

King David High School

Inspection report

LEA	Manchester
Inspection dates	31 October & 01 November 2007
Reporting Inspector	M H Moore

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

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Eaton Road, Crumpsall, Manchester M8 5DY
School category	Voluntary Aided	Telephone number	0161 740 7248
Age range of pupils	11 - 18	Fax number	0161740 0790
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr J Rowe
Number on roll	842	Headteacher	Mr B Levy
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body	Senior Jewish Studies Teacher	Mr S Mintz
Date of previous inspection	11-15 April 2005		

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

King David High School forms part of the wider King David campus, which encompass a crèche, nursery, primary and high school. Although most of its students come from the Greater Manchester area, it also takes students from other provincial communities, including Leeds, Liverpool and Nottingham.

The school has a modern orthodox ethos, and its pupils come from families who practice varying degrees of Orthodoxy.

The school is over-subscribed and attracts pupils from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Pupils are admitted in all academic ability ranges, but are streamed prior to entry into four ability bands with an additional requirement for entry to Yavneh for families to be Shomrei Shabbat.

Key to grades:

1. Exceptional
2. Good
3. Satisfactory
4. Unsatisfactory

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

King David High School is a very effective school with a caring ethos. Pupils greatly enjoy their learning and are well prepared to be productive members of the Jewish community when they leave school, and possess the knowledge, confidence and ability to fully participate in the service of Orthodox Synagogues and communal life.

Pupils are very well cared for and guided. Boys are fully prepared for their Bar Mitzvah responsibilities, and girls are not only well tutored in their Bat Chayil lessons, but are offered the opportunity to celebrate their Bat Chayil at school.

The curriculum has been re-addressed since the previous inspection, and a valuable 'King David Siddur' has been produced to enable pupils in the lower school not only to recite prayers with fluency, but also to understand the deeper meaning behind them. An additional Chumash extension book has been prepared to provide a structural aid to Chumash study and students find this helpful and an invaluable tool to aid their comprehension and development.

Kodesh staff are enthusiastic and knowledgeable with overall good teaching skills.

The 6th form is very effective, with students giving full support and help to make informed choices for their future courses and careers.

During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed, with some lessons being graded as outstanding.

A Head of Kodesh has still not been appointed.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO FURTHER IMPROVE: -

- 1) Appoint a Head of Jewish Studies to ensure that the teaching of all disciplines within the Limmudei Kodesh department is cohesive having identical systems for assessment, recording and planning.
- 2) Ensure that the teaching of Ivrit is incorporated under the umbrella of the Kodesh department to ensure that all subjects work cohesively together.

GRADE 1

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

Pupils make very good progress during their school life and achieve well.

Pupils are streamed prior to admission to the school in four academic bands, but are monitored to ensure that their banding is appropriate, and may be moved into different bands, dependent on their progress.

Pupils are prepared very well for their Bat Mitzvah or Bat Chayil curriculum, and by the end of Year 7 have a good knowledge of Siddur and Chumash. The introduction of the King David Siddur has ensured that when pupils commence in Year 7 they start with a good grounding and understanding of the meaning of prayers and how to recite them. By Bar Mitzvah age boys are able to put on tefillin with confidence, know the procedures for reading from the Torah and are able to leyn. Girls by the age of 12 know the qualities of Eshet Chayil, kashrut rules and how to translate from the Chumash.

All pupils take Jewish Studies at GCSE, and Module 2 on Judaism is offered at A-level. Every student who took GCSE and A-level achieved at least a pass grade.

The school offers a good level of support for pupils with learning difficulties. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good role models, and most teachers use opportunities to pair students with differing abilities and also provide opportunities for differentiated teaching. IEP's are well prepared and support staff are well used to give every opportunity for all pupils to succeed.

By the age of 12 and 13 pupils are well prepared for further education. Pupils are encouraged to apply for places in FE – either University, Yeshiva or Seminary, and every help is given to them to make informed choices for their future career and life.

GRADE 1

CURRICULUM

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum to prepare pupils for examinations, and also to enable them to lead a full and varied life as members of an orthodox community.

Ivrit is taught as a discreet modern foreign language, and although the curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils have a thorough grounding in Ivrit reading, pronunciation and translation, they would receive greater benefit if consideration be given to merging the Ivrit department into the Jewish Studies department to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of Ivrit is combined with this perception of Torah, Chumash and Siddur.

New schemes of work have been provided for GCSE in religious studies to enable students to evaluate Judaism as encompassing more than just religious rituals and perceptive behaviour, and to use religious teachings to develop understanding of the mitzvah of Tzedakah.

The school has a very effective approach to the teaching of Torah, which ensures that pupils know the source of Torah and its main constituent parts, and also reveals people and places. Higher attaining pupils are taught to identify a story or situation in the parashah studies that possess a particular feature. This group of pupils know and understand a range of classical parshiyot and midrashim.

The curriculum is enriched by numerous activities arranged by the school, including Shabbatonim on a regular basis, trips to Poland, Aish and Hama'ayan trips, numerous Israel trips, clubs and extra curricular activities. The school has adopted the procedure of arranging split year assemblies to ensure that pupils receive instruction and participate in Tefilah, which is appropriate to their age range.

Targets are set for pupils to reach by the end of each academic year, e.g. by the end of Year 9 pupils are expected to compare and contrast events in the Torah with parallel stories, and by the end of Year 10 to know the structure of Jewish scripture and how the oral law compliments the written law.

By the end of Year 10 pupils are well prepared for their GCSE examinations in which the school has achieved excellent results.

GRADE 1

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and is a strength of the school. All staff shows respect for the school's ethos, and pupils show consideration towards one another by volunteering to mentor, (e.g. older boys helping younger boys to put on tefillin). Parents and carers show strong example through fundraising to support charitable causes in the school (purchase of a mini-bus) are matched by pupil support of a hospital in Israel.

Staff and pupils enjoy good relationships and are mutually respectful. There is evidence of pride in Jewish identity, and an appreciation of educational and social opportunities offered to them at the school.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities demonstrates the commitment of staff and engagement of pupils. Activities include an after-school Bet Midrash, which extends opportunities for additional Jewish learning, a Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, a Latin club, Applied ICT, an Israel club and Public Speaking.

Daily acts of collective worship demonstrate that pupils have a good basic knowledge of the tefillot. A Parashat Ha-Shavua project in Yavneh has developed excellent materials which could be made more generally available. The school's visits to Israel are a highlight for pupils.

Excellent displays of art and craftwork around the school reflect the creative abilities of pupils and reinforce aspirations for high levels of achievement across the curriculum.

The learning environment is streamed, with some flexibility to meet the changing needs of pupils, however a professional head of Jewish Studies, if appointed, should be able to take responsibility for the whole Jewish Studies department, the changing needs of pupils and their personal development and well-being.

The Jewish Studies department meet the needs of pupils. A professional Head of Jewish Studies would be able to take responsibility for school policies in relation to Jewish Studies and pupil's personal development, well-being and changing needs.

Attendance is good.

GRADE 2

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The learning environment is safe and secure. There are rules and policies in place to ensure safe practice as far as possible within the school. All members of staff are aware of and follow the school's Health and Safety procedures, Child Protection policies and security protocol.

The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is excellent. Most pupils seem happy and enjoy lessons and social learning. The Head of Jewish Studies in Yavneh is a qualified educational counsellor, and is sensitive in looking after the welfare of pupils. There is a very caring atmosphere within the school, and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for welfare of each other in accordance with the school's ethos.

Good links exist between teachers and parents/carers who support the school's work. Outside youth workers, (Maccabi, JGLB and Aish) visit the school.

Pupils would benefit from targeted feedback on homework, to guide and inform them about what they need to do to improve their performance.

Pupils enjoy nutritious school meals, which are cooked and served on the premises. There is encouragement of physical activities (gymnastics, rugby, swimming, basketball, football, badminton, archery, trampoline, cheer-leading and Israeli dancing). These and other extra-curricular activities enhance the formal curriculum.

Pupils and parents can self-refer to a Relate Counsellor who offers sessions one half-day each week. The Jewish Federation offer support to the school as required.

A Behaviour Consultant from Manchester LEA's Diversity and inclusion service, offers individual and group support for a range of inclusion issues, including bullying.

Information about the special needs of pupils is given in a pack by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to all staff members on INSET days at the beginning of the school year. For new staff or supply teachers, meetings with the SENCO should be part of the induction process into the school to ensure information on inclusion in Jewish Studies is communicated well. This is particularly important when differentiation might be needed, or teachers need to understand the reasons for a child's behaviour, EMA and free school meals may not be taken up by some parents due to school systems in place to monitor or address them.

GRADE 1

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The previous report produced in 2005 found a decline in the quality of teaching standards, however since the last inspection there has been an overall improvement. Two outstanding lessons were seen in Yavneh, in Limmudei Kodesh and in Ivrit Year 9; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers displayed hallmarks of good practice, including good and effective classroom management skills. Lesson preparation was general good, but not consistent, and the school would benefit from a management system in which there was a single lesson plan format supporting clarity in identifying teaching objectives and learning outcomes.

The Yavneh unit teachers have a clearer management system, and therefore benefit from the vision and commitment of a senior manager in Limmudei Kodesh. Unfortunately this is not a permanently appointed post, and continuity will be lost when the Shaliach returns home.

Homework is regularly set, but the feedback pupils receive in written comments from their teachers is variable in its quality and usefulness.

Information on children's individual learning needs is shared with the Jewish Studies Department and taken into account when setting standards of attainment and achievement are decided for pupils with SEN.

The library has a stock of well used Jewish books, and classrooms are resourced to support Jewish Studies, but given the size and range of ability of pupils, further expansion of resources to support learning is desirable.

GCSE and A level results fall mainly within grades A-C with 100% pass ratio. Pupils are confident in their participation, answering questions and reading aloud.

Exemplary teaching was seen in Year 10, Yavneh required pupils to reflect and use thinking skills, rather than to just respond with obvious answers. Teachers made good use of interactive white boards, but they need to pay attention to their presentation when displaying their own written work in this form.

In several lessons teachers did not allow sufficient time to summarise learning points, set homework or answer questions about what was expected or provide links to the next step in learning. A professional Head of Jewish Studies needs to be appointed to support and direct the professional development of some staff.

Pupils across the school appear to enjoy learning, and those spoken to in lessons, in the dining room and in meetings with the inspectors gave positive reports of their learning experiences in the school.

The designation of Ivrit as 'a foreign language' separates spoken Hebrew from the Jewish Studies curriculum, rather than integrating it into this subject area. Both staff and pupils are now used to the separation of Ivrit from Jewish Studies, but future integration of Ivrit and Jewish Studies would support learning in both areas.

It might be helpful to install clocks in all classrooms, so that teachers can better maintain time keeping and pace their lessons.

GRADE 2

Sixth form students are encouraged to study Jewish Studies for A level, but are not compelled to do so. The curriculum is designed to accommodate pupils who wish to continue Jewish Studies on a non-academic basis, and the boys and girls in the Yavneh classes are well prepared for Seminary or Yeshiva life.

GRADE 2

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

The Inspectors judge the leadership and management of the school to be good. The Head Teacher and Governors set a clear agenda on how they see the school is run and the direction it is taking.

They promote excellent academic standards to ensure that the highest level of attention is given to pupils. They insist that the orthodox, Jewish ethos mentioned in the school mission statement is maintained and that every opportunity is given to pupils from all levels of observance to excel and succeed.

The Chairman of the Governing Body is a charismatic and dynamic figure whose personal influence and direction have enabled the school to grow to its present numbers and stature.

The school has decided not to appoint an overall Head of Limmudei Kodesh, and there are therefore no effective procedures for observing teachers in the classroom. Teachers' current and future training needs are therefore unidentified.

Although responsibilities for some areas of the Kodesh curriculum have been delegated, there is no overall responsibility. This has the cause and effect of an unevenness of curriculum dealing with differing standards of marking, assessment and reporting progress being applied, (the teaching of Ivrit being seen as a separate subject, rather than being a cohesive and inclusive part of the Kodesh curriculum).

The absence of the Head of Jewish Studies from the Senior Management Team has a detrimental effect on the integration of Jewish Studies, and affects the whole curriculum.

Because the various Heads of departments have little non-contact time, monitoring and observation of teaching colleagues rarely takes place. This may have a detrimental effect on the progress of teachers, particularly those who are unqualified or less experienced.

The school has a good capacity for improvement and some improvements have been made since the previous inspection.

There is a very clear mission statement, which states that the highest achievement and standards are to be reached for every child, and to develop pupils in a warm and caring atmosphere is an absolute priority.

The development plan has identified a number of priorities to improve academic standards and to provide additional training for staff. These priorities are appropriate and are being implemented.

Most of the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. A written curriculum and full schemes of work have now been prepared. The quality of teaching has been much improved with no unsatisfactory teaching being observed during the inspection. Collective worship has now been developed by each year group having a separate assembly.

The Governing Body is very effective in maintaining standards, the welfare of pupils and the quality of provision.

Through the Chairman strong guidance and leadership is provided, and governors know the school very well. The Governing Body has taken the decision to appoint Shlichim for a fixed term contract for key positions within the Kodesh department. This does however have the knock-on effect of a break in leadership continuity when their tenure expires and they return home.

Inspectors judge that many appointments made by the Governing Body have been excellent and contribute significantly to the high standards within the school.

The Head Teacher and his Deputy are dedicated individuals who provide an excellent role model to staff and pupils. Their work is much appreciated by parents.

GRADE 2