

Inspection of Leeds Menorah School

399 Street Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 6HQ

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 July 2022 and 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education pupils receive requires improvement. This has a direct impact on what pupils have the opportunity to learn. Leaders have started a programme of training events and made links with other schools. Green shoots of improvement are beginning to show. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that some previously unmet standards are now met. For example, boys and girls are now taught together in lessons relating to Jewish law. Pupils learn the same content; therefore, they have a stronger understanding of how aspects of Jewish law relate to each other.

Pupils are happy at this school. They want to come to school, and they want to learn. Attendance rates are high. Pupils behave well. At times, their exuberance means that they do not always listen or wait for others to finish before they speak. Pupils say that bullying and poor behaviour are rare. Pupils have good relationships with adults and know who they can turn to if they need help.

Parents are very pleased with the care and education their children receive. All parents who responded to the survey, Ofsted Parent View would recommend this school to other parents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils read well and extensively, including at home. Younger pupils are taught phonics systematically by a trained teacher. As pupils move through the school, texts quickly become more complex, and pupils read fluently and with confidence. Occasionally, the books that younger pupils read do not always match their phonics knowledge. The early years teacher is aware of the weaknesses in the current system and a new phonics programme is due to be introduced. Reading resources are being purchased so that books are a better match to the phonics skills being taught.

Pupils are taught mathematics through a coherently sequenced commercial programme. Pupils learn well and speak confidently about what they understand. However, pupils have insufficient opportunity to apply the knowledge they have learned in a range of situations to ensure a greater depth of understanding.

In other subjects such as history, art and physical education, curriculum planning and pupils' learning is weak. Curriculum plans for these subjects lack breadth, structure and coherence. They do not give enough detail about what pupils should learn and when. Plans lack a clear sense of what pupils should know and understand. The effect of this is that pupils do not build secure knowledge in these subjects. They do not have the building blocks of knowledge that help them to develop a stronger understanding.

In English, planning and teaching are improving rapidly. The school has started working with a multi-academy trust. This training and support the trust provides are

already improving pupils' learning in English. Pupils demonstrate growing confidence as they redraft work and improve elements of grammar and punctuation. In science, the curriculum is also showing strong signs of improvement. Pupils do not spend long learning science. This, coupled with the fact that improvements in science are very recent, means that pupils have a lot of work to do to develop a strong understanding of some important scientific principles.

The early years leader and teacher work well together to ensure good links are made between the morning, Kodesh, and the afternoon curriculum. Planning for the early years children and Year 1 pupils is detailed. These pupils learn well. Leaders have not ensured that the teachers of pupils in Years 2 to 6 build on this strong early learning. Children in the early years do not access planned learning in the outside environment. Staff interactions, which are excellent inside, are purely supervisory outside. Therefore, a significant amount of learning time for these children is lost each week.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lead has planned a curriculum that makes links to the Kodesh curriculum. In Kodesh and PSHE lessons, pupils learn about relationships, laws and moral values. Pupils enjoy recalling visits such as to Harewood House and the visitors they have in school, for example the police and fire brigade. Staff model politeness and kindness, which pupils mirror. Pupils learn about democracy and tolerance. During the inspection, pupils were developing their confidence when practising for a performance. Pupils spoke clearly with intonation and confidence, clearly remembering the text. However, the personal development curriculum requires further development to ensure pupils have opportunities to strengthen their understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity.

All staff spoke highly of the support they receive from leaders. More recently, staff have attended more training events which are supporting them to ensure that the quality of care and education pupils receive continues to improve. Governors and the proprietor play an active role in school life. They have put together an action plan of what needs to be done to improve. The recent and sudden loss of a member of staff has slowed the pace of improvement of this small staff team.

Some other previously unmet standards are now met. Improvements to the school building and documentation and processes are now resolved. Regular reports on safeguarding, curriculum and finance mean that the proprietor and governors have an overview of all aspects of school life. Additionally, leaders have taken action to improve fire safety and management of complaints.

In the past, pupils used to be separated according to their sex when attending lessons relating to Jewish law. Leaders and governors have taken steps to stop this from happening. While pupil numbers are low, all pupils who study Jewish law are taught together. They learn the same content now. Furthermore, leaders and governors have plans in place to ensure policies and procedures set out that separation will not happen in the future. Policies linked to equality and separation

that were viewed during the additional evidence-gathering visit were appropriate and highlight the importance leaders and governors place on equality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A new compliance officer is precise in ensuring information, such as recruitment and admissions documentation, is accurate and meets all government requirements. A new designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is ensuring that both they and all staff have regular training. They are aware of issues pupils and staff may come across. There is an ethos of 'it could happen here'. The DSL is vigilant and keeps records of every incident, including behaviours and minor sanctions. Expectations are high, and most incidents and behaviours are relatively minor. Some of the safeguarding records are not as detailed and child focused as they could be.

Leaders care greatly for the mental health of pupils and staff. Following the recent bereavement of a member of staff, all staff and pupils were given access to counselling. Pupils know they can turn to someone if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's previous practice of separating pupils according to their sex during some lessons was not compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and amounted to unlawful discrimination. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken steps to improve this issue. Girls and boys are now taught the same curriculum content in Jewish law lessons. Leaders have demonstrated that they have taken steps to address the separation. Leaders and the proprietor need to embed new approaches to the teaching of Jewish law, ensuring that their practices consistently comply with the Equality Act 2010 and do not amount to unlawful discrimination.
- Leaders are still developing the curriculum in some subjects. Planning in these subjects does not clearly show the depth and clarity needed to ensure that teachers know what they should teach. Plans do not build on prior learning, nor do they make explicit the key knowledge and skills pupils should remember. Consequently, teachers struggle to assess what pupils know. They do not recap well on prior learning, and pupils lack breadth and knowledge in some subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum plans in all subjects are coherent and clearly identify steps of important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know.
- The early years team have detailed curriculum plans in place. Consequently, younger children quickly learn a broad and rich curriculum which they remember well. Leaders have not ensured that these building blocks of learning are built upon as pupils move through the school. Therefore, valuable learning is lost. Leaders need to ensure that there are clear links between what is taught in early years and Year 1 with what is taught in the rest of the school.

- The DSL is relatively new to post and is developing a system to record all inappropriate behaviours and/or safeguarding concerns. Records are few, as incidents are rare and pupils' behaviour is good. However, safeguarding records do not include enough detail, for example clear and accurate time logs. They do not focus enough on the impact on the pupil and what actions were taken to evaluate or alleviate this impact. This means that incidents could continue or could be missed. The DSL needs to ensure that all safeguarding records include all relevant information.
- Children in the early years do not receive the same level of interaction with adults when learning outside. This means that opportunities for learning are missed. Leaders need to ensure that the quality of pupils' learning inside is replicated when pupils are outside.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	108110
DfE registration number	383/6099
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10212932
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	5
Proprietor	Ethel Refson
Headteacher	Chaim Bell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,000
Telephone number	01132 697709
Website	www.leedsmenorahschool.org
Email address	office@leedsmenorahschool.org
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2021

Information about this school

- The school received its last full standard inspection in January 2019 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate. Since that inspection, the school has had two progress monitoring inspections in February 2020 and May 2021 where standards remained unmet. An emergency inspection in July 2021 noted that some standards remained unmet. Two action plans were written by the school to note how they would meet the remaining unmet standards. Both action plans were deemed to be unacceptable in August 2019 and January 2021.
- The school accepts girls and boys from the Jewish faith from the ages of three to 11 years. The proprietor changed the registration age from 16 to 11 years in 2021.
- Year 1 pupils are taught alongside pupils in the early years. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in Years 4 and 6.
- Pupils spend approximately 15 hours a week studying the Kodesh curriculum and approximately 10 hours studying national curriculum subjects.
- The school does not use any alternative education provisions or run any after-school childcare.
- During the first visit, the school operated a practice of separation by sex. Boys and girls studied different aspects of Jewish law separately for four hours each week. This practice amounts to discrimination. When we returned to gather additional evidence, leaders had taken steps to remedy the discrimination as set out in the report.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- A progress monitoring inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) in addition to the standard inspection to consider previously unmet standards.
- The inspection was conducted following 30 minutes' notice given to the school on advice from the DfE.

- The inspection was considered to be incomplete after the first inspection visit. One of His Majesty’s Inspectors returned on 29 September 2022 to gather additional evidence about separation and pupils’ personal development.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the chair of governors throughout the inspection. They also met with subject leads, the early years lead, the special educational needs coordinator, the proprietor and governors.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with an external consultant acting as a mentor to the school’s leaders.
- No survey responses were received from staff or pupils. Staff’s and pupils’ views were gathered through discussion throughout the inspection. Parents’ responses to the confidential Ofsted Parent View survey were considered.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, personal, social and health education and mathematics. Planning and pupils’ work were also considered in art, history and science.
- Inspectors visited the early years and Year 1 classroom and considered planning for this age group throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector toured the premises with the chair of governors to check standards relating to the school premises.
- Inspectors also held meetings, considered documentation and spoke to pupils and staff to evaluate the safeguarding culture in the school.

The school’s progress in meeting previously failed standards

During the inspection we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous emergency inspection on 7 July 2021.

The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school now meets the previously failed standards.**

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Keefe	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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