

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The inspection was carried out under Section 23 of the 1996 School Inspections Act. Its purpose was to report on:

- ◆ The educational standards achieved in Jewish Studies in the school
- ◆ The quality of Jewish education provided
- ◆ The spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils in the school
- ◆ Arrangements for collective worship

Other aspects of the school's work were inspected under Section 10 of the 1996 School Inspections Act and have been reported on separately.

### Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Rosh Pinah Primary
Type of School	Infant and Junior
Status	Voluntary aided
Age Range of Pupils	4 -11
Headteacher	Mrs H Wiseman
Head of Jewish Studies	Vacant
Address of School	Glengall Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 8TE
Telephone	020 8958 8599
Chairmen of Governors	Mr H Berg and M. D Gallick
Emeritus Principal	Rev Saul Amias MBE
Associate Principal	Rabbi Y Schochet
Local Education Authority	Barnet
Reporting Inspector	Mr. D Felsenstein
Team Inspector	Rev M A Binstock
Date of Inspection	19-21 November 2001
	4 –6 Kislev 5762
Date of Previous Inspection	15-18 June 1998

## 1.1 School Data and Indicators

When fully staffed, there are expected to be 5 full-time teachers, one 0.7 part-time teacher and 3 assistants.

Pupils on Roll	414
Proposed pupil-teacher ratio	1:73 (excluding assistants)
Total teaching time:	
Reception	approx. 3.25 hours a week per group
Key Stage 1	16 hours
Key Stage 2	37 hours
Pupils with Special Educational Needs	Statemented 9 SEN Register 107
Pupils with Free Meal Entitlement	13
School Leavers Summer 2001	JFS 29, Immanuel College 11, Hasmonean 7, Haberdashers 3, King Solomon 4, Watford Grammar 1.

Number of full-time pupils

<b>Years</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Reception	31	29
1	29	31
2	26	33
3	30	27
4	33	27
5	27	32
6	34	25
Totals	210	204

Religious affiliation:  
Proportion of Jewish pupils:

Orthodox  
100%

## **1.2 Basic Information**

1. Rosh Pinah Primary, an orthodox Zionist school, caters for the Jewish communities of Edgware and neighbouring areas of north west London. Pupils come, on the whole, from socially advantaged homes and represent a wide range of religious orthodoxy. There are two classes in each year group with an average of 30 pupils in each. 5 pupils speak Hebrew as their first language, a small number are bilingual, but most are competent in their use of English. The school has had a strong tradition of teaching *Ivrit* as a language, largely independently of Jewish Studies, although technically they have both been under one head of department.

2. The school admits pupils who are recognised as Jewish by the Chief Rabbi, and if over-subscribed, clear entry criteria are applied.

3. The sudden and unexpected withdrawal of Scopus financial support in March 2000 created great problems for the school, and uncertainty and discontent within the department.

4. The retirement of the long-serving head of department last July left a crucial vacancy, which has not yet been filled. Other staff departures from the department have resulted in a situation at the time of the inspection of there being no permanent Jewish Studies teachers in the fifth and sixth years, although there is a supply teacher. Three unqualified teachers with the help of three assistants teach the Reception class and Years one to four.

5. In this difficult situation, major issues such as the relationship of *Ivrit* to Jewish Studies, the development of a more relevant up-to-date curriculum and the effective teaching of basic skills, can only be tackled in an ad hoc and piecemeal manner by the energetic but heavily burdened headteacher, backed by a keen Jewish Studies committee of the governors. This committee is chaired by a co-chairman of the governors, and includes an experienced educational professional.

6. This inspection, therefore, has had to be conducted within these parameters. It has proved difficult to assess progress since the last Pikuach inspection in 1998, or to assess areas normally looked at in depth. Unable to inspect regular teaching in two years, to examine a curriculum, or to discuss issues with a head of department, the inspectors in their report, have evaluated what they have seen, but have been unable to make definitive judgements in all areas. Moreover, their prime concern has been to make helpful suggestions to assist the governors and headteacher in the promotion of a Jewish Studies Development Plan for the future.

## **1.3 Record of Evidence**

1. Two inspectors spent three days in the school. In view of the situation in the Jewish Studies department, it was only possible to observe seven lessons, one in Reception, two at Key Stage 1 and four at Key Stage 2. The inspection took place almost a year after the Ofsted one.

2. Several pupils, representing the ability range, were interviewed and tested, work across the school was inspected, marking and school reports reviewed, and assemblies and lunches were observed.
3. Discussions took place with the headteacher, members of staff and governors.
4. Pupils were observed around the school and in the playground, and opportunities were taken to speak to pupils as appropriate.
5. 125 parents, about 50% of the families in the school, responded to the questionnaire distributed to all parents. About a quarter of these wrote letters or made comments on the forms.

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **2.1 Main Findings**

1. These should be taken in the context of the situation in the Jewish Studies Department as explained earlier.
2. Rosh Pinah is generally a happy school. Pupils demonstrate *derech erez* towards visitors and have positive attitudes about their school and Jewish Studies. There is respect for the environment and there are beautiful displays of work which include many themes on *middot*.
3. A particular strength of the school is the quality of collective worship. Assemblies in particular, provide a very positive start to the school day. Infant and Junior assemblies held in the hall, classroom assemblies, and daily *Birkat Hamazon* comply fully with the statutory requirements.
4. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good and is reinforced by all members of staff in and out of the classroom.
5. The standards in the Reception class observed, were satisfactory. Those achieved in Key Stage 1, including Hebrew reading and writing, are satisfactory and in line with the school's expectations, except in the area of general Jewish knowledge. The standards achieved in Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory, particularly in *Ivrit* and in general Jewish knowledge. Even Hebrew reading falls short of the school's stated aims. Pupils in these years have been particularly affected by the staffing situation in the department.
6. The quality of teaching provided is good in Key Stage 1, but overall, is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2, although there were some examples of satisfactory lessons.
7. The school still theoretically works within the Scopus curriculum. This offers general advice and attainment targets, but does not provide detailed year by year, and term by term work to be covered in each area of the curriculum. This situation is unsatisfactory and is a major impediment to the work of the department.

8. The provision of resources is deficient in certain areas. There is little software available for Jewish Studies. There is no separate library for Jewish books, and the range and quantity of Jewish books is limited.

9. The management of the Jewish Studies department is unsatisfactory due mainly to the lack of a head of department. There is a sub-committee of the governors, chaired by one of the joint chairmen of governors, which with the headteacher, has oversight of the department, and is urgently seeking to rectify this unsatisfactory situation from which most of the problems of the department stem.

10. An action plan following the Pikuach inspection of June 1998 was formulated but not fully implemented. There is now considerable in-service training available and there has been a definite improvement in the special educational needs provision in Key Stage 2.

11. There are strategies in place for behaviour management and the governors have appointed an associate principal. However, issues concerning the curriculum and aspects of assessment have yet to be resolved.

## **2.2 Key Issues for Action**

- \* The governors should continue the search for a head of department and for permanent members of the Jewish Studies department as a matter of extreme urgency.
- \* A curriculum document should be produced as soon as possible containing clear aims and objectives. In the meantime, the existing scheme of work produced by the headteacher and a governor should be broadened and expanded.

### **2.2.1 Further Issues**

- \* The governors and headteacher should review the aims of the Jewish Studies curriculum, defining such matters as the place of *Ivrit* in the curriculum, the teaching of general Jewish knowledge, strategies for teaching basic skills and the teaching of texts. This is necessary to serve as guidelines for the development of a new curriculum.
- \* Once a new head of department has been appointed, a realistic development plan should be drawn up, and its implementation carefully monitored by the headteacher and the Jewish Studies sub-committee of the governors.
- \* As well as general in-service training for the Jewish Studies staff, the needs of each individual member should be addressed. A plan to provide further incentive to these teachers by encouraging them to accept responsibilities within the department for areas such as the Reception classes, Key Stage 1 classes, Key Stage 2 classes and the development of resources, will help the teachers to grow professionally. In time, one might even be appointed as

deputy head of department to ensure effective cover in the event of the possible absence of the head of department or even, as a possible successor.

- \* Particular attention should be paid to the development of effective teaching strategies, including the use of a wide range of resources such as overhead projectors, videos and computer technology.

### **3. STANDARDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION**

#### **3.1 Achievement and progress in Jewish Studies**

1. The school prospectus claims that ‘our pupils reach a high standard of Jewish knowledge, *Ivrit* and *Limmudei Kodesh*, reading and understanding the *Siddur*, *Chumash*, *Rashi*, *Mishnah* and Jewish History, all of which merge to instil love and understanding of Israel and its culture’.
2. In practice, in the present situation within the department, there is no teaching of *Rashi* whilst some *Mishnah* is taught irregularly to Year 6. There is some teaching of integrated *Ivrit* in the Reception and Infants, but not in the Juniors. Standards in other areas are variable. Reading is good in Key Stage 1, where the pupils are on target in learning to read, but do not reach the stated aims in Key Stage 2 where consistent practice is necessary to turn hesitant reading into fluent reading
3. Translation and comprehension is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, but none was observed in Key Stage 1. The teaching of Jewish history and geography is taught within the secular curriculum.
4. General Jewish knowledge is unsatisfactory at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, even of basic subjects such as the *chagim*.
5. Progress is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1 except in general Jewish knowledge, whilst the departmental difficulties in the upper school are hampering progress in several areas, including general Jewish knowledge and those areas where there is presently little or no teaching.

#### **3.2 Pupils' Attitudes, Behaviour and Response to Jewish Studies**

1. In those lessons observed, where the teaching was stimulating and challenging, the attitude of the pupils was very good. In other lessons, where these qualities were not present, their attitude was negative. The same comment can be made about their behaviour.
2. In assemblies, however, which were well organised and stimulating, the concentration, attitude and behaviour was generally very good.
3. The behaviour of the pupils observed around the school and in the playgrounds was good, and the inspectors experienced *derech erez* from the pupils at all times.
4. The response of pupils as demonstrated in their participation in a wide range of school activities, in their visits to old age homes and in their acceptance of responsibilities in the school, is very positive.
5. The staff has put in place strategies for improving the general attitude and behaviour of the pupils in the school since the last Pikuach and Ofsted inspections,

and these are clearly bearing fruit. This was also confirmed in the most recent report from the Barnet inspector to the governors.

### **3.3 Collective worship - *Tefillah***

1. The programme of Infant and Junior school assemblies which is supplemented by classroom *Tefillah* on those days when pupils are not in the hall, satisfies the statutory requirements.
2. The quality of school assemblies is very good. The pupils concentrate on and participate well in the reciting and singing of *tefillot*, and they are well led by senior pupils. Members of staff set a very good example by their dress and their assistance to pupils in need of help in following the service. The principal speaks briefly to the Juniors at their Monday assembly.
3. The assemblies are well planned and provide both a devotional and a learning experience for the pupils. The content reflects not only the *siddur*, but also the festivals of the Jewish calendar such as *Rosh Chodesh* and *Chanukah*.
4. The pupils daily say the appropriate blessing over bread in their classrooms before lunch, and then recite *Birkat Hamazon* in their classrooms at the end of the lunch break. This helps to create an atmosphere of *kavanah*, because the groups are relatively small and the pupils are supervised by their own teachers.
5. The parents in their responses to the question on school assemblies and *Tefillah* were very supportive of the efficacy of both these activities.

## **4 QUALITY OF JEWISH EDUCATION**

### **4.1 Teaching**

1. The quality of teaching provided is good in Key Stage 1, but overall, is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2, although there were some examples of satisfactory lessons.
2. The knowledge of the teachers presently in the school is sufficient for the range of subjects being taught, but in some cases would not be if the areas designated in the prospectus were all included in the teaching.
3. The effectiveness of the teaching is naturally hampered by the lack of a curriculum and by the absence of a head of department to give direction. Teaching is largely oral, supplemented by worksheets. The quality of some worksheets is poor both in terms of content and presentation.
4. Of the seven lessons observed, three were very good (43%), two were satisfactory (28%), and two were unsatisfactory (28%).
5. Where lessons were planned effectively, with clear objectives, stimulating content, and varied methodology, with an understanding of the needs of particular age



groups, the response of pupils was good, as was their behaviour. For example, in Key Stage 1 lessons observed, teachers displayed good rapport with their pupils. They gave warm praise where due and employed a variety of strategies to maintain the interest and enthusiasm of the classes. In some Key Stage 2 lessons, this was not the case.

6. In the present situation, policies on matters such as assessment and homework are not being carried out consistently.

#### **4.2 Assessment**

1. In the Staff Handbook there is an appendix with a detailed assessment policy. This policy is only being partly implemented by the Jewish Studies teachers.

2. Written work is being marked, and there are often supportive comments, but these are rarely informative or analytical. Thus the marking does not help the pupils to progress.

3. Reports to parents are well written and cover different areas of the work of the pupils (they were written at the end of the summer term 2001). However, six pupils were tested for reading in Year 6 who had been described in their Year 5 reports as fluent readers, and one was found to be fluent and the other five were hesitant readers. This only emphasises the need for written reports to parents to be based on detailed records.

#### **4.3 Quality and Range of the Curriculum**

1. The quality and range of the curriculum have deteriorated since the previous Pikuach inspection and as such, are unsatisfactory. It remains unclear what has become of the developmental curriculum referred to in the previous Pikuach report and why it was not available to the current inspectors.

2. The school theoretically follows the Scopus National Jewish Studies Curriculum. The programme of studies in this curriculum identifies key features that aim to provide a framework for the design of schemes of work. The headteacher and governors are aware of the need to produce a developmental scheme of work as a matter of extreme urgency in order that the curriculum can be successfully implemented.

3. The school's policy on the teaching of *Ivrit* needs to be clarified. The current view of the governors is to incorporate the teaching of *Ivrit* within the Jewish Studies lessons. The rationale for this is to maximise the time available so that the standards of attainment in all areas of Jewish Studies can be raised. If this new policy of *Ivrit B'Ivrit* is to be adopted and implemented successfully, the curriculum document will need to contain clearly defined aims and objectives for teaching *Ivrit* in each year group. Appropriate resource material will be essential and teachers may well require specific in-service training to develop the skills required for the teaching of *Ivrit B'Ivrit*.

4. The school is aware of the importance of cross-curricular links and the evidence indicates that these take place. For example, Israel studies are taught as the geography element within the National Curriculum. The resource material used for this subject is the AJE publication 'Into Israel'. Other examples include the linking of the festival of *Chanukah* with studies about the Greeks, and Rabbi Akiva with the Romans.

5. Extra-curricular activities exist which enhance the teaching of Jewish Studies. Examples include Israeli dancing held weekly after school for Years 4-6, two lunchtime leining clubs for Years 4-6, and two *Anim Zemiroth* clubs for Years 2-3. In addition, there is a school choir of 38 pupils, which performs both within and outside the school. The headteacher believes strongly in the value of a school Israel trip but has so far, not been able to organise this. The school has a commendable record of achievement in raising money for *tzedakah* to support a variety of worthy causes.

#### **4.4 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

1. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good and is reinforced by all members of staff in and out of the classroom.

2. Consistent with the school's religious ethos rooted in Jewish values, great importance is given to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This objective is seen as a whole school responsibility, and it is gratifying to note how all teachers act as excellent role models for the pupils to emulate. There are beautiful displays around the school bearing appropriate biblical and rabbinic quotations, which reinforce the school's golden rules.

#### **4.5 Equality of Opportunity**

1. The school has a written policy on Equal Opportunities. In accordance with the policy, all pupils have equal access to the Jewish Studies curriculum in so far as it is consistent with the school's religious ethos. This means that the boys lead the service and read from the *Torah* during *Tefillah*.

#### **4.6 Support, Guidance and Welfare**

1. The provision for support, guidance and welfare is very good. The school provides a safe and secure environment throughout the school day.

2. The school recognises and respects the varying standards of religious observance of its families, and therefore, pupils and parents are given guidance on matters such as *Kashrut* and appropriate dress in a sensitive and non-threatening manner.

3. The school has appropriate links with outside agencies including Norwood Jewish Child Care, and Binoh, the Jewish Special Educational Needs Service.

#### **4.7 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

1. Provision for pupils with special needs is sound, and has improved since the previous Pikuach inspection. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, classroom assistants are now in place, providing extra support where required.
2. Due to illness, the special educational needs co-ordinator (Senco) in the Infants department has not been in regular attendance. A new Senco for Infants is due to commence in January 2002.
3. In Key Stage 2, the Senco is involved in Jewish Studies. At the commencement of the academic year, she provides all teachers with the SEN register and gives advice regarding each pupil's particular needs. She is available to the Jewish Studies teachers throughout the year. Individual education plans exist where required, but they do not contain specific reference to Jewish Studies. This is a weakness that needs to be addressed.

#### **4.8 Partnership with Parents and the Jewish Community**

1. The large number of replies to the parent questionnaire, indicate both the interest parents have in Jewish Studies, and their concerns about the absence of a head of department, the lack of a permanent and full staff, and the confusions about the curricular provision. These concerns are justified in the view of the inspectors. Moreover, there is also a significant minority view that parents are not encouraged sufficiently to participate in the Jewish life of the school, and do not find the school easy to approach about their concerns.
2. The school is making urgent efforts to rectify the present situation within the department, but until the governors have something to report, parents will feel a natural frustration. In practice, there are three formal occasions a year for parents to meet class and Jewish studies teachers to discuss pupils' progress. There is an annual meeting to discuss the curriculum for the year at which written handouts are also provided, and each pupil has a diary that can act as a two-way means of communication. Appointments can always be made to see the headteacher to discuss concerns, and parents can also contact either of the two chairmen of governors. So there is evidence that the school does try to involve parents and make itself available to them.
3. Parents are also invited to attend *Kabbalat Shabbat* ceremonies and model *Sedarim*. The school is involved in the Jewish community in several ways. The school choir visits Jewish old age homes to entertain the residents. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 take fruit to these homes prior to *chagim*, the school participates in both Jewish and non-Jewish inter-school sports and there is a strong school tradition of support for charities. Representatives from such organisations as Jewish Child's Day and Norwood Ravenswood address school assemblies. Money is brought to school each Friday, and non-Jewish charities also benefit.
4. In one sense the school does feel apart from the community. Although the Scopus Trust still owns the property of the school, it now offers no support to the

school, whilst the school does not have the benefit of being under the umbrella of another organisation such as the United Synagogue. Hence there is some feeling of isolation.

5. The school liaises closely with receiving schools, and the headteacher participates in the conferences of the Association of Jewish Headteachers.

## **5 MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL AND THEIR IMPACT ON JEWISH EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Management**

1. Since there is no head of department and no departmental structure, the present management situation in the Jewish Studies department is unsatisfactory. There is a sub-committee of the governors, chaired by one of the joint chairmen of governors, which with the headteacher, has oversight of the department, and is urgently seeking to rectify this unsatisfactory situation from which most of the problems of the department stem.

2. There is a clear management structure for the administration of Jewish studies. Governors exercise their responsibilities through a sub-committee chaired by one of the co-chairmen of governors. The very committed headteacher and head of department (when there is one in post) are responsible to this committee as well as to the governors as a whole. There has not been a structure within the department itself, which is partly the cause of the current situation.

3. When the appointment of head of department has been made, management issues such as the creation of a development plan and the establishment of quality control will have to be addressed.

4. The cost of the Jewish Studies department is met entirely out of the voluntary levy and donations. The headteacher plans her budget with care, and within the resources available, uses them to support priorities. These at the moment centre on the appointment of appropriate staff.

### **5.2 Staffing, Resources for Learning, and Accommodation**

1. The current provision of staffing and resources for Jewish Studies is unsatisfactory. The projected size of the department would provide the numbers to staff the department adequately. The school already has in place an effective in-service programme for developing the professionalism of the staff.

2. The accommodation is good and there is beautiful display enhancing the environment of the school.

3. The school's resources would be enriched by the acquisition of more software for Jewish Studies, and by the rearrangement of the Jewish library provision with an enhanced provision of books on Jewish subjects for pupils of different abilities and ages.

