

Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls School

Egerton Road, Stamford Hill, London N16 6UB

Inspection dates

6 March and 14–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The school does not meet the requirements of the national curriculum. Leaders tightly control curriculum content and prohibit pupils from learning key information. For instance, they do not allow pupils to study human or animal reproduction in their science lessons. The curriculum is too narrow.
- Governors and the principal have limited the range of books available to pupils. They have redacted textbooks, texts such as 'Sherlock Holmes' and historical texts on subjects like 'Elizabethan England'. This redaction is detrimental to pupils' learning, and pupils do not have equal opportunities for learning compared to pupils elsewhere.
- Governors do not hold the principal to account for the quality of education provided or robustly manage his performance. They have an over-inflated view of the school's strengths.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders deliberately restrict pupils' access to advice and guidance about how to keep safe in the world, including the redaction of helpline numbers from books. This prevents pupils protecting themselves, because they are unable to seek independent, confidential advice if required.
- Leaders do not prepare pupils well for life in British society.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to learn about different beliefs. Leaders do not encourage pupils' respect for other people because they do not acknowledge some groups in society.
- Leaders have not met their statutory duty to provide impartial careers advice and guidance so that pupils can make informed decisions about their future aspirations.

The school has the following strengths

- By the end of key stage 4, pupils' achievement overall is above average in the subjects they study.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Many say they enjoy their protective school environment, where they are kept physically safe. They attend regularly.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

■ Leaders and governors must ensure that:

- they fulfil their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They should provide pupils with access to appropriate independent and confidential advice. They should ensure that pupils are taught how to keep safe in the wider community
- decisions on the running and development of the school are in accordance with statutory requirements
- they meet their statutory duty to provide high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance so that pupils understand the full range of options available to meet their academic needs and aspirations
- they give high priority to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that pupils can routinely learn about different cultures, faiths, viewpoints and beliefs
- they engender pupils' respect and tolerance for all members of society
- they review the leadership structure so that roles and responsibilities are clear and leaders can be held to account if they do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities
- they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development
- the school meets the requirements of the national curriculum
- they review and extend the range of texts and resources available to pupils in order to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

■ Governors must ensure that:

- they set appropriate targets for the principal's performance and hold the principal stringently to account for his decision-making and the quality of provision.

■ Leaders must improve teaching and learning by:

- ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are given further support, guidance and experiences to improve their practice
- ensuring that the school's assessment policy is used effectively
- providing planned opportunities for pupils to undertake more demanding work
- raising teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work, including the quality of handwriting
- ensuring that all staff have high expectations of what pupils who have special

educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities can achieve academically and support them to do so.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The curriculum set by the principal and governors is narrow and limiting in terms of subject content. The principal has made decisions restricting subjects, content, knowledge and information. For instance, some pupils' study of history in Year 9 this year has been restricted to the Second World War, which is just one aspect of the key stage 3 history programme of study. In English at key stage 4, large sections of the GCSE course text book have been deemed as inappropriate and have been redacted. In addition, texts such as 'Sherlock Holmes' have had sections of text redacted. In science, pupils are not permitted to study animal or human reproduction and other areas such as global warming are restricted. Leaders do not fulfil their statutory duty to provide sex and relationships education. The majority of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is taught through the religious curriculum. These tight controls limit pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and their understanding of the world, their future aspirations and their access to the full national curriculum. The curriculum does not prepare pupils adequately for life in modern Britain.
- Extra-curricular activities, trips and resources, including books in the library, are restricted. Leaders said, for example, that a visit to places such as the Tate Modern art gallery would not be allowed. Drama and music are limited to permitted pieces. Consequently, there are few opportunities for pupils to reflect on the views, opinions and experiences of others, particularly those outside of the immediate community.
- The principal and governors do not adequately promote equality of opportunity or diversity. They do not encourage pupils' respect for all other people, because they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths, experiences, cultures or perspectives. Consequently, while there is an ethos of respect and tolerance for each other within the school environment, pupils have few opportunities to explore how these would extend to those who do not share their beliefs or faith.
- The principal has overall strategic responsibility for the school. He has an over-generous view of the quality of education the school is providing. The principal and governors judge the school's effectiveness in terms of the school's own values, reflecting the expectations of their immediate community, rather than their statutory obligations as prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE). These are incompatible in several respects.
- Together, the acting headteacher and the menaheles manage the day-to-day running of the school. They both have high aspirations for the school and its pupils and have an accurate understanding of the areas that need to be reviewed and improved. They are clear about the statutory requirements that are currently being breached and have begun to plan and implement some changes. They are particularly keen to improve the quality of the PSHE programme so that it provides better advice and guidance. However, during the inspection it became clear that pressure from governors and parents sometimes thwarts their attempts to make improvements in line with current legislation.

- The acting headteacher has worked hard to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In particular, actions to improve the leadership skills of middle leaders have proved effective. They work closely as a cohesive group, check on the quality of teaching and strive to support the high number of unqualified teachers to become more proficient in the classroom.
- The school works closely with parents to track the progress of individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders assess each pupil's strengths and aspects requiring further support. They provide teachers with strategies to engage the pupil in an activity or manage their behaviour. Government funding is spent on providing teaching assistant support, occupational therapy and help with speech and language where needed. Leaders are working to develop the skills of teaching assistants and give teachers further confidence in meeting the needs of all pupils. However, the progress made by these pupils remains variable because some teachers' expectations of what they can achieve academically are too low.
- Very few pupils receive pupil premium funding, which is used to support their academic, social and emotional needs. By the end of key stage 4, the progress of this group of pupils is better than that of all pupils nationally.
- The majority of parents are highly supportive of the work of the school. They believe that the school provides a safe and sheltered environment for their daughters to learn and develop.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not sufficiently hold the principal to account for the quality of the provision. Governors' actions derive too heavily from their own views, and those of the parents and the faith community, rather than from their statutory responsibilities. They are not aware of, nor do they challenge effectively enough, the strategic actions of school leaders, particularly the principal. They do not set the principal appropriate targets or check that their strategic actions are having an impact on the quality of education provided.
- Governors have not fulfilled their statutory responsibility to keep pupils safe in modern Britain, because they restrict the information, advice and guidance available to them. They have failed to ensure that the school meets the requirements of the national curriculum or provide impartial careers advice and guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective.
- Pupils are not given enough appropriate information, advice and guidance about how they can stay safe in the wider community of modern Britain. They do not have access to independent and confidential safeguarding advice, should they require it. For example, information about safeguarding helplines has been redacted from some books. Leaders do not fulfil their statutory obligation to teach sex and relationships education as specified in the national curriculum. Pupils receive little or no information on how to stay safe online. While leaders claim that pupils do not have access to social technology, there was evidence that parents and teachers at the school use phones,

tablets and computers. Information on how to keep safe is limited to road and fire safety and first aid.

- The school site is highly secure. Pupils are physically safe once in school. The building is well maintained, modern and aesthetically pleasing. Pupils and staff wear identity badges and swipe these to register in and out of the building. Procedures for visitors on arrival are robust.
- Leaders undertake checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school and keep accurate records. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. The principal says they are planning to provide further 'Prevent' duty training for staff in the immediate future. There is a system for passing on any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead, who is also the principal, and the deputy safeguarding leads. A school counsellor offers therapy for those requiring it, though this is not independent or confidential, as information about the sessions is sometimes shared with the individual pupil's parents.
- During the inspection, the team noted that, while signage around the site stated that the principal was the designated safeguarding lead, pupils had no access to independent, confidential advice and help should they need it. During the inspection, the acting headteacher agreed to display NSPCC helpline numbers in the pupils' toilets.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The majority of teachers are unqualified and many are inexperienced. Teachers' subject knowledge varies enormously. Some teachers do not demonstrate confidence in teaching the subject content and skills. Some rely too heavily on providing simple activities for all pupils, irrespective of their ability. These tasks require very little knowledge or understanding and, consequently, result in superficial learning.
- Pupils' work in lessons and in their books indicates that the progress of the most able pupils is inhibited sometimes by the lack of sufficient challenge. In addition, some lower-attaining pupils do not receive the guidance they need to embark on and complete a task as swiftly as others. This was seen clearly in a review of exercise books belonging to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Many had simply stuck in the worksheets but not completed the task.
- Pupils' learning is restricted due to the prevalent redaction of textbooks, fiction and non-fiction texts in the library. Governors and the principal have enforced a policy of redacting texts, which limits pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, the majority of pictures in books on major artists such as Picasso had been blanked out. Photographs portraying men and women on the same page, for instance in a crowd, had been redacted. Paragraphs in English comprehension passages had been redacted. Whole chapters in some texts had been stuck together. For instance, in a text on Elizabethan England, leaders had redacted sections relating to the queen's supremacy and the Puritan challenge. Staff had systematically gone through every book to blank out any bare skin on ankles, wrists or necks.
- The quality of teachers' assessment varies substantially between subjects and key stages. This leads to poorer-quality work in some pupils' books. Some were untidy and contained much unfinished work; they also showed a lack of progress in the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- There is some effective teaching in the school. This is based on more competent subject knowledge and well-planned resources that showed high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Reflecting purposeful teaching, pupils are motivated and engaged. Excellent relationships between the teacher and pupils mean that there is a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupils are keen to achieve well academically. This is particularly true at key stage 4 when pupils are working diligently towards their GCSE examinations. Pupils show a genuine curiosity and interest in their studies, though an acceptance of the narrow limits that have been placed on their learning. Examination results reflect higher standards than those seen in books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils' spiritual development is focused narrowly on their own faith. Redaction of texts and information, and a narrow curriculum, restrict pupils' knowledge and prevent them from learning about themselves, others and the world around them.
- Leaders instil moral values such as being righteous, honest and law-abiding, which pupils demonstrate consistently well throughout the school. They show each other mutual respect and trust. However, the scope within which they exercise their understanding of moral and ethical issues has been purposefully restricted. This inhibits their ability to appreciate the viewpoints of others and to debate different perspectives.
- Leaders do not provide opportunities for pupils to socialise with pupils from different communities, religions, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds or with boys. For example, pupils have no opportunity to compete in inter-school sport, participate in events or visit universities.
- Leaders restrict pupils' access to members of the public and activities outside of the faith community, both in school and in their social lives. While being confident among their friends and school staff, many were somewhat reticent about talking to inspectors. Pupils appeared comfortable and content to answer questions such as, 'What are you reading?' while in the library or 'Who would you turn to if you were concerned about something?' Equally, some older pupils entered into a conversation about the different types of families.
- Pupils are able to go on visits that support the school's narrow curriculum, but restrictions placed by the school limit opportunities to visit the wealth of cultural events across the capital city and beyond.
- There is a bullying policy and a separate behaviour policy, which set out clear expectations regarding conduct and pupils' respect towards others; it includes people who have a different faith or who have a disability. However, it does not encourage respect for all citizens living in modern Britain, because it does not acknowledge the existence of all groups of people with protected characteristics.
- Pupils are taught to respect themselves highly and take appropriate care over their dress, personal hygiene and appearance. Leaders provide them with information and

guidance on how they might form healthy and safe relationships solely within their own community. However, they do not give pupils opportunities to discuss all aspects of their emotional, mental and physical well-being as they move from adolescence to adulthood.

- Leaders do not ensure that pupils are given appropriate advice and guidance on how to keep safe in the wider world. Advice is limited to 'staying in pairs', using 'the family phone' or avoiding certain areas. Consequently, pupils do not have suitable strategies for staying safe or dealing with an unfamiliar incident in the wider world. They do not have access to independent, confidential safeguarding advice and guidance outside their own community.
- Pupils do not receive impartial careers guidance that helps them to make informed choices about their academic needs and aspirations. Leaders deliberately restrict the options available to pupils, with the vast majority going on to study at a seminary. This lack of independent advice means that pupils' choices are restricted and they are not prepared appropriately for the next stage of education, training or employment within modern Britain.
- Pupils are familiar with the key features of Britain's parliamentary democracy. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They are relaxed and happy, enjoying each other's company and mixing well across the age range. They show respect towards staff and visitors to the school. Pupils enjoy singing Jewish songs, collective prayers, dancing and games. Staff know the pupils extremely well; many of the staff are older siblings or members of the pupils' extended family. Consequently, the needs of each pupil and their family are known in detail. There are strong links between the staff at the school and the pupils' families.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Around the school site, pupils mix well, support each other and enjoy positive friendships. They respect each other and the staff who teach them. They laugh, sing and pray together, clearly enjoying each other's company. Staff quickly calm any loudness or silliness.
- Staff expect pupils to behave well and, as such, the school is an orderly environment. Pupils are known well by staff, the majority of whom are former pupils or older sisters or cousins.
- Pupils take care of their appearance and are proud of their school and community.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils, particularly in key stage 3, do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. The restricted curriculum, redaction of texts and pupils' limited access to information hinder their learning and progress. Despite pupils overall achieving strong outcomes by the end of Year 11 in permitted subjects such as English and mathematics, the breadth and depth of their knowledge and understanding are too restricted.

- Pupils enjoy reading and regularly visit the school library. However, the range and breadth of texts are too limited. The vast majority of texts have significant redaction of key information, images or links to websites. Fiction texts have a single faith perspective. The biography section focuses primarily on the achievements of Jewish men. The governors and principal determine the information available in the library, as in the curriculum. However, they were unable to explain the origin of the detailed policy on redaction, or who decides what is redacted in texts across the school.
- Many pupils make their work books look attractive on the outside, with pretty paper and adornments. However, the contents do not reflect the effort given to the covers. Some activities are left unfinished and insufficient effort is devoted to the quality of the work being produced. Pupils' handwriting is often difficult to read and the presentation of their ideas is disorganised.
- Pupils' work seen during the inspection was heavily reliant on created worksheets, often with a religious perspective, that required short answers to 'fill in the gaps'. The purpose of some activities in lessons was unclear. Some stereotypes had not been challenged, for instance comparing the recreational interests of Jewish people with non-Jews. Misconceptions had been left unchecked, and simplistic responses had been accepted.
- The small proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make less academic progress. Many spend time working individually with an adult, rather than being helped to gain access to work in mainstream classes. Many of the identified strategies used by adults are to do with attitudes to learning rather than development of knowledge and skills.
- Pupils make better progress in key stage 4, when teachers use the school's assessment policy well and are guided by GCSE examination specifications. Pupils reflect on their work and make improvements. There are more planned opportunities for them to write at length and practise some of the skills required by the external examinations. Pupils are keen to perform well in their final examinations.
- Pupils have aspirations for their future lives, though have a limited understanding of the full range of available options once they leave school, because they have no access to independent careers advice. The majority accept that they will move on to a seminary and some may have an opportunity to study at degree level by distance learning rather than attending university.
- The majority of pupils arrive in Year 7 with middle or high attainment on entry. By the end of Year 11, in 2017, published results show that pupils made above-average progress across their selected subjects and attained highly. Progress was strong in English, mathematics, languages and humanities.

School details

Unique reference number	133599
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10042096

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Theo Bibelman
Principal	Rabbi Pinter
Acting headteacher	Clare Neuberger
Telephone number	020 8826 5500
Website	www.yesodeyhatorah.org/
Email address	admin@yesodeyhatorah.org
Date of previous inspection	10 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average 11 to 16 orthodox Jewish maintained voluntary-aided girls' secondary school. The school's intake is exclusively from the Charedi community.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is significantly below average at 3%.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average.
- The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above average.
- The proportion of students who receive special educational needs support is below the

national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- Pupils' absence and persistent absence are below the national average.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2017, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- No pupil attends alternative provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The principal has executive responsibility for the school. The substantive headteacher is currently on leave. The acting headteacher runs the school day to day, with the director of religious studies, the menaheles.

Information about this inspection

- The section 8 inspection was deemed not complete. Inspectors revisited the school on 14 March to gather further evidence. As a result, the inspection was converted to a full section 5 inspection, as the team had concerns over safeguarding and the likelihood of one or more judgement grades being deemed inadequate.
- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across year groups and subjects. They watched assemblies and prayers and visited the school library. They listened to pupils reading in lessons. They talked to pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. They spoke to a group of parents.
- Inspectors spoke to the principal, acting headteacher, senior leaders, staff, governors and the local authority's director of children's services.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and parental letters presented to the team. No staff or pupils responded to the online survey. Inspectors took into account 28 staff surveys completed manually.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: records related to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment system. Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including referrals to external agencies.
- Inspectors, alongside school leaders, scrutinised current pupils' work.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Seal	Her Majesty's Inspector
Amanda Carter-Fraser	Her Majesty's Inspector
Diane Khanna, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Rice	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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