

Simon Marks Jewish Primary School

Inspection report

LEA	Hackney
Inspection dates	18 – 19 May 2009
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Reporting Inspector	Rabbi Geoffrey L. Shisler
Team Inspector	Mrs Fayge Levenberg

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	75 Cazenove Road
School category	Voluntary Aided		London N16 6PD
Age range of pupils	3 – 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8806 6048
Number on roll	184	Fax number	020 8442 4722
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Kessler
Date of previous inspection	28 Feb – 1 st march 2006	Headteacher	Mrs Nicole Delamere

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Introduction

Description of the school

Simon Marks is a modern orthodox Zionist Jewish primary school, based in Hackney. The ethos of school is *Torah Im Derech Eretz,* and it places a great emphasis on teaching *Middot* (high ethical standards) to its pupils.

The school is supported by the Simon Marks Jewish Primary School Trust and the Scopus Trust, which is the foundation body. It also operates under the auspices of The Learning Trust, Hackney. It does not affiliate to any synagogal body but approaches Judaism from an orthodox perspective. Also, it currently has on roll a small number of non-Jewish pupils.

The pupils come from families right across the spectrum of Jewish observance and there is a significant number of Israeli children.

Although the majority of pupils live in the local area, there are also those who come from the East End as well as North West London. Although many pupils come from affluent and professional families, there are some who are disadvantaged and are entitled to free school meals. There is a small number of children on the Special Educational Needs Register.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education

The Jewish Studies in Simon Marks is satisfactory with some good features.

The present Director of Jewish Educational Development (DJED), who is also the assistant head teacher, has been in post for the past four years. He inherited a curriculum that had been written by the previous head teacher which was comprehensive and very ambitious. Since the school moved from providing four Jewish Studies lessons per class per week down to just three per week, it has become clear that the expectations of this curriculum are completely unrealistic. Together with his colleagues in the department, the DJED has begun to prepare a more appropriate curriculum which he hopes to have completed during the next academic year.

Of the four issues arising from the previous Pikuach inspection one, that relates to the expansion of professional development has been addressed to some extent, including teachers observing teaching of Chumash at another Jewish primary school and the Foundation Stage teacher observing there the delivery of Kabbalat Shabbat. There is little evidence that these limited activities have impacted significantly on the delivery of the Jewish Studies programme.

The other three issues still remain to be addressed

There is a positive and vibrant Jewish atmosphere in the school. All boys are expected to wear a *Kippah* and *Tzitzit* at all times (other than when engaging in physical activities), and teachers are caring and warm. Pupils are confident, happy and polite, and in general very well behaved.

What the school should do to improve further

The most significant task facing the senior leadership is to improve the management and delivery of Jewish Studies in the school. This should be done as follows:

- a) the Governing Board should identify Jewish Studies as an area for urgent improvement in the school's plan, and with the Headteacher and DJED, procure the services of one or two independent School Kodesh Improvement Partners to work alongside the DJED in constructing a credible Self Evaluation for Jewish Studies.
- b) the DJED and these School Kodesh Improvement Partners should work with the Headteacher to construct a plan of action for Jewish Studies; this plan would be on the same lines as those for other curriculum areas.

- c) The school leadership should ensure that such a plan is approved by Governors and also addresses two of the curricular key issues mentioned in the last Pikuach report that have not yet been actioned, viz:
 - i). Complete the development of the Jewish Studies curriculum to create practical schemes of work that promote pupils' progression;
 - ii). Improve assessment in Jewish Studies.
- d) the Governors and headteacher should offer a good role model of management in that they regularly appraise and support the DJED and enable him in turn to:
 - iii) develop leadership strengths and receive resources for improving the Jewish Studies provision
 - iv) conduct regular appraisal meetings with those whom he manages;
 - v) play an increasing role in regularly modelling and monitoring teachers, as required in the last Pikuach report.
- e) coordinate more effectively the impact of the joint contributions of the Jewish Studies, Ivrit and music.

Grade 3

Achievement and standards

Achievements and standards are satisfactory overall.

Inspectors scrutinised a selection of work from each year group at different levels of ability and children's work shows a range of topics covered from *Parasha*, to *Chagim*, to Jewish heroes, Jewish history and Israel. However there is little evidence to show continuity of subjects taught or subjects completed.

There is little differentiated work and individual targets have not been set. In lesson plans observed by Inspectors, the methods of differentiation were stated to be 'by outcome' or by questioning. In lessons observed, it was not apparent that questions were being directed to any individual children, or how 'by outcome' helped the weaker, or indeed, the brighter pupils.

Little provision is made in Jewish Studies for children with special needs, and there is little challenge for the more able. As at the time of the previous Pikuach report, at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, some pupils who have the potential for high achievement are not being fully enabled to achieve it.

A representative sample of pupils from years 2, 4 and 6 were interviewed and tested by the Inspectors, who were impressed by the standards of reading among children, as well as their good level of general Jewish knowledge.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. *Tefillah* – collective worship takes place each day, at times as whole school assemblies and at times in smaller groups. Inspectors observed an impressive whole school assembly at which pupils sang various prayers with enthusiasm. Pupils were selected to lead parts of the assembly which included the saying/singing of the *Havdalah* by a girl and a boy.

Many of the Jewish Studies lessons focus on moral dilemmas and through this whole school focus, pupils are very well aware of what is right and wrong. Pupils develop good relationships with their peers through work and play. In a number of lessons observed, pupils were working very positively with each other in small groups or pairs. Pupils are starting to expand their understanding of Britain as a diverse society and have links with a Muslim school and community centre. Pupils support various charities both Jewish and non-Jewish and the school choir have visited the Brenner Centre for the elderly. On the day of the inspection a visit to St. Joseph's Hospice was made.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and pupils' behaviour both in and out of lessons is good. Pupils enjoy their Jewish Studies learning and feel safe and secure in this small and friendly school. Pupils were eager and comfortable talking to the Inspectors about their learning experiences.

The parental responses as recorded on their questionnaires, although few in number, showed that most parents are positive about the Jewish Studies provision in the school.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but with several important reservations. The Jewish Studies department has three members of staff throughout the school, equivalent to two full-time teachers. Since the inspection took place on days of the week on which the Early Years teacher does not come to school, and year 4 does not have Jewish Studies lessons, it was not possible for inspectors to see any teaching in these classes. The learning environment in the Nursery is attractive and contributes to the Jewish ethos of the school, with displays that highlight aspects of Hebrew language, the Jewish calendar and Israel. Nursery teachers plan and assess pupils' work together and so integrate well the Jewish and general aspects.

In lessons seen higher up the school, classes were generally orderly and well-handled and offered pupils opportunities to learn. Some topics elicited interest from some of the pupils. Unfortunately the planning of individual lessons was of variable quality, and there was little evidence of assessment. There was also little evidence that such assessment as has been undertaken was used to plan further lessons. Although there is a marking policy in the school, it was adhered to in only some of the marking. Comments in which teachers ask pupils to complete unfinished work are not followed through to ensure pupils' compliance.

Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and are well-liked by the pupils. Pupils' behaviour is good, although the lack of proper differentiation means that pupils are not always busily engaged and learning.

Most lessons commence with a 'Learning Intention' written on the board, and this is sometimes written as the heading of the piece of work that pupils are about to do. In the summary of lessons observed, it was shown that the activities of the Learning Intentions were indeed usually completed as intended. However, it was unclear what exactly pupils achieved during such a lesson because few learning outcomes had been defined or assessed.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and children like their Jewish Studies teachers.

Resources for teaching Jewish Studies are barely adequate and much use is made of photocopied worksheets. Pupils are expected to purchase their own *Chumashim*. Little use is made of ICT, although there is a computer room in the school that could be used by the Jewish studies department. Apart from the Ivrit rooms, the only classroom that does not yet have an interactive white board is the Jewish Studies room. The DJED feels this is a facility of which the department could make much use.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The quality of the Jewish Studies curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum which originally consisted of 7 strands of learning is in the process of being re-vamped, to make it both more realistic, in relation to the time given to Jewish Studies, and more manageable. At present there are few clear, planned links between that which is taught in Ivrit and what is taught in Jewish Studies, and there is unnecessary overlap. For example, in discussion with Ivrit teachers inspectors were told that they prepare the pupils for the annual demonstration *Seder* by practising reading from the *Hagaddah*, and they also explain its contents. There is no curriculum which defines what the Ivrit teachers should teach, and what is to be left to the Jewish Studies teachers.

The curriculum consists of many subjects: Festivals; Jewish Heroes; Israel; *Parashat HaShavua*; *Middot*; Jewish symbols; *Shabbat*; the Synagogue; *Pirkei*

Avot, the lives of our Sages; Jewish calendar; and the Jewish life cycle. However these topics are not taught in a cohesive way which results in disjointed lessons and no discernable progression within each subject.

Music is an integral part of the Jewish Studies curriculum and there are whole school links at *Pesach* time when all teachers are involved in preparing the pupils for the *Pesach* Seder. To a lesser extent these links take place at *Chaunukah* time too. However other than at the time of the *Chagim* there are few cross curricular links.

There are some attractive Jewish Studies displays around the school and in the Jewish Studies/creative room; a *Mitzvah* tree; art work related to the *Chagim*, all of which promote the Jewish ethos of the school. There are several clubs for the pupils one of which is Israeli dancing.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

The provision for care, guidance and support is good. Security at the school is good; this ensures a safe environment for its pupils. Pupils know they are well cared for and feel supported, and they know who to approach if they have a problem or concern. The school displays effective sensitivity towards the range of Jewish observance among the pupils.

There is, as yet, no SENCO in the Jewish Studies department, which means that not all pupils' learning needs in Hebrew and Jewish Studies can be ascertained and supported, where necessary, with appropriate provision.

In addition to the morning *Tefillah*, *Birchat HaMazon* is said after lunch and there is a *Kabbalat Shabbat* each Friday. There is a school tuck shop from which children may purchase healthy refreshments, including fruit.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.

The head of department, who is also the assistant head teacher of the school, has no job description and has so far, had no appraisal. For this reason the Jewish studies department has not been through the appraisal process.

Although Ivrit is not considered part of the Jewish Studies programme in Simon Marks, the DJED is line manager for its teachers as well as for the teacher of Jewish music.

Inspectors could find very little evidence that much has changed since the last Pikuach inspection three years ago, although the DJED is now trying to develop schemes of work.

Jewish Studies teachers are not given clear direction as to what to teach, and how, and although he is the line manager for the Ivrit department, he has little input into what they teach.

There is still little monitoring of teachers. Although the DJED has informally visited members of his department to observe their lessons, there are no records of these visits. The link Governor to the Jewish Studies department visits the school frequently and has observed some lessons.

There are no action plans for further development and no clear aims of where the department is going that reflect the ethos of the school. Long term planning consists of little more than a basic outline of topics to be taught. Clearly this constitutes insufficient support for teachers and no discernable teaching plan has yet been produced.

Prior to the inspection the Kodesh Department completed a Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and the inspection found that the grades awarded did not demonstrate sufficient evidence to justify the grades given.

The recently appointed Head teacher and the governors are very supportive of the Jewish Studies in the school and are keen for it to reach the highest standards possible, appropriate to the pupils in the school.

The DJED has just started to receive support from an outside agency, and it is hoped that its input will be effective in sustaining improvements.

Grade 4

The following annex should be completed and attached to this report:

1. The **Inspection Judgement Form** (Annex A)

The inspection report should be published as a single document.

We will not publish Annex A.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY
Inspection judgements

Annex A

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 unsatisfactory.</i>	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of pupils?	3	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being?	3	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NI	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	

Achievement and standards

How well do pupils achieve?	3	
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by pupils	3	
How well pupils' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils	3	
How well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the pupils?	2	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including collective worship	2	
The behaviour of pupils	2	
The attendance of pupils	3	
How well pupils enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community.	2	
How well pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of pupils' needs?	3	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils?	3	
How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported including provision for collective worship?	2	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils?	4	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can	4	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are protected	Yes	
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable pupils to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	NI
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	NI
Pupils are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	NI
Pupils are educated about sexual health.	NO
The extent to which providers ensure that pupils stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.	NI
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	NI
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	NI
Pupils are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	NI
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	NI
Pupils, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	NI
Pupils are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	NI
The extent to which schools enable pupils to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote pupils' basic skills.	NI
Pupils have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	NI
Careers education and guidance is provided to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	NA
Education for all pupils aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	NA

