



Manchester Mesivta School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134195
LEA Bury
Inspection number 282485
Inspection dates 23 March 2006 to 24 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Brian Sharples HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Beechwood
School category	Voluntary aided		Charlton Avenue
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Prestwich, Greater Manchester M25 0PH
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	0161 773 1789
Number on roll	165	Fax number	0161 772 9170
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr I Shapiro
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr P Pink

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 23 March 2006 - 24 March 2006	Inspection number 282485
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and one additional inspector.

Description of the school

The Manchester Mesivta School is a small voluntary aided school for boys based in Bury. It is an orthodox Jewish school which provides a dual curriculum of Jewish studies and secular education for boys aged 11-16. There are presently 165 pupils on roll. In order to deliver the demanding curriculum requirements, the school days are particularly long. This inspection focused only on the secular element of the school's provision.

The school gained voluntary aided status in November 2004 and moved into brand new buildings in December 2005. The school serves a relatively small catchment area. The school site also hosts an independent sixth form which is franchised with a local further education college.

The proportion of boys with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or from minority ethnic groups is also very low.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school that provides good value for money. The majority of pupils enter the school with attainment levels that are in line with, or above, national averages. The overall standard of attainment and progress made by pupils across all year groups is good when compared with national averages. However, there is some outstanding performance, for example in mathematics at Key Stage 3. The quality of lessons across the school is varied, but satisfactory overall. Teachers make little use of varied teaching and learning styles and assessment procedures are not yet fully established or consistently applied in all subjects. Despite this, pupils make good progress because of their motivation and willingness to learn. The curricular provision is satisfactory but aspects such as the work based curriculum and the provision of vocational options are underdeveloped.

The care, guidance, support and personal development of pupils are all good. Behaviour is good overall and attendance rates remain well above national averages. The overall leadership and management of the school is satisfactory with some good features. The senior leadership and governors have managed the transfer from independent to voluntary aided status and the move to a new building very effectively. The headteacher provides strong leadership and direction, but too little of the leadership and management responsibilities are devolved to the deputy headteacher or middle managers. Development planning is not yet well developed across the school. The school generally knows its strengths and weaknesses well and the inspection agrees with most of its judgements. The governors are supportive of the school and know it very well. However, the governing body's structure and working procedures do not yet comply with all statutory requirements.

The spiritual, caring and fully inclusive ethos of the school creates a supportive and co-operative learning environment for all pupils. Parents and pupils are generally happy with the provision in the school. Assuming the school addresses the main areas for improvement then the capacity for this school to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of development plans at all management levels is of consistently high quality and constructed in a way that enables a high standard of monitoring and evaluation.
- Involve the deputy headteacher and middle managers more in areas in the wider roles of leadership and management.
- Ensure that the working procedures of the governing body meet all statutory roles and responsibilities.
- Improve aspects of curricular provision, especially opportunities for work experience and vocational choices.
- Introduce a wider variety of teaching and learning styles and a greater focus on assessment for learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good with some outstanding aspects. The majority of pupils enter the school with standards of attainment that are in line with, or above, the national average in English, mathematics and science. The change to voluntary aided status required the school to enter pupils for national Key Stage 3 tests. This took place for the first time in 2005. The standards in these national tests in 2005 for all three core subjects were above average and in mathematics were outstanding. Equally, the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results across the full range of subjects are good and 87% of students gained five or more A*-C grades. There is not yet enough year on year data available against which to measure trends and progress over time. However, the school does have some systems in place for monitoring pupils' progress effectively. These include half termly teacher assessments in each subject and the analysis of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum assessment test scores. Analysis of this data shows that pupils make at least good progress in both key stages 3 and 4. The small number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and supported well and also make good progress during their time in school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good overall, although the school's self-evaluation judged it to be satisfactory. Pupils feel safe in and around school. They have no concerns about bullying and know what to do if they feel worried. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, often outstanding, except in those lessons where the teaching fails to capture and hold their interest. Attendance rates are well above average. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. There is a healthy eating culture in the school. The pupils' school council has helped to bring about some improvement to the school's organisation, for example, the introduction of a short afternoon break on Fridays.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is fostered particularly well through the strong spiritual and caring ethos which pervades the school community. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community, for example, by fundraising for local charities. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school through their effective learning in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school is aware that pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world of work and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills are underdeveloped and has plans to improve this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This differs from the school's self-evaluation which judged it to be good. The quality of lessons observed covered the full range from outstanding to inadequate but many were either satisfactory or good. Most of the teaching is very traditional and formal in nature. Teachers take few risks in their teaching with little variety in teaching and learning styles and pupils have few opportunities to develop as independent learners. For example, teachers are not yet using the school's excellent ICT provision to best effect in lessons across the curriculum. The good progress and standards that pupils achieve are largely a result of their motivation and extremely positive attitude to learning. Teachers generally have a secure command of their subject. Their expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high and pupils respond accordingly. Teachers set challenging work and expect that pupils can cope well. Their class control and ability to enthuse the pupils is generally good but there are exceptions.

Lesson planning varies in quality. Some of it is very superficial. The marking of pupils work is also very variable in quality. At its best, it is extremely thorough and provides pupils with helpful and constructive comments but this is not yet the case in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties are well monitored and receive some good support from learning support assistants, form learning mentors and sixth form volunteers.

The school is aware that assessment procedures such as marking of work and pupil target setting are not yet well established or used consistently.

Pupils are assessed at least every half-term, but there is inconsistent use of National Curriculum levels. There is no individual target setting by subjects and pupils do not know how well they are doing in terms of national standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. It matches well the religious status of the school community, with its heavy weighting to Jewish studies. However, it also reflects the stage the school has reached in its journey from independent school to voluntary aided state school. The basic skeleton of the National Curriculum is now in place but there are strands where the pupils are still only receiving the bare minimum entitlement and some of this is very recent. For example, design and technology is becoming well established across the school but music and art are presently only offered in Key Stage 3. Similarly, citizenship now has a firm footing in Key Stage 3 but is delivered only in a minimal, cross curricular way with the older year groups. ICT provision is much improved since the move to the new school and is slowly being applied to subjects across the curriculum. Work experience and vocational provision are both at an early stage of development. Subject departments are beginning to bring Key Stage 3 schemes of work more into line with the national curriculum programmes

of study. Science has made the most progress in this respect. The curriculum is enriched in a number of ways. This includes choir, chess club, swimming, visits abroad and an annual adventure camp. There are few after school activities because the boys work such a long day on their subject studies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's provision for the care, guidance and support for pupils is good.

Pupils are positive about the care they receive from the school. A very remarkable mutual respect permeates the whole school and the positive relationships it generates make pupils feel happy and secure.

Pupils say that they find their teachers very helpful and very friendly, but also strict.

The academic progress of pupils is monitored well. Reports to parents are full of useful detail about pupils' progress, but not yet as clear as they need to be on how pupils are achieving in comparison with national standards. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are thorough. Security of the school site is good. There are good arrangements for the regular reviews of children with learning difficulties and their individual learning plans are of good quality. Links with support agencies, other schools and with the community are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

This is satisfactory with some good features. The headteacher provides strong leadership and knows the school well, but retains too much direct control and insufficient responsibility is devolved to senior staff and middle managers.

The school's recently produced development plan identifies the right activities to move the school forward. However, it is too inconsistent and imprecise to be used to monitor progress effectively. Other development planning is limited and no development plans currently exist within departments.

The school has some effective procedures in place for monitoring the quality and standards of provision across the school by both senior staff and heads of department. These include data analysis and regular reporting procedures. The headteacher provides regular reports and reviews to governors and to the weekly staff meetings. Heads of department monitor the quality of provision and standards in their subject areas through informal and/or formal meetings with colleagues and the analysis of test data. The self-evaluation form was written by the headteacher following some discussion with staff. A small number of governors saw the self-evaluation form in draft format and provided feedback, but their involvement was limited. The leadership of the school generally knows its strengths and weaknesses well and the inspection team agree with the majority of their judgements.

There is a performance management system in place for all teachers, each of whom has an agreed job description and targets for the current academic year. At present, all teacher appraisals are carried out by the headteacher. There is currently no performance management system for the headteacher.

The school leadership gives a high priority to ensuring that all pupils achieve the highest possible standards. The senior management team and governors have rightly prioritised their recent efforts on: the transition of the school from independent to voluntary aided status, overseeing the new building programme and the move from the previous building to the new site. They have all carried out this work effectively and efficiently. The new school provides an outstanding teaching and learning environment for the staff and pupils.

The governors are a well established and often long-serving body of people who are dedicated to the school and know it well. At present, the committee structure of the governing body has not been formalised and the minutes for governing body or committee meetings lack formality or reference to points for action. The governing body has yet to meet all its statutory obligations.

The school budget is well managed by the governors and headteacher and funding has been used efficiently to ensure that teaching and learning resources around the school are good. The school provides good value for money. A significant number of parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that the school is led and managed well.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work and to listen to your views about the school. We have decided that Manchester Mesivta is a satisfactory and improving school. We also recognise that you, along with the teachers, parents and governors are all proud of the school and are working hard to see it become even better.

What we liked most about your school

- The new buildings and pleasant working environment in which you learn.
- Your very good behaviour and polite manners around school.
- The interest you show and good progress you make in lessons.
- The good standards you achieve during your time at school and in public examinations. We were particularly impressed by your results in mathematics at Key Stage 3.
- The spiritual and caring ethos which surrounds everything about the school.
- The good care, guidance and support available for you.
- The good relationships between yourselves and with teachers.
- The interest your parents show in the school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that all the development plans are of a consistently high quality and written in a way that enables all aspects of the school to move forward.
- Make sure that other staff including the deputy headteacher and core subject leaders take a larger role in managing and leading the school.
- Make sure that members of the governing body carry out all the things they are legally required to do.
- Make sure that you have opportunities for work experience and an opportunity to choose more work related courses if they are relevant to you.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by using a wider variety of teaching and learning styles and a better focus on how your work is assessed and recorded.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about your school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved. We found our two days in the school to be a most delightful experience.