

# LEEDS JEWISH FREE SCHOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

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Local Authority      NA

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates      5 – 6 December 2017

Inspector              Janine Kasmir

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

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Type of school              Secondary

School category              Free

Age range of children      11-16

Gender of children              Mixed

Number on roll              105

Appropriate authority      The Governing Body

Chair of Governors              Dan Cohen

Headteacher              Mrs Susy Jagger

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School website              [www.ljfs.org](http://www.ljfs.org)

## **Inspection team**

**Inspector: Janine Kasmir**

This inspection was carried out by one inspector. Five lessons were observed, and the focus was on evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Jewish Studies. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of students. During the inspection a range of documentation was scrutinised, including students' written work, the Jewish Studies curriculum, the Jewish Studies self-evaluation document and the school development plan.

## **Introduction**

**The inspector looked in detail at the following:**

- Outcomes for students in their Jewish and Religious Education
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish and Religious Education, and Modern Hebrew
- Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance of Jewish and Religious education
- Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies and Religious Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives
- Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*tefillah*)

## **Information about the school**

- Leeds Jewish Free School is a modern orthodox, Jewish school with multi-faith students spread over five year groups from Years 7-11. It is a one form entry comprehensive school, with 105 students on roll.
- The Secretary of State for Education approved the free school application in 2012, and the school opened in September 2013.
- The school's aim is to offer outstanding educational provision that ensures high academic standards, a strong moral ethic, a joy of learning, high aspirations and an expectation to contribute to the local community. All of this to be underpinned by a strong Jewish ethos and an innovative educational model, where all students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have the same learning opportunities.
- Just over half the students are from the Jewish community. Other faiths represented include Sikh, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Muslim, Rastafarian and those of no faith. Jewish students represent a wide spectrum of Jewish observance and practice.
- The percentage of students on Pupil Premium is currently 35%, which is above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and disabilities is 8%, which is below the national average.

## Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Outcomes for students in their Jewish education	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish Education	2
Effectiveness of Leadership, Management, and Governance of Jewish Education	2
Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives	2
Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (tefillah)	2

### Overall Effectiveness:

#### The quality of Jewish Learning provided by Leeds Jewish Free School is Good (GRADE 2) because: -

- The quality of leadership and management at the school is good. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), in conjunction with the governors, shares a vision to make Jewish education and life at the school good for all students. For example, it strives for all students, whatever their faith, to constantly demonstrate the school's values of *Tzedek*: integrity and respect for one another and different beliefs; *Chessed*: kindness, especially to the sensitive and vulnerable; *Mishpat*: Deep respect towards the rules and laws of the school and society; and *Rachamim*: compassion and forgiveness.
- All the stake holders are committed to driving through and implementing new strategies and systems to achieve improvement.
- Major changes have taken place this term, including the appointment of a new Head of Jewish Studies (September 2017) and new Jewish Studies teachers; an upgraded and more robust Jewish Studies curriculum and an improved assessment system with more effective tracking which enables the school to monitor more accurately students' progress in their Jewish studies.
- In the last 14 months, the new SLT has driven change. It is continually aware of the need to support and improve new developments.
- Staff meetings to review student progress based on new success criteria will be used to ensure that better attainment is achieved in Key Stage 3 Jewish Studies.

- There is a desire to create parity across all subjects of the school's curriculum, including Jewish studies at Key Stage 3. This is already happening at Key Stage 4. Greater monitoring of teaching and learning in Jewish studies by the SLT will assist in achieving this.
- The school's Key Stage 3 Jewish Studies Curriculum has been greatly enhanced, with the Head of Department creating new learning goals and monitoring their development.
- Informal Jewish learning is engaging, fun and includes the 'Community Zone' youth worker who runs Jewish social activities during lunch times and after school at the 'Zone' community facility located on the campus. 'Lunch and Learn' with the local *Kollel* (male Jewish learning programme) is enjoyed by all who attend. "I really like coming as I get to learn in a fun way with my friends, and I enjoy the different food we have for lunch," observed one student.
- There are many opportunities for students to contribute to different aspects of Jewish and communal life, which enhances the informal Jewish learning at the school. These include visits to old age homes where students talk to residents and help with chores.
- Students benefit from good teaching that promotes positive attitudes to Jewish learning.
- Teachers are aware of and support their students' needs both in the classroom and pastorally, thereby providing a warm and happy environment where the children enjoy both their formal and informal Jewish learning.
- The school takes effective action to ensure that students reach their potential in their Jewish education by providing, for example, additional lessons in *Gemarah (Talmud)* and Biblical Hebrew for more able students.
- The school supports the students and equips them for their post 16 education. "I feel proud to be Jewish and not ashamed when I leave LJFS," remarked one student.
- The school worked with Harrogate Grammar School to create an effective transition of their 6th form students. Interviews for prospective Harrogate students now take place on a Tuesday as opposed to the traditional Saturday. LSJF has leased and created timetable options at Harrogate Grammar School to enable some 6<sup>th</sup> Formers to return to LJFS to study GCSE Biblical Hebrew or *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew). This creates options to incorporate Jewish Studies in a 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision back at LJFS.
- Diversity and difference are celebrated at the school.

### **The quality of Jewish Learning is not yet GRADE 1 because: -**

- The new curriculum provision with accompanying assessment and tracking procedures needs to be embedded and reviewed. At this stage, it is too early to predict the outcomes that are expected in Jewish Studies because of the changes and developments detailed above.
- Some members of staff need to become more fluent and confident in their delivery and monitoring of the new Jewish Studies curriculum.

- The Head of Jewish Studies needs more support and guidance in his role of covering the different areas under his responsibility.
- The different levels of students' knowledge need to be considered more in future planning to ensure greater progress for all students.
- The school needs more time to develop, support and evaluate the range of innovative changes, which at the present time are at an early stage of development.
- Monitoring and assessment by all staff needs to be consistently good, with specific targets set to ensure all students know what they need to do in order to make further progress in Key Stage 3.

### **The school has the following strengths:**

- Students are well behaved, and feel both happy and safe. Students' feelings about the school were best summarised by the following comment:  
"I really enjoy school: my lessons, and feeling like we are one happy family where everyone wants the best for us."
- Students feel cared for by all the staff, and if there are problems they are comfortable seeking appropriate support.  
"I feel I could go to a teacher if I needed help with a subject at school or any other problem," said one student.
- Students are making good progress and enjoy Jewish studies lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4. In Key Stage 4, internal assessments show that students make good progress in *Ivrit*, Biblical Hebrew and Religious studies at GCSE.
- Accelerated Learning and support are quick and effective where high ability students are identified and provided with additional Jewish learning, for example, in Talmudic Law.
- All members of staff are keen for the school to go from strength to strength with the development of teaching and learning in Jewish Studies. Members of staff, including those who teach secular subjects, have high expectations. They are keen for all aspects of Jewish education to be studied to a high standard.
- The whole school works together to support, reinforce and provide the students with ways in which they can understand and carry out the school's values of *Tzedek*, *Chessed*, *Mishpat* and *Rachamim* (see above).

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Measure and evaluate the impact of the changes to the new Key Stage 3 Jewish Studies Curriculum in order to develop it further.
- Review the new monitoring and assessment system to ensure it is robust and used to measure the impact on student progress and attainment in their Jewish Studies, then expand into Key Stage 3 where it has not been used to date.
- Continue to support the Head of Jewish Studies by examining the amount of time allocated to his role and in order to ensure that there is a realistic time frame for him to carry out all his duties.

- The school needs to promote and record evidence of all the good that takes place, highlighting more of the Jewish experiences students gain at the school, with reference to how the learning and activities enhance their personal growth, and how these experiences connect to the school's ethos and its four core values.

**Outcomes for students in their Jewish education are GOOD (GRADE 2) because: -**

- Students enter the school with vastly different levels of Jewish knowledge. Baseline assessments allow the school to identify their needs from the start. These assessments are used to provide relevant support and intervention where necessary.
- Students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, are making good progress by the time they reach GCSE level in *Ivrit* and Biblical Hebrew.
- Assessments are used to plan effectively for appropriate teaching and learning strategies in *Ivrit* and Biblical Hebrew in Key Stages 3 and 4. Those students who are not making appropriate progress are quickly identified; support, where relevant, is given to ensure that they make good progress.
- Students can talk about the things they have learned and the way this impacts on their understanding of Jewish Studies.
- Some students, whose first language is Hebrew, have taken GCSE *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) early and gained outstanding results.
- Students understand the value of their Jewish learning and enjoy making progress. They are happy sharing what they have learned with their teachers and their peers.
- Jewish education has a high profile in the school and permeates everyone's understanding of what being a student at LJFS means, regardless of faith.
- Effective use of monitoring in Key Stage 4 is contributing well to projected high grades in the forthcoming first GCSEs for Year 11.
- All pupil premium students are making progress in line with expectations.
- Those students not making expected progress are provided with additional support, and this is reflected in improved outcomes.

**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education is GOOD (GRADE 2) because: -**

- Teaching is good. Examples of good and outstanding lessons were observed, with evidence of most students achieving well. Most lessons observed were enjoyable and engaging with challenging learning for the different age groups and abilities. Students were productive and keen to join in all the different activities in order to enhance their Jewish learning.
- Formal and informal assessments are being used effectively to improve future progress in Jewish learning.

- Past papers are marked with guidance for relative targets to enable students to make appropriate progress towards their predicted grades in GCSE Biblical Hebrew. All Key Stage 4 students are aware of both their present levels of attainment and the targets they need to meet in order to make good progress.
- The new assessment system in Key Stage 3 enables staff to analyse student progress, allowing them to evaluate what students understand and know in order to build on this to support future learning.
- Teachers have a very strong knowledge of the Jewish subjects they teach, and communicate this effectively and confidently to their Key Stage 3 and 4 students.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning in Jewish Studies where the students feel comfortable asking questions.
- Small, streamed groups are created in each year to provide learning at a level to match students' abilities. Students are given the opportunity to self-assess their abilities and opt for specific sets in Jewish studies as a result of their learning needs.
- Hebrew reading is in line with the school's expectations. For example, there are high standards in Year 11 with students learning *Gemarah*, and basic levels for those Hebrew readers who have only studied the language for a short time.
- Teachers constantly check students' understanding and correct errors during lessons.
- Students are provided with detailed verbal feedback which helps them to understand how to make progress in their Jewish lessons. For example, one teacher asked: "You have described the letters on the *dreidel* (Jewish spinning top) - can you work out what the Hebrew letters *ש-ה-ג-נ* stand for? Each one is the beginning of a word connected to a famous event in ancient Jewish history."
- Effective homework is set to support learning. For example, the students had to complete a *kosher* recipe that they would want to eat. They learned about what makes an item *kosher*, looked at *kosher* shopping and the way to identify *kosher* products.
- At the end of the Autumn term, parents will be provided with thorough information about their children's progress in Jewish Studies. This is newly created in order to have parity with the school's secular reporting system.
- Examples seen of the assessments carried out during the week of the inspection are robust and thorough.

### **The effectiveness of Leadership, Management and Governance of Jewish Education is GOOD (GRADE 2) because: -**

- The school's leaders, including governors, have a clear vision and ambition for the Jewish education at the school. This has resulted in identifying clear areas for development, leading to re-organised and strategic changes in order to address some of these issues. All the stake holders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's Jewish formal and informal education.
- The Head of Jewish Studies communicates well with senior leaders, governors and staff. The SLT, including the Head of Campus, have only been in place for 14 months, and all are focused on continuing to improve student outcomes in Key Stages 3 and 4 Jewish Studies.

- The new leaders, together with the governors, are committed to working together to create an on-going focus on improving teaching and learning in Key Stage 3. This includes appointing new staff across the Jewish Studies Department and providing them with focused, professional development; for example, by partnering secular staff for support and training in areas of previous weakness.
- Governors are very effective in challenging all aspects of provision, implementing target setting within a time frame, with the result that outcomes for students are improving.
- It has taken time, to change for the better, so many different areas within Jewish Studies. All leaders, including governors, fully support the implementation of the new changes in Key Stage 3 and the impact these will hopefully have on student learning.
- The leadership and management, including governors, are aware of the need to create consistency between the various Jewish education curriculum areas and are seeking, through support and training, to create parity with Key Stage 4 GCSE subject areas and other areas of the Jewish Studies Curriculum.
- Self-evaluation by the leadership team has led to the creation of effective strategies for improving teaching provision at Key Stage 3.
- The Head of Jewish Studies focuses on improving teaching and learning that is monitored regularly with observations, appraisals and targets for progress.
- The SLT and governors have a good understanding of performance management and use effective self-evaluation strategies to strive for improvement on an on-going basis. The whole leadership team is passionate about its vision for providing the best Jewish education in line with the school's aims and ethos by achieving high, academic, Jewish Studies results.
- New members of staff have been supported well in the early stages of their time at the school and this support will continue to be provided. All staff commented positively about the support they received upon entering the Department. They have received internal training, with the opportunity to observe best practice in order to learn from other good and outstanding teachers. Support has also been provided to assist teachers with the use of the new curriculum and assessment systems.
- Appraisals of teachers, with appropriate target setting and monitoring, are carried out effectively in line with the school's requirements.
- All members of the Jewish Studies team feel the school is well managed. They feel that the students are safe and are proud to be members of this school. 100% of staff connected to the Jewish studies department were positive in their survey responses.
- Monitoring of *Ivrit* and Biblical Hebrew is effective throughout the school. Monitoring at Key Stage 3 with new tools to support progress is in its early stages of development.
- The leadership, including governors, cares a great deal about the 'Parent Voice' as this is essential in helping to increase student numbers.
- Parental surveys are carried out by the school twice a year at Parents Evenings, to ensure their feedback is received and acknowledged.
- Another avenue for parents to input their views is through the Parent Forum which meets termly. A good example of the Parents' Forum in action was when Year 8 parents felt that their children were not being stretched enough. This resulted in

Biblical Hebrew being introduced to enhance the Jewish learning for some students. As a result of the input from the 'Parent Voice', an analysis of actions and their impact are measured in order to ascertain if parents are happy with the changes.

### **The effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives is GOOD (GRADE 2) because: -**

- All the students, irrespective of their faith, experience the Jewish Studies Curriculum which is comprised of *Chumash* (Hebrew Bible), *Parsha* (weekly portion of the *Torah*) and Modern Hebrew. These are delivered in two ability sets. The students are positive about this experience.
- The Jewish Studies Department understands the importance of assessing the delivery of a new curriculum, and are aware that it is not until it is embedded that they can seek to make this consistent throughout all key stages.
- The students in Year 11 are all on track to reach their predicted grades and have made the relevant progress to date. For example, 100% of students are expected to achieve their predicted grades in all Jewish Studies GCSE subjects.
- The students self assess their needs and opt into one of two ability sets for Jewish Studies. The higher set receives an accelerated learning programme which includes additional studies e.g. *Chumash* (Hebrew Bible), *Parsha* (weekly portion of the *Torah*) and Biblical Hebrew in Key Stage 3.
- The SLT, with the support of the governors and the Head of Jewish Studies, have sought to change much of the weaker aspects of the curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- There is awareness that as a new school, it has taken LJFS a while to be able to analyse the initial data of student progress and attainment in Jewish Studies. The provision of the new curriculum is good, as is the established Key Stage 4 formal GCSE curriculum.

### **The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*tefillah*) is GOOD (GRADE 2) because: -**

- The school fulfils its statutory requirement for collective worship. Students have a daily opportunity for prayer and reflection, with varied daily worship options.
- Students are consistently polite, respectful, helpful and kind to staff, visitors and each other.
- There is a sense of enjoyment among all the students in learning about the Jewish faith, its heritage and about others in the world around them.
- Students are provided with the tools and skills to engage with Jewish spiritual experiences in school, such as *tefillah* (prayer), festival celebrations and *Kabbalat Shabbat* (the 'Welcoming the Sabbath' service). Both teachers and parents comment on the way in which the students feel confident in the subjects they are engaged with as a result of their learning; for example, *Bar Mitzvah* and *Bat Mitzvah* classes and exploring *davening* (praying). One parent commented: "I am thrilled that my son learned in the *Bar Mitzvah* programme how to take parts of the daily service, now that he has had his *Bar Mitzvah*."

- Students appreciate and are sensitive to the needs of those around them. They are encouraged to become involved in informal activities in the school and respond well through their involvement. A Year 8 student commented: "I love all the different things we do at the school for other people, and I feel good helping others when we raise money for the different charities."
- Charities are often selected at the school through an awareness of a particular child or family link, for example the Crohn's Charity was chosen to support research and raise funds to improve the lives of people students know who suffer from that disease. Non-Jewish and Jewish charities are selected in the same way, with suggested charities chosen by students. The Student Council representative and youth worker decide on different charity events and activities to support them.
- Students show kindness to each other in and around the school. For example, when one child was contributing a lot to a discussion, he said to a fellow student: "Would you like a turn answering the question?" The response was, "Yes, please. Thank you."
- Many students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, attend the optional Morning Service on a Wednesday morning.
- Students show respect for the Jewish traditions and life in the school.
- Students demonstrate an inherent understanding of tolerance and respect for each others' cultural diversity.
- There is a strong sense of community in the school and the students feel happy and safe; that they are part of a single unit. "I really like coming to this small school as I feel I am part of a big, happy family where everyone cares about each other."
- Students feel they are growing and learning to be better people. "I used to think it was good to be loud all the time, but I have learnt that it is important to listen to others and be quieter when I need to."
- A number of students volunteer to attend the lunchtime learning programme. "I enjoy the relaxed way in which we can learn and also be with my friends."
- The students work together to create activities for the school. For example, Karate Club was introduced by listening to the wishes of other students.
- The non-Jewish students feel as much a part of the activities and life of the school as the Jewish students. One remarked: "I feel I am attending a Jewish faith school that enables me to flourish in my own way with values that I can relate to."
- British values are a part of all that is happening in every classroom, as demonstrated by the tolerance, respect and equality that students show towards each other. Another student said: "It doesn't matter what someone's faith is, they should be treated fairly and be able to practice it freely."
- The school values appropriate student opinions. The 'Whole School Pupil Voice' operates twice a year to monitor student views and considers them when making decisions. Feedback from students, for example, highlighted the need to improve the Jewish Studies provision. The impact of the 'Pupil Voice' is taken seriously.
- Students partake in the Community *Yom Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Day) service; the Community *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day) and *Yom Hazikaron* (Remembrance Day) ceremonies. Students contribute to the wider community, for example, visiting Donisthorpe Hall to spend time there with the elderly residents.

## Views of Parents and Carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of students at Leeds Jewish Free School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. Parents' views about the Jewish Education provision were positive, with 90% of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement: 'My child is happy at this school' and 91% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement: 'The school encourages high standards in Jewish Studies.' 98% of the parents strongly agree or agree with the statement that 'the life of the school gives my child a good understanding of Jewish values'.

The comments below encapsulate parents' and carers' views on the formal and informal Jewish Education at Leeds Jewish Free School:

*My child is so, so happy and well taught at LJFS, the staff, deputy and head teacher together with the governors work so hard to create a positive Jewish environment where everyone is encouraged to thrive. The school is like a big family.*

*We Jewish Parents can be very hard to please. I'm really happy with the education both Jewish and secular LJFS is giving.*

*My son has a very strong sense of Jewish identity, I feel LJFS is helping to strengthen his beliefs. The higher level Jewish Studies lessons he has are pushing him whilst still maintaining the enjoyment. We are extremely happy to have made the decision to send him to LJFS.*

*LJFS is a wonderful environment for my son to be educated. A school with a very strong Jewish ethos and we are very proud to support it.*

*I find the school incredibly welcoming and friendly. It has a real family close feel about it, as you walk round. The children seem very well behaved and have good manners. I think this is really important to instill these type of values, to all the students, giving them good values for their future.*

# GLOSSARY

## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>JUDGEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils.