

Wiznitz Cheder School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jonathan Yodaiken

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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

Wiznitz Cheder is an independent day school for orthodox Jewish boys aged from three to 13 years of age from the Chassidic community in North London. Most of the pupils come from families that are attached to the Wiznitz Chassidic sect, but the school welcomes all members of the Charedi community. The school started functioning in January 2011 and intends to add on classes past its current Year 5, year by year.

The school is located in a large Victorian building in the centre of Stamford Hill. Since its pre-registration inspection in July 2011, when the school was registered for 80 pupils, the school has refurbished the basement so that it now accommodates two classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Currently, the school has 95 pupils on roll, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs. There are 25 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage all of whom receive government funding.

The school aims to assist every learner to reach his potential. It encourages pupils to 'constantly improve their character traits; to develop respect for the environment and an understanding of the world in which we live'. This is the school's first inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Wiznitz Cheder provides a good quality of education from Nursery to Year 5 and meets its stated aims. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and the main school, pupils make good progress over time as a result of good teaching and a good curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is reflected in their outstanding behaviour. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good with robust safeguarding arrangements in place. Parents and carers value highly the care provided and the attention given to promoting pupils' well-being and enjoyment of school. The school meets all the regulations for independent schools.

The school is in breach of its registration by having more than 80 pupils on roll.

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

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

Quality of education

The curriculum is good overall, with elements that are outstanding. It is divided into two parts: *Kodesh* (Jewish) studies and *chol* (secular studies). The *Kodesh* curriculum covers all of the core subjects including *chumash* (bible), *davening* (prayer), *Gemoroh* (Talmud), *mussar* (moral ethics) and *halacha* (Jewish law). It is underpinned by the learning of *sedra* (weekly Torah portion) and by the events of the Jewish calendar. The *Kodesh* curriculum is exemplary and its strengths include excellent progression, whereby pupils' knowledge and skills are built upon, year on year, and the great emphasis which is given to developing their understanding of the Talmud. This well-planned *Kodesh* curriculum, supported by in-depth schemes of work, is a major feature of the school's provision. As a result, a spiritual ethos permeates the whole school. The school has a clear policy for personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is mainly taught through *Kodesh* in which pupils learn to understand, for example, the importance of healthy lifestyles.

The *chol* curriculum is broadly based on the National Curriculum, with appropriate time set aside for literacy, numeracy, science and physical education. Other subjects such as music, art, drama, history and geography are taught in a cross-curricular way within *Kodesh* lessons. Examples of this cross-curricular work include Year 5 pupils learning about countries of the world as part of a *Mishnayos* (Talmud) lesson and Year 2 pupils learning *gematrius* (numerical values of Hebrew letters). The curriculum is comprehensive, covers the required areas of learning and ensures that the optimum use is made of the time allotted to the secular subjects.

Although the use of computers is discouraged by the school for religious and cultural reasons, pupils learn about design and technology through work on photography and producing models. Examples of this are the models of *Succos* (Tabernacles) that pupils in junior classes produce and the Year 5 weekly woodwork lessons. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught according to the requirements of the the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, all of which are successfully woven together with the *Kodesh* curriculum.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers make effective use of the resources that are available to support teaching and learning. They have high expectations of attitudes to learning and behaviour. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and mutual respect, help to create a calm atmosphere within classrooms so that pupils can concentrate on learning. Teachers generally use effective questioning strategies to challenge pupils and to develop enquiring minds. However, occasionally questions are too closed and do not help the pupils to reflect. Provision for disabled pupils and those with other additional needs is good.

Procedures for assessment are excellent within *Kodesh* and good for *chol*. As a result, teachers have a good understanding of pupils' abilities. Particularly impressive is the way that the headteacher tests pupils weekly on their knowledge and skills within *Kodesh* and uses this information to plan intervention strategies for pupils who are making slower progress. Good records are kept of all the regular assessments undertaken by teachers which are subsequently used to plan lessons. Parents and

carers are kept exceptionally well informed of pupils' progress through letters, reports and twice yearly parents' evenings. Although marking of pupils' work is done regularly, teachers do not always write comments to inform pupils on the next steps they need to take with their learning.

The formal school curriculum is augmented by a number of well planned extra-curricular events. These include *melava malkas* (a meal after conclusion of the Sabbath), *chumash seudos* (celebrations), off-site educational visits and *Purim* activities. All of these give pupils opportunities to speak and sing in public and to develop their self-confidence. As a result of the good curriculum and good teaching, pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage every child has a profile that includes photographic and written evidence of their learning. Profiles are comprehensive and show that children are making good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Throughout the school their development is underpinned by an ethos strongly centred on promoting moral values and a life-long enjoyment of learning. Pupils are taught to distinguish between right and wrong and to respect the law through the *Kodesh* curriculum which is a major feature of their religious beliefs. For example, Year 4 and Year 5 take part in a *shimiras haloshon* (guard one's tongue) campaign, which emphasises the importance of not speaking badly about others. They also participate in the focus of Year 4's *Gemoroh* lessons on 'looking after and returning lost property'. As a result, pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and considerate towards each other and their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on a whole range of issues within *mussar* lessons and during their daily prayer sessions in which they say psalms for the recovery of those who are unwell.

There is great *achdus* (unity) at the school, with pupils stating that they 'are like one big family'. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are high. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the Jewish community. For example, twice a year pupils take part in major charity work and often visit the elderly in a local retirement home. They are encouraged to show initiative and contribute to the community through the organising of prayer sessions, and older pupils organise an annual *Purim spiel* (show) which is performed in the winter term.

Pupils acquire a general knowledge of public institutions and services in England within the *chol* studies and through a 'people who help us' programme. They learn about other cultures through a variety of stories, pictures and puppets which promote an understanding of cultural diversity. They are taught about tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions as a religious precept. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour, are courteous to visitors and display kindness to each other.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Arrangements for child protection training and safeguarding procedures are good and all staff have been suitably trained at the required level to fulfil their child protection responsibilities. Risk assessments for off-site activities and the school premises are securely in place. Policies and procedures for behaviour management, anti-bullying, health and safety, fire safety and first-aid are consistently implemented. Two members of the leadership team have completed the safer recruitment training and procedures for recruitment are effective. Staff training in first-aid is up to date and there are sufficient first aiders on site. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The school has an appropriate level of fire safety, as identified by its risk assessment. The school has a sanctions book and admission and attendance registers which are kept meticulously and updated appropriately. Pupils are encouraged to embrace healthy lifestyles and are aware of how to keep safe. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are safe.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children have been carried out and details are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is accommodated in a large Victorian house which, since refurbishment, now includes the basement which houses the Early Years Foundation Stage. The premises provide for the delivery of the curriculum, teaching and learning and provide a safe environment for pupils. Classrooms are appropriate in size and are bright and airy and do not compromise health and safety. One side entrance provides ready access for emergency services. There are ample washrooms for pupils and an appropriate facility for pupils who are ill. Although the outdoor provision is somewhat dull, with limited toys and other equipment, it provides a safe area for pupils to play.

Provision of information

Parents, carers and others receive a wealth of information that is accurate and up to date. All of the required information is either provided or made available to them. Parents and carers appreciate the school's open-door policy and feel well informed of their sons' progress through regular newsletters, reports and discussions with their teachers. Parents and carers display an exceptionally high degree of satisfaction with the school's work.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet all requirements.

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.

- Ensure that within lessons on secular subjects, teachers regularly ask open questions.
- Ensure that playground facilities are enhanced by providing a variety of play equipment and activities for pupils.

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 day		
Type of school	Orthodox Jewish		
Date school opened	January 2011		
Age range of pupils	3–13 years		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 95	Girls: 0	Total: 95
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0 (voluntary donation)		
Address of school	126B Stamford Hill London N16 6QT		
Telephone number	0208 8099513		
Email address	admin@viznitzcheder.co.uk		
Headteacher	Rabbi P. A. Taub		
Proprietor	Viznitz Limited		

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.



6 December 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wiznitz Cheder School, London N16 6QT

Thank you for contributing to the inspection of your school. The inspectors enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. The following is a summary of our findings.

The quality of education provided by your school is good. You told us that you enjoy learning and feel at home at school and you take pleasure in helping others. We were impressed by your outstanding behaviour, enthusiasm for learning, self-confidence and sense of responsibility. You are proud of your school and understandably so. In your school adults work very hard to help you develop all the skills you need to reach your full potential.

In school you learn a wide range of subjects and you enjoy taking part in events and educational visits. Your teachers and teaching assistants care for you very well and teach you well. You feel safe and understand the importance of taking exams.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your school to:

- ensure that in chol lessons all teachers consistently ask you questions that help you to understand your work
- ensure that playground facilities are enhanced by providing you with a variety of resources and play activities.

You will help your teachers if you continue to work as hard as we saw during the inspection and if you maintain your excellent behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Yodaiken
Lead Inspector