chair	Mr Andrew Basger
Jewish Studies Governor	Mr Benjamin Sallon
Head of Kodesh	Rabbi Z Katz
Headteacher	Mr M Woolf
Date of previous inspection	2013
School address	St Ann's Road North Heald Green Cheadle SK8 4RZ
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School website	www.ncjps.org.uk

Introduction

The inspection was conducted by Rabbi Dr Yodaiken who visited in total seven lessons, or parts of lessons, including two *tefillot* (prayer) sessions and a focussed reading intervention programme. He visited two assemblies, juniors and infants, the juniors one being a Shabbat assembly. Discussions took place with the Head of Jewish Studies, the Headteacher, the Jewish Studies Governor Lead, members of staff, Jewish studies and national curriculum, a member of the PTA, several parents and the local authority advisor to the school. The inspector conducted two learning walks, one accompanied by four Year 6 pupils, including the head boy and head girl. Interviews took place with a representative group of pupils from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, in separate discussion groups, during which pupils shared their views about their school experiences, particularly relating to Jewish studies. Pupils from Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 were tested on the Jewish studies curriculum which they had learnt over the last year. The inspector perused a range of documents including policies, the Jewish studies curriculum, the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan, children's written work and teacher's lesson plans, as well as tracking data in Hebrew reading. The family learning programme arranged by the school in conjunction with SEED was observed and an after school Jewish studies club, Alef Bet, was visited by the inspector. This inspection of Jewish studies was carried out at the end of a five year period, the school previously being inspected in 2013.

The inspection focus was on the following.

- The effectiveness of leadership and management in Jewish education.
- Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education.
- Quality of the Jewish studies curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives.
- Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education.

Information about the school

North Cheshire Jewish Primary School was founded in 1973 and is located in the leafy suburbs of Heald Green, within the Stockport Local Authority. It is situated on a large, purpose built campus, with separate buildings for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils come from all areas of South Manchester, including Hale, Altrincham, Bowden and Cheadle. Although previously a two form entry, now the school offers a one form entry for new pupils. There is a range of ability, with 11 pupils having special educational needs, which is well below the national average, and 43 children who speak English as an additional language. The school's stated core aims and mission statement is 'to offer a highly motivating and academic

atmosphere, where children are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential, to be proud of their Judaism and have a strong identity regarding their own community and the State of Israel'. In addition, 'to encourage all children to be outstanding British citizens who are imbued with a rich experience in British values and heritage'.

Overall effectiveness

- The quality of Jewish learning provided in North Cheshire Jewish Primary School is good (Grade 2) because the quality of teaching in Jewish studies is high and pupils have a very positive Jewish educational experience which ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their Jewish education.
- The school takes effective action to enable most pupils to reach their full potential in their Jewish education and the school meets its stated aims.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding and the school provides a high quality *tefillah* (collective worship) provision.
- The quality of leadership and management in Jewish studies is good, particularly since the recent appointment of the Head of Jewish Studies who works very well together with the headteacher and governing body who have a shared vision for the Jewish studies provision at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- ensure that the systems of monitoring teaching and learning are formalised, with written feedback offered to teachers, on the planning and implementation of lessons.
- ensure that marking of written work consistently includes advice on the next steps for development and that pupils are afforded the opportunity to respond to these comments
- further develop the Jewish studies curriculum, so that there is comprehensive progression mapped from year to year and that the school maximises the cross-curriculum opportunities between the national curriculum and the Jewish studies curriculum

Inspection judgements

Key for inspection grades

	Grade
Overall effectiveness	2
Effectiveness of leadership and management in Jewish studies	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish studies	2
Quality of Jewish studies curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives	2
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, meeting the standards requirement for a daily act of collective worship	1
Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education	2

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

The quality of leadership and management is Good (Grade 2)

- The quality of leadership and management is good. The head of Jewish studies, headteacher, staff and governors have high expectations for the school and a shared vision. The head of Jewish studies works seamlessly with the headteacher and as a result there is a great sense of harmony between Jewish studies and national curriculum staff. The head of Jewish studies provides an outstanding role model of respect and empathy and facilitates, along with the headteacher, the excellent pastoral care provided for pupils at the school.
- Since his recent appointment, the head of Jewish studies has driven school improvement relentlessly and as a result the school has made good progress. Initiatives introduced include the new Hebrew reading programme linked to a good system for assessment and tracking. Family programmes such as the SEED programme, impressive work on the development of good *middot* (character traits), and the systematic approach to reinforcing Jewish knowledge and practice through the excellent extracurricular programmes.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive, with one parent commenting that the school is "like one big family". Another parent reported to the inspector that "we could not wish for anything more from the school". Parents appreciate the weekly newsletters sent by the head

of Jewish studies which help them review, amongst other aspects, the weekly *parashah* (portion of the Torah) with their children.

- The governing body make a significant contribution to the work and direction of the school. They provide a high level of support as well as challenge and hold the Jewish studies department to account. Discussions with the lead governor for Jewish studies reveal that he has a clear grasp of the school's strengths and the areas for development. He is highly motivated and focussed and is clearly making a significant impact on the school's journey towards providing an excellent Jewish studies provision.
- The head of Jewish studies knows his school well, its strengths and areas for development and he monitors teaching and learning within Jewish studies frequently. However, this needs to be formalised, with written feedback offered which provides direction to staff on the planning and implementation of lessons.
- The Jewish studies curriculum offers a provision which meets the school's own aims and visions. However, the curriculum needs to be upgraded, so that there is precise progression from year to year in each subject, and that the school maximizes opportunities for integration between the national curriculum and the Jewish studies curriculum.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is Outstanding (Grade 1)

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and to respect the law within the Jewish studies curriculum. The school offers an extremely positive and happy setting and pupils report that they feel very safe and nurtured therein.
- Outstanding spiritual development is very evident in the many opportunities provided for pupils to reflect and empathise with others less fortunate. Examples of this can be seen in the way pupils are encouraged to pray for the welfare of others. A wonderful example of pupils' reflection was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils described prayer as an opportunity to welcome Hashem into their school. Pupils learn about giving *tzedaka* (charity) which is imbued within school life. They raise money for charities such as Camp Simcha, Chai, RSPCA and Maggie's Wateraid – Africa.
- The school meets the legal requirements for collective worship through daily *tefillot* (prayer sessions), *bentching* (grace after meals) and other opportunities to recite *brachot* (blessings). Throughout all these activities behaviour is excellent and pupils are well focussed on the prayer being recited.

- The school provides excellent extra-curricular activities which impact very positively on pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. These include the Year 2 siddur presentation ceremony, Year 3 *havdallah* event in which pupils are involved in making the spices and *havdallah* candles, a Purim fair, Lag B'Omer carnival, a mock *seder* before Pesach, festival workshops, Year 5 design a box for Camp Simcha project in which presents are collected for ill children, and the after school Alef Bet club which is enthusiastically attended by pupils who want to extend their Jewish studies learning. The Head of Jewish studies expertly and enthusiastically leads the "Respect Project" which is an acronym for the seven core area values of Resilience, Empathy, Self-awareness, Positivity, Excellence, Communication and Teamwork. Pupils talk very positively about the headteacher's drive to encourage pupils to do random acts of kindness.
- Prominent displays in the Jewish studies classrooms and around the school reinforce knowledge, skills and the religious ethos of the school. These include displays on *nashim tzidkaniyot* (righteous women) and on the Jewish festivals.
- Pupils develop their self-esteem and self-confidence by assuming responsibilities within the school. Two wonderful examples of this were seen during the inspection when Year 6 pupils acted as guides to the inspector, showing him around the school, and in the way Year 6 children support pupils from younger classes who might be upset or worried.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish studies is Good (Grade 2)

- The quality of teaching in Jewish studies is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. As a result, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities as well as the more able, are making at least good progress.
- Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and this is reflected in the creative way in which teachers present lessons.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, very positive and act as excellent role models to their pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons is consistently outstanding and pupils work well in pairs and groups, displaying positive attitudes and excellent focus.
- When the teaching was outstanding, the inspector noted high levels of pupil interaction and expert questioning, leading to a high level of challenge and deep reflection. For example, in one class a pupil defined prayer as an opportunity to form a close relationship with G-d.
- Where teaching is only good there is a lack of precise lesson planning to ensure that classroom activities are timed to generate maximum progress.

For example, in one lesson the pupils were given a written activity before they had fully absorbed the concept being taught

- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed. They are active in lessons and assist and challenge pupils in their understanding of key learning points.
- Assessment of pupils' work in Jewish studies is through questioning and written tests. In the teaching of reading a clear and rigorous process is in place for tracking the progress of each pupil. This recent initiative, and the introduction of an expert reading teacher, has clearly made a big difference to pupil progress in Hebrew reading.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, there is a lack of direction offered to pupils on next steps, and in addition pupils are not being given opportunities to respond. This does impact somewhat negatively on progress.

The effectiveness of the Jewish studies/education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives is Good (Grade 2)

- The Jewish Education Curriculum is good and enhances the Jewish ethos of the school. There are five strands, including content and skills. These are Hebrew reading, prayer, *parashah* (weekly portion of the Torah), *chumash* (five books of the Torah) and Jewish general knowledge.
- The school's curriculum and extra curriculum has been clearly upgraded since the last inspection and now provide many memorable occasions for pupils, who clearly enjoy these opportunities because they are so meaningful and age appropriate.
- The recently introduced Hebrew reading programme is innovative and is already having a big impact, with the specialist reading teacher skilfully implementing and tracking the new curriculum. The Alef Champ strategy encourages pupils to work hard in this important area.
- There are curriculum documents for each year group, however, these documents now need to be upgraded so that progression is charted year on year with each year building on the last. The *tefillah* curriculum provides guidance on the teaching of *tefillah* in a very meaningful way.
- The school's Jewish curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable experiences and many opportunities for high quality learning. One pupil commented 'I love Jewish studies because it makes me feel close to Hashem and I feel so proud to be a Jew'. The head of Jewish studies has facilitated a joyous approach to learning by making the lessons fun and enjoyable.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about participating in informal Jewish education as part of the school's provision. For example, in the after school Alef Bet club which offers pupils the opportunity to learn Jewish topics in more depth.

- Extracurricular events consolidate the enthusiasm and positivity of pupils towards Jewish studies and practice. These events include a model *seder* before Passover, Succot programmes, the Chanukah concert, the *chazak* (inspiration) week for Year 6, which includes a residential visit to a Jewish area of interest, and Purim events.
- Cross curricular provision, placing the Jewish topics in their broader context, does happen on occasion. For example, the literacy work on writing about Jewish women of distinction and the *challah* (bread for Shabbos) baking activities. However, this opportunity to really maximize cross-curricular links needs to be worked upon and maximized. The headteacher and head of Jewish studies are determined for this to happen.
- External organisations such as SEED are invited to work with the school to increase family involvement, and the school Rabbi often visits the school to take part in inspirational events such as the school *minyan* (family prayer), the *havdallah* celebration and other events.
- All groups of pupils benefit from a highly enjoyable and relevant curriculum which promotes an enthusiasm of pupils towards Jewish worship and practice.
- The parental partnership is an important part of the curriculum provision. Parents are regularly invited into school, for example, for the *siddur* presentation evening in Year 2, *havdallah* event in Year 3 and Project Seed programmes.

Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education

- Taking account of their starting points, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress is high.
- The head of Jewish studies effectively communicates expectations to all the stakeholders and as a result Jewish studies has a prominent part in the school.
- Pupils behave well in Jewish studies lessons and enjoy all the strands being taught. They display very positive attitudes towards all aspects of the Jewish curriculum.
- Pupils make excellent progress in Hebrew reading. This is due to the good work of the new reading teacher and the effective Hebrew reading tracking programme.
- Testing of pupils from three classes indicates that pupils are making at least good progress in all subjects, when considering the school's own curriculum and pupils' starting points.
- When the inspector spoke to pupils about their current topics of learning, many could articulate the learning topic with a good level of depth of understanding. However, when referring to previously learnt Jewish general knowledge topics the detail was somewhat lost and, in this respect, a redraft of the Jewish Studies Curriculum, building in progression year on year, will really help to consolidate knowledge previously learnt.

- Good opportunities are provided in the Alef Bet after school learning programme for pupils to reach higher levels in their Jewish studies. For example, pupils tested in *chumash* were able to translate with accuracy and confidence.