

Tashbar of Manchester

Independent school standard inspection report

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Tashbar School is an independent strictly orthodox Jewish boys' school which opened in 1990. It serves a growing Jewish community in the Greater Manchester area. The school premises are centred around a large Victorian building surrounded by a spacious hard-surfaced yard. The majority of boys speak English as their first language. The school is open six days a week from Sunday to Friday. The school aims to provide an excellent education guided by giving over the principles of a true *Toradik Chinuch* (Torah education). The school is registered for pupils aged from three to 11 years of age. There are 501 pupils on roll, three of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Government funding is received for 135 of the three- and four-year-old children who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a separately registered childcare setting at the school site for children under three years old. The school was last inspected in October 2008.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of the education provided by the school is good and the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has made steady improvement with regard to the quality of education and other provision since the last inspection and meets its aims fully. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Arrangements for safeguarding and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding. The school meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The overall quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good and some elements are outstanding. The school curriculum is divided into *Kodesh* (Jewish studies) and *Chol* (secular studies). The majority of time is spent on *Kodesh* studies which includes *gemoro* (Talmud), *chumash/rashi* (Bible with commentaries), *mishna* (Mishnaic studies), *halacha* (Jewish Law) and *nach* (Prophets). Curricula for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are good and the school covers an adequate range of subjects and all required areas of learning. The school follows National Curriculum guidelines and pupils are provided with an especially firm grounding in literacy and numeracy.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Proficiency in literacy is central to the curriculum and all subjects involve a focus on basic reading and writing skills. The *Kodesh* curriculum effectively integrates some aspects of other areas of learning such as personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE), history and geography. Schemes of work for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are good, providing effective support for the quality and consistency of teachers' planning. These have been improved since the last inspection. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities during school hours. These include choirs, a *Derech Eretz* (proper conduct) Project, *Mishnayos Chabura* (Mishna Group) and *Chevras Chemdas Hatorah* (Group that Delight in the Torah) for pupils that wish to further advance their learning.

Overall teaching and assessment are good. Where teaching is especially effective, pupils take part in lively discussions with their peers and teachers and all are attentive and engaged. This is especially true in Talmud lessons where teachers have exceptionally good subject knowledge and students enjoy lively debates with them. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and resources especially in *Chol* lessons, for example, a writing lesson was supported by a recording of *Peter and the Wolf*, along with pictures and photographs. The school's 'toolkits' for literacy and numeracy promote the use of a good variety of teaching approaches in those areas. Most teachers plan their lessons well, although the planning of tasks for pupils of varying capabilities is not always consistently detailed. Most lessons are paced well, so that time is used effectively. Additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and has been improved since the last inspection.

Pupils make good progress in all areas of learning. In *Kodesh*, pupils are tested regularly by their teachers and take part in oral examinations by their head of *Kodesh* studies and by internal and external examiners. Teachers record marks in order to inform future learning and planning. The school has a system of tracking pupils' achievements although it does not consistently monitor pupils' progress in all subjects. There are plans to standardise and further embed these procedures so the school is better placed monitor attainment and trends. For *Chol* there are effective forms of assessment and good systems of recording. These inform teaching and ensure progress. *Kodesh* and *Chol* results show that pupils of varying abilities including those with a statement of special educational needs and those that are more gifted make consistently good progress. Marking is generally basic. It is sometimes not as helpful as it might be to the pupils and some does not provide them with effective guidance on how to improve.

The school makes good provision for meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are kind and caring and form warm relationships with children. The early learning goals are integrated well through both the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula. The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children's progress is monitored accurately; this ensures that children make good progress. Teachers use information from assessments well to inform their planning and teaching. The setting provides an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and there is good use of indoor resources. The outdoor area is satisfactorily used as an outside classroom. However, this is

somewhat hindered by the lack of a covered area and by the surface of the outdoor play area; although safe, this is somewhat uneven. The setting is a very happy place where children enjoy learning and this contributes to their good progress. Accurate assessments are made at the end of the Reception year and staff ensure that the transition to Key Stage 1 is smooth. Staffing ratios are good as are staff qualifications.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school and the personal development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Pupils very much enjoy the education that they receive and appreciate the close relationships that they forge with their teachers and each other. Parents and carers acknowledge that teachers take a personal interest in their children and that there is a special atmosphere in the school. One parent commented that 'staff gave extra tender loving care to my son at a time of family bereavement and always look for innovative ways to motivate and encourage my son.' Another stated that 'we feel secure and comfortable knowing that our son is at school where all of his needs in all areas are taken care of.' Behaviour in lessons, corridors and during break times is consistently good. Attendance is exceptionally high and pupils are very punctual to lessons.

Pupils are pleasant, well mannered and courteous. They have plenty of opportunities to offer their opinions and organise school activities such as the *Achdus* Campaign when pupils actively promoted peace and harmony within the school through their own initiatives. These activities help them grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. Classes organise their own choirs and perform during the festival of *Chanukah* and Year 6 perform plays and skits at different points during the year. These activities further bolster pupils' opportunities for self-expression. Older pupils are encouraged to befriend and support younger ones. An example of this is the annual sports day when teams are formed from across age groups. Pupils take part in charity work such as sponsored abseiling, Purim collections and a 'Toy Drive' in aid of Camp Simcha for children suffering from serious illnesses.

The school places strong emphasis on the moral and ethical teachings as taught through *Kodesh*. This instils in the pupils the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong. Pupils learn to understand the importance that Judaism attaches to respecting the law of the land and being law-abiding citizens. Spirituality forms the basis of everything that happens at school. Pupils pray daily and perform all of their religious duties with enthusiasm. *Chol* teachers use every opportunity to complement their lessons with references to Torah, religious ideals and morality. Pupils learn about other cultures through geography and aspects of *Kodesh*. They come to appreciate the importance of racial harmony through discussions with their teachers and a pervading atmosphere of acceptance and equality.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety in both the school and the Early Years Foundation stage is outstanding. Pupils are taught to keep healthy through science, physical education and personal, social and health education. In addition to this, the school has many activities that promote healthy lifestyles such as a 'Fruit Bar' that is organised by pupils on the festival of Tu B'Shvat. The school provides a very safe environment and supervision is consistently good.

The school has an effective anti-bullying policy and ways of promoting good behaviour amongst pupils are clearly stated in its behaviour policy. Teachers develop their own systems to ensure good behaviour in addition to a whole school policy that applies to all age groups. As a result, behaviour in lessons, corridors and outside is consistently good. Pupils are clear about the sanctions imposed by the school for misconduct and a sanctions record is in place. Pupils are very respectful. They enjoy learning and are proud of their school. Students claim that bullying is rare and, if it were to happen, that it would be dealt with appropriately. The school has a 'confidentiality box' where pupils can post their concerns and key members of staff and mentors provide extra support for identified pupils. The school has a suitable policy for first-aid and staff are trained in general and paediatric first-aid. All of the school's policies, including its policy for health and safety are very comprehensive and form an effective basis for ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for.

A policy for educational visits is in place and thorough risk assessments are conducted before school trips. The child protection policy is robust and the designated person and all staff have attended the required training in child protection. The school has a current fire audit for the premises and fire risk assessments are conducted regularly. Fire drills are regular events and are recorded carefully. The school maintains a comprehensive register of admissions and daily attendance registers are taken. The school has a suitable three-year plan to improve accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school's recruitment procedures are well established. All staff have had the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau and the single central record of staff checks contains the necessary details.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory and the buildings are safe. There are sufficient classrooms for the number of pupils on roll. Classrooms are an adequate size and most are decorated with pupils' work and incentive charts. The maintenance of the building and accommodation is satisfactory. The school has two outdoor play areas that are suitable for pupils using them during the staggered breaks and the outdoor play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although the surface is somewhat uneven. The number of toilets and

hand basins is adequate and there is warm running water for students to wash their hands. Arrangements for looking after pupils that are ill are satisfactory and there is a designated medical room.

Provision of information

Parents and carers are provided with clear information about the activities of the school and about their children's progress. They are kept well informed through weekly letters sent home by *Kodesh* teachers. Parents' and carers' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reveal that they are very positive about the quality of education their children receive.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The policy and procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements. There have been no formal complaints in recent years.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations')

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - consolidating systems for tracking pupils' progress over time in both *Kodesh* and *Chol*
 - improving the quality and consistency of the marking of pupils' work
 - improving planning for *Kodesh* and *Chol* lessons to ensure that tasks meet the learning needs of pupils of varying abilities.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Jewish day school		
Date school opened	September 1990		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 464	Girls: 0	Total: 464
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 37	Girls: 0	Total: 37
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,200 - £2,640		
Address of school	20 Upper Park Road Salford Lancashire M7 4HL		
Telephone number	0161 720 8254		
Email address	N/A		
Headteacher	Mr A Pinczewski		
Proprietor	Tashbar Academy Ltd		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Tashbar of Manchester M7 4HL

It was a great privilege to be able to inspect your school. I found you to be friendly, welcoming and courteous.

As you know, I spent my time in the school observing lessons and reading the questionnaires that you and your parents and carers returned. In addition to this, I examined the school's paperwork and had meetings with various members of staff.

I found that the education that your school provides is good. The ways that the school supports your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. You are very well cared for in school and the welfare, health and safety at the school is outstanding.

I have made a few suggestions that would help the school to further improve teaching and learning. These include tracking your progress more carefully and improving teachers' planning and marking.

In my discussions with some of you, you expressed how much you like school and your teachers and how much you enjoy learning. I am sure that you will build on these positive attitudes and continue to succeed with the help of your teachers and mentors.

Many thanks for making the inspection so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Rabbi Dr Chanan Tomlin
Lead Inspector