

Manchester Mesivta School

Beechwood, Charlton Avenue, Prestwich M25 0PH

Inspection dates	14–15 October 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well. The proportion gaining five good GCSEs is now above average. This reflects good progress given pupils' broadly average starting points in Year 7.
- Teachers plan lessons which interest and motivate pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils are confident and keen to learn.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately in Years 9, 10 and 11. They provide extra help for those who are at risk of falling behind in their work so that such pupils are able to catch up.
- All teachers provide teaching assistants with clear guidance for supporting pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs in lessons. As a result, the achievement of this group of pupils is accelerating.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance has improved as a result. They are extremely proud of their school and very appreciative of the things teachers do to help them.
- Pupils are friendly, courteous and considerate. They have a good understanding of British values and all understand the importance of respect and tolerance.
- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing, and have very high aspirations for the pupils in their care. They have improved the quality of teaching and assessment by setting robust targets for teachers, and as a result, outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is slower in Years 7 and 8, particularly in English and humanities, than it is in the rest of the school. Some teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Although reducing, fixed-term exclusions are higher than average for a very small number of pupils.
- Teachers' feedback and marking does not consistently enable pupils to improve their work.
- Planning for improvement is not always as sharp as it could be to enable leaders to track the effectiveness of their actions.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that progress in Years 7 and 8 accelerates, particularly in English and humanities, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers take steps to develop pupils' literacy skills by providing them with opportunities to write at length
 - ensuring that all marking and feedback is effective in enabling pupils to improve their work.
- Reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions in the school by exploring all strategies for supporting the very small minority of pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour.
- Ensure that leaders plan precise actions for improvement with clear success criteria so that they can consistently evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors have high aspirations for the pupils. They have created a very positive culture where pupils are keen to do well and where relationships between staff and pupils are based on high levels of trust and respect.
- Outcomes have improved since the previous inspection because leaders have taken robust steps to check how well the school is performing and to improve the quality of teaching. They now have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders collect a range of information about, for example, behaviour and pupils' achievement, and use it to plan steps for improvement. However, the actions identified for improvement are not always precise or measurable enough to enable leaders to track the effectiveness of their actions.
- Teachers now enter information about how well pupils are learning in to a central tracking system six times a year, and use this to identify and target pupils who may need additional support. This extra support enables such pupils to catch up with their peers. However, the systems to check that teachers' assessment judgements are accurate are not as rigorous in Years 7 and 8 as they are at Key Stage 4.
- Leaders now set performance management targets for teachers which are robust and closely linked to pupils' achievement, school improvement priorities and the teachers' standards. This is improving the quality of teaching.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding to provide a learning mentor to support disadvantaged pupils and for additional one-to-one help for them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This ensures that those pupils achieve at least as well as others in the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It allows pupils to learn Jewish studies while still having access to a wide range of secular subjects at both key stages. Changes have been made since the last inspection to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve as well as they should at GCSE by adjusting the curriculum for a small minority of pupils so that they can sit GCSEs in Year 11 rather than Year 10. Leaders have also promoted equality of opportunity through improved training and guidance for teaching assistants, so that their support for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is more effective.
- The promotion of the pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development and their understanding of British values is a particular strength. Pupils have opportunity to take part in extra-curricular clubs and activities at lunchtime, and the curriculum is supported by visitors to the school. This has ensured, for example, that pupils across the school have a good understanding of democracy because, prior to this year's general election, speakers from each party came to talk to them about the political system and their policies so that pupils could hold their own mock election. Leaders ensure that pupils feel safe around school and that they learn how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, with a strong focus on e-safety and healthy lifestyles.
- Middle leaders have a secure understanding of how well their areas are performing, and are responding appropriately to curriculum and assessment changes. Within their areas of responsibility, middle leaders are clear about what needs to improve, and put appropriate actions in place to address them. The school communicates regularly with parents, providing them with, for example, suggestions for how they might support their child in reading. As a result, parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. Comments such as, 'the staff go over and beyond and are true role models' are typical.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection governors have undertaken a review of their work. This has enabled them to audit their strengths, skills and areas for development, and to secure training to close any gaps in their knowledge. Under the guidance of the new chair of governors they now have a clear understanding of how well the school is performing, and are using the school's tracking data to check on pupils' progress. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and use data to check on its impact. They also have a good understanding of teachers' performance management targets and make sure that pay progression is closely linked to improvements in teachers' performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Teachers receive regular child protection training and leaders take appropriate action to support pupils at risk, including liaising closely with families and external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils are keen to learn and to contribute to lessons. They feel well supported, for example when teachers and other adults move round the room to check that they understand.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to keep pupils motivated, including discussion and group work, which enables pupils to share ideas and develop their thinking.
- Teachers ensure that teaching assistants know exactly what they need to do to support pupils in lessons, so that pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are all able to tackle work at an appropriate level.
- In mathematics in particular, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and challenging work. They have a good understanding of mathematical concepts and are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations, and to solving problems. Some teachers reinforce this in other lessons across the curriculum. For example, in a PE lesson, pupils were encouraged to use their basic number skills and also to cross-reference their learning against what they understood from their science lessons.
- Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to read. However, their expectations of writing are not consistent across the school. Pupils are not always challenged to write in full sentences or to explain their ideas in detail. Spelling, grammar and punctuation errors sometimes go uncorrected.
- All teachers mark work frequently and provide some quite detailed feedback to pupils. However, not all feedback is precise enough to tell pupils exactly what it is that they need to do to improve.
- Although teachers make frequent checks on how well pupils are learning and provide additional support or intervention if some are falling behind, they do not always take every opportunity in lessons to ensure that pupils are set work which matches their needs, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Occasionally work is set which is too hard for some and too easy for others. When this is the case, pupils' progress slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good. As a result pupils are very confident and articulate, and keen to talk positively about all the things the school offers. They say that they are taught a lot about respect, and this is evident from the respectful but enthusiastic and open way in which they speak to each other and to visitors.
- Pupils value their education and say that they understand that it is important for their futures that they achieve well in school. The vast majority say that they enjoy learning and all feel that they are well supported and will be helped if they are struggling with work.
- Pupils were unanimous in their views that school is a safe place to be. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, but say that it is very rare and dealt with effectively because school staff have a 'zero tolerance' approach. They all say that the school teaches them to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, for example with lessons about the risks of drugs and alcohol.
- All pupils say that there is someone in school to whom they could speak if they have a problem or concern of any kind. Parents have no concerns about the behaviour or safety of their children, and comments such as 'my son is extremely proud of being part of this school' are typical.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour at breaks, lunchtimes and in between lessons is calm and orderly. Pupils show respect for the environment and there is little evidence of litter.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and therefore attendance has improved. Although levels of persistent absenteeism are higher than average for some groups of pupils, almost all cases can be explained by long-standing medical conditions and all pupils are being well support to improve their attendance where appropriate.
- Behaviour in lessons is good overall, though some pupils reported rare occurrences of low-level disruption if the teacher gave them work that was too easy or too hard. Older pupils spoken to by the inspector say that behaviour has improved considerably in recent years.
- Leaders have high expectations of behaviour and a zero tolerance of anything which falls below the expected standard. However, the number of fixed-term exclusions appears high when compared with national figures. This is because of repeat exclusions of a very small number of pupils who need extra

help to manage their own behaviour and does not reflect the full picture of the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Despite the fact that the majority of pupils take their GCSEs a year early, they make good progress and leave with above average standards.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4 is particularly strong and is accelerating in English. Outcomes in other subjects are typically in line with or better than national averages. Where this has not been the case, improvements have been made since the last inspection particularly in languages and humanities where achievement is improving.
- However, there is still some variation in progress for some pupils across the school. For example, typically, pupils' progress is not as rapid in Years 7 and 8 in English and humanities as it is in mathematics. This is because although there are some excellent examples of pupils being taught and encouraged to write for a range of purposes and to produce pieces of extended writing, these are not consistent across all year groups. Work is not always sufficiently challenging.
- At the last inspection middle ability pupils did not achieve as well as others. This is no longer the case and differences in the achievement of pupils of different abilities have been eradicated. The progress of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs requires improvement overall, but is improving because of better-targeted support and better-directed use of teaching assistants. As with all pupils, their progress accelerates as they move up the school.
- Teachers assess all pupils in Year 7 against a particular group of tests. They use the outcomes of the tests and 'catch up' funding (additional money provided to schools to support pupils who join school in Year 7 with attainment which is below average) to provide additional support either individually or in small groups to help them to improve. Leaders provide convincing evidence to show that these pupils are catching up because they are demonstrating improved progress in the tests.
- Pupils are well prepared to go on to their next stage of education, which for the majority of them is Talmudical College. Following this, many pupils go on to further education or university.

School details

Unique reference number	351-4005
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10002275

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	8
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Avrom Topperman
Principal	Binyomin Sulzbacher
Telephone number	0161 773 1789
Website	www.mesivta.org.uk
Email address	mesivta@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 October 2013

Information about this school

- Manchester Mesivta School is a small orthodox Jewish school.
- It provides a dual curriculum where Jewish studies are taught in the morning and secular subjects in the afternoon.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those with service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The majority of pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language.
- No pupils follow courses in other schools or colleges.
- The school enters most pupils for GCSEs in Year 10, so that they can begin their A levels in Year 11. This is so that they can progress to Talmudical College either in Israel or the United Kingdom.
- There is an independent sixth form which is funded through links by Bury College for Year 12 only. This did not form part of the inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of a number of lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- Only the secular provision in the school was inspected.
- The inspector analysed the 56 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and texts from parents.
- The inspector held a formal discussion with a number of pupils from across the school, and talked to pupils informally at breaks and lunchtime. Behaviour was observed around the school as well as in lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with senior and middle leaders as well as with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including behaviour records, information collected by the school relating to observations of teaching and pupil achievement, school policies, action plans and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, lead inspector

Ofsted inspector

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