

Jewish Community Secondary School

Castlewood Road, New Barnet, London EN4 9GE

Inspection dates

1–2 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is effectively led and managed by an exceptional leader. The headteacher has the very able support of senior and middle managers who have a very good understanding of the school's work and ethos.
- The senior leaders' high expectations and strategic planning have contributed to the school building on the practice found at the last inspection. As a result, capacity for further improvement, including succession planning, is well considered.
- The sixth form is outstanding. As a result of very good provision, combined with high-quality teaching and strong leadership, learners make extremely good progress.
- Provision for pupils with a statement or an education, health and care plan is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers plan well-structured lessons that engage and motivate pupils to learn well.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and hold it in high esteem.
- Achievement is good and pupils make good progress overall. In 2015, outcomes in the GCSE examinations placed the school in the top 10% of all schools nationally.
- The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress and holding staff to account.
- The governing body provides strong strategic direction; it is actively involved and takes decisive action to develop the school further.
- Pupils behave very well and their personal development is good. The inclusive ethos and values are key factors in the school's success. The development of 'Mensch', which includes life skills, is the 'heart beat' of the school which contributes to shaping pupils' personal development.
- The curriculum provides breadth, depth and balance, particularly in the sixth form which offers learners a wide range of academic and vocational courses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While teaching is good, inconsistencies remain. Expectations are not always high enough.
- Variation in the rates of progress between groups of pupils exists and the attainment gap is not closing quickly for some groups, particularly the disadvantaged in mathematics.
- The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work requires more sharpening to ensure consistency. Weaknesses are not always picked up. However, the speed and decisiveness of dealing with them require urgency and constancy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching so that all is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently have high expectations of pupils
 - ensuring that all pupils complete their work in full
 - ensuring that all pupils' work is thoroughly marked in line with the school's policy to help them improve
 - ensuring that all pupils take pride in their work, including presentation skills, and are given time to respond to the marking.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment information effectively and consistently by:
 - identifying the in-school attainment gap between different groups of pupils, in particular those who are disadvantaged
 - finding suitable strategies to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers rapidly.
- Sharpen the quality of monitoring and evaluation so that all areas of the school's work support the drive for excellence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, with the effective support of other senior and middle leaders and governors, has successfully built on and developed a shared vision of high academic achievement and inclusion among staff, pupils and parents.
- The inclusive ethos embraces many Jewish traditions, so that pupils, regardless of their starting points, their cultural or religious background know and understand that they all have equality of access to achieve well.
- Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team, with the support of governors, has maintained a clear focus on improving provision and succession planning. Leaders have been decisive in introducing systems to reflect the expansion of the school so that the vision can be sustained.
- They have worked on developing teaching and learning, while welcoming new initiatives. This inspires staff to use action research to identify best practice and introduce change for the benefit of pupils. For example, the setting up of a teaching and learning task force is used to drive teaching, and a new marking policy is in place. However, this policy is not implemented rigorously by all teachers.
- Staff feel valued and very well supported, knowing they are consulted and can instigate change. Leaders have created a distributive leadership model and a learning culture so that teachers can have opportunities to develop their skills and succeed as future leaders.
- The leadership of teaching and systems for checking the quality of teachers' work are unremitting. For instance, expert teachers provide support and share and develop good practice. Leaders provide training on staff using the 'Etz Limmud' (Tree of Learning) model to inculcate good learning habits among pupils and establish the school ethos. However, while teaching is monitored regularly, it lacks sharpness in picking up some of the weaknesses so that all staff are consistently meeting the school's high expectations.
- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. The school's self-evaluation and development plan correctly identifies the main areas for improvement, such as the slower progress of boys. However, the focus on big areas for improvement has meant that there has been a lack of sharpness in tackling specific points quickly. For example, very good systems are used for tracking pupils' attainment and assessment. The information on pupils' progress indicates that they are achieving well overall but this masks the attainment gap between, for example, disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The gap remains wide, particularly in mathematics.
- The school has some exceptionally thorough approaches for safeguarding and protecting pupils. Checks are rigorous and pupils and their parents know they are very safe. Nevertheless, while safeguarding meets requirements, there is still more to do to ensure that all aspects of the government's directives concerning the 'Prevent' duties are covered in-depth and widely, particularly female genital mutilation, radicalisation and extremism.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of academic subjects and pathways for those in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Courses offered provide a clear match to pupils' needs and abilities, ensuring that all have an equal chance to succeed. There is good coverage on careers advice and work experience.
- The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and religious study enables pupils to explore concepts relating to culture, different faiths, equality and current events. Pupils value these opportunities but told inspectors that they would like to have even more information on different faiths. A current initiative is to extend the curriculum to cover more topics on different faiths and cultures.
- Coverage of British values is taught across the curriculum, and as part of Kvutzah (PSHCE). However, a cohesive programme of work is not planned across all year groups to ensure progression and in-depth study of all topics. Furthermore, pupils' written work in personal, social and health education does not have a consistently high value because presentation of pupils' work is sometimes poor and, in some instances, they do not refer to it again as they progress through the year groups.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development is strong. For example, work on an interfaith project, the Ramadan tent, deepened pupils' insight into other belief systems. Both pupils and parents welcome the school's approach to develop pupils' understanding of Britain as a diverse country. A pupil summed up the provision by saying, 'I did not know anything about other faiths, and JCoSS has made a difference.' Creative opportunities in art and music are highly valued by pupils, particularly those who are keen

musicians. Nevertheless, provision for pupils' development is not mapped across all year groups to ensure that key aspects on, for example, democracy, justice and freedom of information are covered in-depth.

- The school is at the early stage of using early entry to GCSE mathematics for talented mathematicians, providing them with opportunities to study additional mathematics in Year 11.
- Very few pupils attend off-site, alternative provision. However, checks on their progress, attendance and behaviour are too informal.
- The performance management process which reviews how well teachers are performing is well structured. Leaders at all levels are involved. The governing body ratifies pay awards by ensuring that there is a close link between pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is highly effective. The provision is very well managed. Teachers have detailed information on the level of care required as well as the progress of the pupils, all of which contributes to their needs being met very well.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding to make sure that eligible pupils are included in support projects such as mentoring. Evidence indicates that the range of strategies in place has had a clear impact on increasing levels of literacy but there has been less impact in mathematics. As a result, significant in-school gaps remain. Senior leaders have identified where the weaknesses lie and have begun to take a range of actions to address the underachievement of some pupils. For example, the new head of faculty has developed a new plan of action and there is clear vision for the direction of the faculty. Monitoring is also improving.
- Parents are extremely positive about all that the school provides for their children. They place a high value on the ethos and values. The vast majority who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the school is responsive to queries, and inspection evidence substantiates this view.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are astute and know the strengths of the school and work very closely with the headteacher. They use their expertise and experience very well to serve on different committees such as finance and premises and teaching and learning. Financial skills enable them to have a good insight into spending, and the progression of staff through performance-related pay. They ensure that there is a clear link between pay and staff performance.
 - Governors are well informed about the progress of vulnerable pupils and those who receive additional support through the pupil premium funding. Governors recognise that there is still more work to do.
 - The governing body is quite clear that the key priority for the school is academic achievement while preserving the inclusive ethos. They place emphasis on teaching and check that the quality is good or better through holding leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
 - Governors question the rates of progress when assessment information is presented to them throughout the school year. For example, in 2014/15, they maintained a sharp focus on the lower than expected mock exam results and provided a robust interrogation about the school's work to improve performance. They are diligent about keeping up to date with work in faculties and in ensuring that this is kept under review.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The school has maintained and built on the good-quality teaching found at the last inspection. The many strengths in teaching in all subjects across the curriculum mean that pupils achieve well, with over 40% exceeding expected progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use very well to stretch pupils. This particular strength is more prevalent in the sixth form, where staff use their expertise extremely well to deepen learners' thinking and interpretation of subjects taught. This particular strength is, however, not used consistently by all teachers to highlight links with previous work or to draw out pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Teachers are very much at ease with pupils, which contributes to their learning. As a result, classroom management is good and where the teaching is engaging, pupils are responsive and learn extremely well. Pupils told inspectors that learning is at its best when teachers are 'emotionally intelligent and secure with pupils'.
- In such lessons, teaching is skilfully structured; questioning seeks to deepen understanding; pupils are challenged to work through thought provoking tasks; expectations are high and talk is used purposefully

to extend thinking and encourage pupils to give their views. For example, in a Year 9 Jewish education lesson, pupils considered life after death before turning to the topic, 'What do Muslims believe about after life?' Pupils' conceptual images were conveyed extremely well when they presented their personal interpretations. This particular lesson captured imaginative and enthusiastic teaching that ignited pupils to think, regardless of their ability.

- The work that learning support assistants provide for pupils requiring additional support, particularly those with a statement of special needs or those with an education, health and care plan is very good. They work closely with pupils, echoing the teachers, questioning and instructing, all of which ensures that the pupils they support can keep up with the work.
- Much has been done to sustain the quality of teaching, and increase the proportion that is good or better. For example, professional development is well planned and includes further academic studies linked to the needs of the school. The school also uses action research to review and develop provision. For instance, staff have embraced the way in which they now use dedicated improvement reflective time (DIRT) to mark pupils' work.
- Good-quality marking is, however, not routinely carried out by all teachers in every faculty. Pupils told inspectors that before the policy was introduced, marking included 'ticking and the odd comments such as "good work" and "keep it up"'. Pupils prefer the new marking policy that requires teachers to give detailed comments. However, not all follow the school policy rigorously. Assessment information is not used robustly and too many books did not have sufficient evidence of formative marking. On a continuum, the quality of marking is far too wide. Conversely, marking is frequent and thorough in the sixth form.
- Teachers do not consistently insist on pupils using good presentation skills. Additionally, expectations of quality and quantity of work are not always good enough. Whereas girls take pride in their work, too often boys do not and produce shoddy work. Instances were seen where pupils, in particular boys, did not have much work in their books or folders. Examples were also seen where poor quality and quantity of work has not been tackled directly. Additionally, there are times when work is incomplete. Scrutiny of pupils' work provided evidence that the standards of work of some pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are below that of their peers in the school.
- On the few occasions when teaching is not well structured and expectations are not high, pupils become disengaged. On these occasions, very little work is completed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of the school's ethos and values. They readily engage in conversation about the pluralistic nature of their school and are secure about their identity. As a result, they are open and very accepting of learning more about differences in relation to other faiths and cultural heritages.
- Pupils' maturity and outward-looking approach mean that they are respectful towards each other and to visitors. The school is effective in contributing to building pupils' independence and character, particularly through the citizenship and personal and health education lessons. These subjects are particularly influential in developing pupils' thinking.
- Relationships between pupils are strong. They are thoughtful and can rely on each other for support. As self-assured young people, pupils exude confidence and articulate their views without fear or favour to demonstrate the lessons learnt in Kvutzah enabling them, as part of the Mensches, to be well prepared for the next stage of their life.
- The school council works for, and on behalf of, the pupil body, representing their views and seeking to influence change. For example, they were instrumental in designing the new marking policy. Pupils take on responsibilities as prefects and school ambassadors, and take part in leadership programmes and charity and multi-faith events.
- Attendance is higher than at the time of the previous inspection and is in line with the average for secondary schools, and improving. Persistent absence has, however, risen during the current term due to a few pupils with known medical conditions. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs, previously among the lowest in the school, has improved due to a range of concerted action taken by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed that pupils behave well.

Discussions with pupils confirmed this view and also indicated that behaviour is much improved. This is linked to the new behaviour policy which is having an impact on changing behavioural patterns. Throughout the inspection pupils behaved very well in lessons and around the school. They worked well with each other and were courteous to each other, staff and visitors.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They arrive promptly to lessons and are ready to begin working. They are responsive to teachers' instructions and the vast majority listen very carefully. They love learning and when fully engaged, enjoy discussions. However, not all pupils take pride in their work, particularly a small minority of boys whose work is of poor quality.
- As a result of the senior leaders introducing a new behaviour policy, pupils indicated that they welcome the stricter approach. This has led to a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions. However, pupils also indicated that not all teachers follow the procedures.
- Pupils confirmed that the school deals effectively with bullying but a few parents who took part in the online survey disagreed with this view. The inspection evidence does not confirm the opinion held by parents. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and discussions with them indicated that incidents of any kind are rare because there is zero tolerance towards bullies.
- Pupils are well informed about the different forms of bullying. They know that the school keeps them safe and secure but they are not fully conversant with all of the topics covered on the 'Prevent' agenda. Older pupils, in particular those in the sixth form, indicated that they would welcome more in-depth information on radicalisation and extremism.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- High standards were achieved in 2015, with 80.5% of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, in the GCSE examinations. Progress for all pupils was rapid, and as a result, the school was in the top 10% of all schools nationally.
- The large majority made the progress expected in English with a large minority exceeding the rates of expected progress. In mathematics, pupils made expected progress, with a larger proportion making even better progress than in English. Pupils' performance in both subjects was particularly impressive.
- Virtually all groups of pupils were above the average expected for their group nationally.
- The very few pupils with a statement of special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan made slower progress than their peers in the school. However, this was linked to their specific learning and/or medical needs. In-school assessment information indicates that these pupils keep up with the work when in mainstream lessons and make similar progress as their peers. This is primarily because they are given intensive support in lessons and work is carefully linked to their needs. Those who remain in the Pears Special Resource full-time make good progress in their learning to complete basic functional courses. Pupils with special educational needs support made significantly good progress in the GCSE examinations. They are also very well supported in lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved very well in the 2015 GCSE examinations. However, the school's progress tracking system and evidence from observations and scrutiny of books confirm that not all pupils supported by the pupil premium funding are making the same rate of progress as their peers. Gaps in attainment in Years 10 and 11 are also replicated in Years 8 and 9. The assessment information indicates that they are mostly above the set targets based on their starting point. Nevertheless, the attainment gap between them and their peers is too wide and is not closing rapidly. The exception to this is Year 7, where pupils make similar progress to their peers.
- The most-able pupils performed extremely well with over 40% achieving the highest grades (GCSE grades A* and A) in subjects taken across the curriculum. Current assessment information indicates they are on course to achieve similar results as in 2015. The school has ensured that gifted and talented pupils are nurtured and supported to achieve the highest grades. Discussions with a few gifted and talented pupils indicated that they are suitably challenged in lessons. Nevertheless, observations of teaching this group of pupils indicated that challenge was not consistently robust in all lessons.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups exceeded the national average and made extremely rapid progress. Inspection evidence indicates that their progress is very similar to their peers in the school.
- Pupils' literacy skills are very well developed based on the attention given to interpreting literature, developing pupils' oracy to give extended answers and promoting reading. Across all year groups, pupils demonstrate sophisticated writing and interpretative skills. The school ensures that reading is very well promoted.

- The teaching of mathematics has been reviewed to ensure that all groups of pupils can make good or better progress. Interventions have been introduced to address underachievement of some pupils.

16 to 19 study programmes

are outstanding

- Carefully deliberated strategic planning has resulted in the sixth form becoming a centre of excellence that enables learners to achieve very well.
- Sixth form learners have become trailblazers for the rest of the school. In 2015, virtually all Year 13 learners went on to higher education. Of the first small cohort of 35 pupils, 14 went to Russell Group universities, while 18 succeeded in gaining places at Sutton Top 30 universities. Others have either taken a gap year or chose to pursue well-selected careers.
- The growth and development of the sixth form have been well planned and structured. The most recent cohort includes the large majority of Year 11 pupils who are joined by pupils from other schools. This represents a significant change in terms of numbers. By September 2016, the sixth form is expected to increase in size considerably.
- Learners made very good progress and achieved outcomes that are significantly above those found nationally. The proportion that completed the courses offered is high. The well-structured information, guidance and support lead to all learners progressing on to education, training or employment.
- Learners are very positive about the sixth form. They value the outstanding care and support provided, particularly those who join from different schools. This helps them to integrate with ease. Careful, structured information, guidance and support contribute to learners starting the sixth form knowing that the courses selected will take them towards their future aspirations. They very much appreciate the support and feedback from lessons which contribute to them improving their work.
- They are involved in extra-curricular activities but would wish to have more sports. They act as mentors for younger pupils and value the benefits derived from both volunteering and work experience which is linked, where possible, to their career aspirations.
- Learners have access to a wide range of academic courses and vocational pathways that have expanded with the growth of the school. Courses offered meet the needs of the more diverse cohort of learners.
- The leadership of the sixth form is excellent. Leaders have an accurate and detailed knowledge of outcomes, the quality of teaching and destination data. Their evaluation of the sixth form is clear, concise and accurate.

School details

Unique reference number	135747
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10000583

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,111
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Kosky
Headteacher	Patrick Moriarty
Telephone number	020 8344 2220
Email address	admin@jcross.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school is currently larger than the average-sized secondary school and it expects to reach full capacity in September 2016. The school is still growing and is heavily oversubscribed. If the projected roll of 1,310 is reached, the number on roll will be well above the national average.
- The sixth form opened in September 2012 with a small cohort of learners. In September 2015, the first full cohort of 154 learners entered the sixth form.
- Since the previous inspection, the appointments of all key staff correspond with the growth of the school.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is high, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs support. The school has dedicated additional resource unit, Pears Special Resource Provision (PSRP), which provides additional support for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The provision provides support for up to seven pupils per year group. Currently, 40 pupils are on roll and when full to capacity the school expects to have 49 pupils in the provision.
- The proportion of pupils who are from a minority ethnic heritage is below average. The largest groups are from any other White background and from mixed heritage. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the additional government funding provided for pupils eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has science specialist status and has gained various awards, including Investors in People.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was converted from a Section 8 short inspection to a full Section 5 over two days.
- The inspectors observed 49 parts of lessons. They also carried out very short visits to a number of lessons, which included scrutinising the quality of pupils' work. These activities were carried out jointly with the senior and/or middle leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior and middle leadership team who hold specific responsibilities, and with the Chair of the Governing Body. Five groups of pupils, including the school council, were interviewed. All represented different groups of the pupil body. Telephone conversations were held with the local pupil referral unit which works with the school to provide alternative provision for pupils, and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team considered 242 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 167 free-text written responses. A meeting was held with a few parents who shared their views about the school's provision and effectiveness on the first day of the inspection. The inspectors also took into consideration two telephone conversations with parents. They also took into account 123 responses from staff who completed the questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked closely at the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included, for example, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, assessment information on pupils' progress; information relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour; records of governors' work in the school; and information on the curriculum. They also scrutinised a range of documents on leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, including links with external providers.

Inspection team

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Mr Brian Simber	Ofsted Inspector
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