



Pardes House Primary School

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

Inspection dates 29-30 Adar I 5782 – 2-3 March 2022

Overall effectiveness Previous inspection: Outstanding

This inspection: **Outstanding**

Leadership and management: Outstanding

Quality of Jewish education: Outstanding

Intent – curriculum design

Implementation – teaching, assessment, curriculum delivery

Impact - achievement

Quality of provision for pupils: Outstanding

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The Menahel, senior leadership team and governors share a vision of the school. They are deeply committed to and driven by the ethos and values it represents. This ensures that the spiritual development and wellbeing of pupils is always at the heart of school improvement planning.
- The Menahel provides outstanding guidance to support teaching and learning, including weekly guidance on all the key core curriculum areas within Key Stage 2. Rebbes feel very supported and induction procedures are very effective.
- Leaders' work to construct a comprehensive curriculum is impressive and takes into account the knowledge and skills required in each topic and subject. They consider carefully the sequencing of the teaching of different topics and have a clear rationale for this. This is exemplified by the excellent *Kriah* (reading) programme, innovative *Loshon HaTorah* (knowledge of Classical Hebrew) programme and the wide-ranging

Gemorah (Talmudical Studies) curriculum. Work in *Yediya Klolis* (Jewish General Knowledge) and Sedra (weekly Torah portion) is less well developed, but there are plans in place to provide a fully structured programme of study in these subjects.

- The school's *Limmudei Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) oversees support for pupils with SEND, ensuring that an outstanding provision is provided for these pupils. She maps out the provision for pupils and works closely with staff in guiding them to cater for all pupils. Where appropriate, outside agencies are brought in to support pupils, for example, a play therapist comes in to school weekly.
- The Menahel has constructed an effective leadership team, who have excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development, and consistently looks to improve the school's provision.
- Leaders monitor the quality of education effectively through performance management, lesson observations, and work scrutiny. However, the outcomes of these monitoring activities need to be recorded more systematically.
- Parents overwhelmingly appreciate the educational provision provided to their children, as demonstrated in their responses to the parent questionnaire, and during discussions with inspectors.

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 teaching of *Yediya Klolis* is enhanced by the development of a comprehensive curriculum, with built-in progression from year to year, and with differentiated work linked to regular assessment.
- Ensure that those teachers who are not delivering outstanding lessons are provided with support and training, including the opportunity to observe lessons given by colleagues; so that all teachers challenge high achievers, focus upon lesson objectives and maximise lesson time.

Information about this Inspection

- 15 Kodesh lessons were observed (three of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team), and an additional three lessons were visited during a learning walk.
- Meetings were held with the Menahel, Headteacher, Principal, Senior Leaders, Middle Leaders, SENCO, all the *Limmudei Kodesh* teaching staff, and representatives of the governing body.
- Pupils in year two to year six, across the ability range, were tested on their knowledge and skills in the core subjects, and discussions took place

with these pupils, which focussed upon their experiences within *Limmudei Kodesh*.

- The inspectors considered the views of 88 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.
- In the core subjects, the school's assessment and tracking systems were scrutinised, as was work in pupils' *Kodesh* books, in most year groups.
- *Davening* (prayer) and *Bentching* (Grace after meals) was evaluated and consideration was given to the quality of display in the classrooms and around the school.
- Learning walks included an evaluation of the SEND provision at the school, both in class and in support sessions around the school.
- Deep dives were done on the following subjects: *Chumash*, *Kriah*, *Gemorah* and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC). Discussions about curriculum design and content took place with subject leaders and teachers, of these subjects.

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided primary school which provides a two form entry for boys aged between four and eleven. It is located in the London Borough of Barnet.
- The school was founded in 1952 to serve the needs of the growing *Chareidi* community in the area. There are currently 355 pupils on roll who come principally from Golders Green and surrounding areas, although some come from further afield, including Stamford Hill, Borehamwood, Edgware and Elstree.
- The ethos and values of the school, which are aligned with the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, are derived from the values and teachings of the Torah as transmitted through orthodox Jewish tradition and are monitored by the *Va'ad HaChinuch* (Rabbinic board) of the school.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils transfer to Pardes House, Menorah and Hasmonean, Grammar Schools.
- The Menahel was appointed in September 2019 and since then has built a leadership team which incorporates established leaders, as well as those more recently promoted.
- In the most recent Ofsted Section 8 inspection, 3-6 May 2021, the school was deemed to be still a good school.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

- The quality of leadership and management of *Limmudei Kodesh* is outstanding. There is a dynamic and creative vision for *Limmudei Kodesh* which is shared by staff, governors, and parents.
- The Menahel has an excellent understanding of the needs of the whole school community. He has built a vibrant team of senior leaders and together they are making a strong impact on the school's provision. One parent who met with an inspector commented, "I couldn't ask for more from a Menahel, he cares for each and every child".
- The school leadership team includes, SENCO, *Kriah*, *Loshon Hakodesh* and Key Stage 1 leaders, all of whom have produced a clear plan within their specific responsibility area. They are effectively challenged and supported by the Menahel and provide progress reports to him on a termly basis. In addition, the Menahel *farhers* (tests) pupils in key *Limmudei Kodesh* subjects and observes lessons so that pupil progress can be evaluated, and support put in place where necessary.
- The leadership and management team work to create a positive and harmonious working environment, where all staff feel respected and valued, which ensures that the morale of staff is high. Consequently, new initiatives have been introduced smoothly, such as the *Loshon Hakodesh* programme, in year two and year three.
- The school has an outstanding *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum which has been carefully planned and differentiates for pupils of different attainment levels. Particularly impressive are the *Gemorah*, *Chumash* and *Kriah* programmes. Although there is a *Yediyah Klolis* curriculum, this is not as well planned, with less focus upon progression or differentiation. However, plans are in place to develop this subject.
- There is a systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning, led by the Menahel. Weekly testing takes place in each class by Rebbes. Although staff are observed on a regular basis and valuable advice is provided, as yet this is not supported by comprehensive records. Rebbes are provided with professional development opportunities to support their practice.
- The school has produced an accurate self-evaluation framework and leaders are clear on strengths and areas of development. In discussion with leaders during the inspection, inspectors found senior leaders and subject leaders to be knowledgeable and keyed into school improvement.

- All pupils are supported outstandingly well, for example, each year group has a designated support Rebbe. The specialist staff bring passion and expertise which feeds into pupils progress.
- The leadership team facilitates good *middos* (character traits) and values and provide an excellent role model for pupils. There is good collaboration between the Menahel and Headteacher, which ensures an ubiquitous approach to the *middos* development of pupils.
- Governors are very knowledgeable of the strengths and areas for development in *Limmudei Kodesh*. They call leaders to account and offer valuable support when school projects are presented to them.

The Quality of Jewish Education for Pupils is outstanding

Curriculum Intent

- The curriculum intent offers memorable experiences for high quality learning for all pupils including, high achievers and those with SEND. A parent responding to the inspectors' questionnaire wrote that " the school offers so many memorable events which inspire our children".
- Leaders are very clear on the rationale for the sequence of topics taught and skill development in *Limmudei Kodesh* subjects. A good example of this is the way that *Chumash* skills are built up year on year. In year one, pupils are introduced to a number of key words, which appear often in the *Torah*. This is then developed in years two and three, within the *Loshon Hakodesh* programme, which offers a high level of sophistication in planning. This then feeds into the building of further *Chumash* skills in years four to six.
- The *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum provides a good mix of knowledge development and skill building. This is illustrated by the *Gemorah* curriculum, which includes the building of Aramaic words, and key concepts.
- Planning for *Yediya Klolis* and Key Stage 2 *Sedra* (weekly Torah portion), are less developed, school leaders are aware of this and are beginning to put plans in place.
- The extra-curricular events are planned carefully to support the SMSC development of pupils. Examples of this are the way in which pupils were encouraged to learn *Mishnayos Le'iluy Nishmas* (in memory) of those victims of the Meron tragedy, and the way in which year four to year six pupils have taken part in the *Shluf Gezunt* (sleep well) programme, and all those events associated with key days in the Jewish calendar.
- Assessment to support learning is expertly linked to the curriculum roll out. The assessment and planning within *Kriah* and *Loshon Hakodesh* is outstanding and supports the learning of all pupils very effectively.

The Quality of Teaching and Learning is outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning is generally outstanding which enables pupils to make accelerated progress. In the outstanding lessons, activities are available to challenge pupils at all attainment levels, and teachers take every opportunity to imbue values and life skills. For example, in a year six *Gemorah* lesson the Rebbe wove in “respect for others” and “listening carefully to peers’ comments and questions”. Lessons are typically presented in an exciting, participatory way, and clearly develop independent skills.
- Kodesh staff are passionate and enthusiastic about their teaching and as a result pupils are highly motivated. One parent commented “my child just loves his Rebbe and feels so nurtured”. In one class, pupils were asked to learn *Chumash B’Chavrusa* (with a study partner) and in so doing, were visibly excited to be talking about their learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils’ Jewish knowledge. Teachers impart knowledge and skills and develop pupils’ understanding through effective use of lesson time.
- Rebbes’ subject knowledge is excellent, the pace of lessons is brisk and questioning strategies are used effectively. Questioning involves probing to elicit deeper levels of knowledge. This encourages pupils to reflect upon lessons taught.
- In the few lessons where teaching is less strong, time is not maximised, pupils are not always focused upon lesson targets, and pupils of high attainment are not being challenged.
- Inspectors scrutinised workbooks from nearly all year groups within core subjects and tested a representative group of pupils from classes throughout the school. The books reflect outstanding progress over time, and testing showed that pupils make outstanding progress in all key subjects; *Gemorah*, *Chumash*, *Kriah*, but less so in *Yediyah Klolis*.
- Parents acknowledge the positive impact of the *Limmudei Kodesh* staff. One parent commented “my children love Kodesh lessons; they know how much their Rebbes care for them and want them to succeed”.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS IN THEIR LIMMUDEI KODESH EDUCATION

Curriculum Impact

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy *Limmudei Kodesh* lessons and extra-curricular activities and display great enthusiasm for these lessons. In discussions with pupils during the inspection, several pupils shared their love of *Limmudei Kodesh* and the opportunities to reflect upon *Mitzvos*

(commandments), and their responsibility as Jews. Pupils display a great love of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, which encourages a harmonious and caring environment.

- Pupils display good *middos*, and can understand *Torah* values, in order to make good choices. Inspectors observed a harmonious atmosphere in which respect is displayed by pupils, and role modelled by staff.
- Pupils including those with SEND, consistently advance well and make outstanding progress in *Gemorah*, *Chumash*, *Kriah* and *Loshon Hakodesh*. By the time pupils leave school the vast majority can read very fluently and can translate unseen *Chumash*.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their educational ladder.

The Quality of Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding

- Provision for pupils' SMSC is outstanding. Staff present themselves as excellent role models and take every opportunity to imbue values and good *middos* in pupils. A wonderful example of this was demonstrated within a year two class, when the Rebbe encouraged pupils to celebrate the success of others.
- There are several *middos* programmes and events taking place throughout the school year. They are superbly planned and imbue good character traits and values of how to be a good citizen. These include; a "middoh of the week" programme in year six, promoting what is right and wrong from a *Torah* perspective, a *Dan L'Kaf Zechus* (judging favourably) programme, the *achdus* (unity) project in year two, which encourages building friendships, resilience and self-esteem, and the *Gedolim* (great Rabbis) project in which pupils are inspired to choose a *Godel* to learn about, and to share their research and knowledge with peers.
- The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for Jewish life within modern Britain, including the values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils are taught about the Royal Family, with one pupil sharing with inspectors "we are taught about the gracious ways of the Queen and the laws relating to respecting and honouring her, such as saying a *Brocha* (blessing) on the Queen".
- The school meets the legal requirements of collective worship through daily *Tefillah* (prayer sessions), *Bentching* (grace after meals) and with opportunities to recite *Brochas* (blessings).
- The school puts much effort into making *Tefillah* meaningful, and it is conducted in a very spiritual way, with pupils praying with passion, concentration and behaving well. Pupils are encouraged to pray for

others, for example in a year three lesson, to daven for those who are less fortunate or are unwell. Boys sing beautifully the *Bentching* and enjoy being given an opportunity to use the microphone to lead part of the *Bentching*.

- The curriculum is immersed in spiritual and moral growth facilitating pupils to reflect upon and internalise lessons learnt and *Mitzvos* (commandments) done. An example of reflection activities took place within a year six class in which pupils were encouraged to comment on how they can make a *Kiddush Hashem* (Sanctify the Name of Hashem), pupils were able to offer practical examples of this.
- Extra-curricular activities are carefully planned so that pupils enjoy memorable activities linked to the Jewish calendar and *Mitzvos*. These activities create *achdus* (unity) and sensitivity towards others. A wonderful example of this is the *Shabbos Hisachdus* programme in which pupils join their parents in a *Shabbos* programme including *davening*, learning and eating together within a very enjoyable and inspiring setting.
- Display around the school is often colourful and educative. However, in the classroom, opportunities are sometimes lost to support learning in *Limmudei Kodesh*. This is because display is sometimes more informative, but not linked to pupils current learning. This is an area for development which the leadership has noted in their *Limmudei Kodesh* school improvement plan.

School details

Unique reference number	133364
Local authority	London Borough of Barnet
Lead Inspector	Rabbi Dr Yonoson Yodaiken
Team Inspector	Rabbi Nessanel Lieberman

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

Type of school	Primary School
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Gender of pupils	Male
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Mr Andrew Sprung
Menahel	Rabbi Shmiel Roitenbarg
Headteacher	Rabbi Joel Sager
Date of previous school inspection	8 – 9 November 2016
Telephone number	020 8343 3568
Email	office@pardeshouse.com
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