

THE KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority: Manchester (352)

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates: 5th & 6th February 2024

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

Type of school: Academy

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of children: 11-18

Main School Mixed
Yavneh Boys Single sex
Yavneh Girls Single sex

Number on roll: 775

Chair of Governors: Mr Jonathan Dover

Headteacher: Mr D John Dalziel

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Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Rabbi Yaakov Heimann

Team Inspector: Rabbi Jacob Ebrahimoff

Introduction

Inspectors make judgements on the following three Key Areas:

- The Quality of the Jewish Education
- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development
- Leadership and Management.

The inspection was conducted over two days by two inspectors, who observed Jewish Studies (JS) lessons, assemblies, *Tefillah* (Collective worship), and Jewish clubs.

They had detailed discussions with the Headteacher, Head of JS, SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Coordinator), other key staff, governors, and students from Year 7-13.

Joint lesson observations were carried out with the Headteacher, SENDCO and other members of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to ascertain their knowledge and expertise in the monitoring process. Inspectors also scrutinised relevant documentation, including policy documents and curriculum. They also reviewed the *Pikuach* questionnaires sent to students, staff and parents.

Information about the school

- The King David High School consists of three sections based in separate buildings: the main King David High School campus, Yavneh Yeshiva High School for Boys and Yavneh Girls' High School.
- There are currently a total of 775 students on roll, which includes 186 students in the Sixth Form.
- The main campus is a large, mixed, Jewish faith-based, modern orthodox Academy School which has 635 students.
- The Yavneh Yeshiva High School for Boys and Yavneh Girls High School meet the needs of the more religiously observant students. They have 86 and 55 students, respectively. In Yavneh, more time is devoted to *Tefillah* (Prayer) and JS, by means of an extended school day.
- The educational aims and *Hashkafah* (Ethos) differ between the Main school and Yavneh streams, which is reflected in this report, particularly in the Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development section.
- Jewish demographics in Manchester have changed in recent years, leading to a decrease in the number of Jewish students applying to the school. As a result, the number of non-Jewish students in the main school has increased, particularly in the lower years. Governors are reviewing this change in demographics.

- The school was judged as ‘Requiring Improvement’ at its last Ofsted inspection in June 2023. The School Leadership team is working tirelessly to address concerns raised in the report and much progress has been made by focusing on the behaviour and attitude of students in all areas of the school.
- *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) lessons are taught by the secular department as a modern foreign language.
- With 194 students (25%) on the SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) register, King David High School has the highest ratio of students with SEND in the borough. The school is persistent in its aim to be inclusive of all SEND students and to ensure that the planning for these students meets their individual needs.
- Nineteen students currently have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), with a further 10 in the application stage. The school has 64 students (8%) with English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- Although students come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, the percentage of students receiving Student Premium is 13% (102 Students) of which 97 receive free school meals, which is the second lowest in the Manchester borough.

Inspection judgement

Grade

Quality of Jewish Education	2
Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development	2
Leadership and management	2
Overall effectiveness	2

What is it like to attend this Jewish school?

- The King David High is a good school where students are inspired by the Jewish education offered and the passion of their dedicated JS teachers, who are outstanding role models for Jewish commitment, practice, and learning. As a parent commented, “The teachers are great role models, who lead both in word and deed.”
- Students learn in a positive environment, allowing them to focus on their Jewish learning in an atmosphere of respect and inclusion, irrespective of their background, gender, religiosity, and culture.
- Students are able to engage in a wide range of Jewish experiences through both the formal and informal Jewish education provision.
- Safeguarding at The King David High School is effective. Students feel safe when at school and know whom to speak to if they have a concern.
- Students are proud to belong to The King David and Yavneh High Schools and generally have positive attitudes towards their Jewish learning and practice.
- Lessons are well planned, drawing on a wide range of relevant and thought-provoking resources. Teachers ensure that lessons are relevant to the students’ lives. They make good use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). As a parent commented, “I have always been impressed with the approach to learning from Jewish Studies staff. They have novel approaches and modern ideas to keep young people interested and keep the work relevant.” Students are encouraged to reflect on both their formal and

informal learning. For example, during the assembly the Head of JS shared a thought of the week linking happiness to having a purpose, and teachers referred to this concept in various lessons throughout the day.

- Students in the main school have fewer formal JS learning opportunities and have limited engagement with formal *Tefillah*.

What does the school do well what does it need to do better?

Quality of Jewish Education

- The Quality of Jewish Education is good overall. Teachers ensure that most students across the school, including those with SEND, make good progress and achieve well over time. As a student commented, “The Jewish Studies Teachers are doing a great job; they make the lessons easy to be involved in, even still at the GCSE level.” This view was echoed by a parent, who said, “The *Rebbe'im* (JS teachers) strive to make the content of the lessons interesting and relevant to the boys. They are in tune with the boys' needs.”
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of the JS lessons they teach. They use a range of high-quality resources that promote students' thinking and inspire them in their Jewish education. Students would be even more engaged and involved in their learning if lessons were less teacher-led and more focused on students' active learning.
- It is evident that the JS teachers have a firm and common understanding of what the Jewish curriculum intends to achieve, and what this means for their educational growth.
- The school day, as well as the formal and informal JS curriculum, promotes strong cross-curricular links between Jewish and secular subjects.
- The Jewish curriculum encourages imaginative and effective opportunities for learning through a broad range of experiences which contribute to the students' spiritual development and well-being.
- In the main King David campus, the school has constructed a curriculum for Jewish education that can be taught to students with various interests, backgrounds and educational needs. This enables all students to engage with the learning and make progress. Some students and parents are requesting more Jewish learning opportunities, commenting, for example, that “It's great to do RS GCSEs, but some people would like to learn how we can actively be more Jewish in our daily lives.”
- New curricula have been introduced in the Yavneh streams, a *Gemarah* (Talmud) curriculum in the boys' stream and *Halacha* (Jewish law) in the girls' stream. This needs further development with standardised assessments in order to monitor progress.
- A number of students in the main school were critical about the manner in which ‘Learning for Life’ lessons were taught, commenting that the sessions “should be taught in a Jewish way” and that “it should be taught by the Jewish Studies teachers so that we can study ‘learning for life’ as Jews.”
- A number of students in the higher classes would like more opportunities to engage in practical *Halacha* (Jewish practices), as a student said, “We would like to know how to practically do *Mitzvot* (Commandments) like how to keep *Shabbat* (Sabbath), the laws of *Seder* night and how to build a *Succah*” (Tabernacle Booth).

Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development is good overall. Students' behaviour is good across the school, and they display *Derech Eretz* (Respect) to adults with whom they interact. Students engage positively with their Jewish learning.
- The curriculum provides for students' broader development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum in the main school provides meaningful Jewish learning experiences, preparing pupils to contribute positively to communal life. The curriculum in Yavneh prepares students well for continued learning in *Yeshiva* (Talmudical College) and Seminary.
- The Head of JS has developed effective programmes based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks, which includes ethics, morality, Jewish pride and a love for learning. Learners are challenged effectively and are provided with opportunities to share their opinions and debate these topics. JS sessions support students by developing confidence, independence and stressing the importance of living a purposeful life. A parent said, "The *Kodesh* staff are incredibly caring and motivated to instil in the children a sense of love of Judaism and a strong foundation for life about the importance of the values and beliefs of the religion." The school arranges discussion sessions with Jewish people who had faced challenging life experiences, for example Holocaust survivors, who had demonstrated their resilience as practicing Jews.
- All members of JS staff play an active role in promoting Jewish values and Jewish life. The Head of JS with the support of the SLT creates an inclusive environment where all teachers promote the ethos of the school. The school provides opportunities for spiritual development of both students and staff. The weekly morning staff meeting includes an inspirational Jewish message for the staff from the head of JS, setting the tone for the coming week. His ideas are implemented by the staff and disseminated across the school, for example, the use of 'clean speech' (use of appropriate and respectful language between each other). Students are able to articulate their Jewish spiritual, moral, social and cultural values
- There are opportunities for prayer and communal worship. In the main school, students are confident in reciting the first paragraph of the *Shema* (major prayer), prayers for the state of Israel and for the King. There is also a weekly *Torah* reading on Thursdays and an optional *Tefillin* (Phylacteries) club on Tuesdays. A number of students and parents expressed a keen interest to learn more *Teffilot* (Prayers) and their meaning. "Wish they did some davening - brochas (blessings) and Amidah (major prayer) each day for all students rather than optional or as extra - they do Shema".
- In Yavneh Boys' stream, there are daily *Minyanim* (Quorum of ten males over the age of thirteen) for *Shacharit* (Morning prayers) and *Minchah* (Afternoon prayers). In Yavneh Girls there is a full *Shacharit* service. Students generally know the meaning of the prayers they recite and understand how relevant they are to their lives.
- The school prepares students for life in the Jewish and wider community by developing their understanding of fundamental Jewish values. For example, being responsible active citizens, demonstrating respect and sensitivity to members of other faiths or none, regardless of their religious and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles.

Quality of Leadership and management:

- The quality of leadership and management is good. This is because leaders, including governors, have an ambitious vision of Jewish education and students' spiritual development and well-being. Jewish Education leaders focus on improving teachers' subject, content knowledge and their ability to deliver spiritually rich lessons and experiences that enhance Jewish education.

- The Head of JS is supported by the Headteacher, who empowers him so that he can carry out his role effectively. Examples are, appointing the Head of JS and the Head of Informal Jewish Education to the SLT, allocating them an office in a prominent place in the school, and encouraging the Head of JS to give an inspirational message to staff at the whole-school weekly staff meeting.
- The Head of JS models excellent practice in academic and spiritual matters, encouraging the enthusiasm of staff. The JS teachers are exceedingly dedicated to their students well beyond the classroom. As a member of staff commented, “The Jewish Studies department is a well-led team, that strives to enhance the students’ and staff understanding of the Jewish faith and school’s ethos.”
- The Head of JS teaches a high percentage of the timetable which limits his time available for monitoring the JS department in all of its aspects.
- Leaders and managers ensure that teacher expectations in JS are differentiated according to students’ capabilities and interest. A new SENDCO was appointed in September 2023 who ensures that all students can access the JS lessons. A parent remarked, “The school has recently started putting on activities for the Jewish Festivals that are appropriate for autistic students.”
- Clarity is required regarding line management of the Heads of *Kodesh* in the Yavneh streams.
- Students gain from being in a school that has an effective SLT who work together in all aspects of the school’s operation, including the implementation of an effective and consistent behaviour policy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- To provide students in the main campus with more opportunities to engage in formal *Tefillah*, progressing as they move up the school, and to ensure that all students, including those in Sixth form have regular JS lessons.
- To create a structure where the Head of JS as a member SLT can ensure the provision of the main school’s Jewish values and have the input required for it to permeate throughout their student’s learning and experiences.
- To ensure that the Head of JS has more non-teaching time, so that he is able to focus more on managing the JS department. This includes more lesson observations and feedback to JS teachers on pedagogy, and further opportunities to engage with parents and involve them in the Jewish life at school.

Statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (Tefilla)	Met
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Summary of Questionnaires

Pikuach invited parents and carers of students at The King David High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 84 people responded to the survey.

Pikuach invited students at The King David High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 73 students responded to the survey.

Pikuach invited members of staff at The King David High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 52 members of staff responded to the survey.

GLOSSARY

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

GRADE	JUDGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its students needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its students.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its students.