

# Hasmonean High School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	101366
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	307668
Inspection dates	9 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mr Barry Jones

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

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Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1012
Sixth form	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Conway
Headteacher	Mr D Fuller
Date of previous school inspection	07 September 2004
School address	Holden Hill Road Hendon London NW4 1NA
Telephone number	020 8203 1411
Fax number	020 8202 4526

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement in the sixth form
- the quality of tracking of student's progress and how effectively it is used by teachers and by senior managers
- how effectively the school uses its specialist status to drive whole-school improvement
- leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, external monitoring, observations of teaching and the work produced by pupils. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with students, governors, and staff contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Boys and girls are taught separately on two sites which are one and a half miles apart. The school is over-subscribed. Pupils come from orthodox Jewish families in a large catchment area across North London. Approximately a quarter of the school day is allocated to Jewish studies. There is an extended day to make time for this extra provision. Pupils come from more advantaged backgrounds than in most schools but the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Most pupils have White backgrounds although only half are White British. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school is a specialist Business and Enterprise College.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hasmonean is a good school with many outstanding features. A distinctive feature is the very good balance between religious and secular studies. A strong religious ethos and supportive community underpin its success. Many aspects of the work with 11 to 16 year olds are outstanding. Very strong leadership has ensured that academic standards are exceptionally high at GCSE level and consistently well above average at GCE advanced level. Most parents are very appreciative of its efforts. As one parent wrote, 'Our children are happy in a supportive, educationally challenging and safe environment.' A significant minority of parents feel that the school could do even better. This reflects the high expectations for the school. The school is not allowed to rest on its laurels by parents, students or the ever-watchful governing body.

Students join the school with attainment that is above average. By the end of Year 11 standards have risen considerably and are consistently and exceptionally high in the GCSE examinations. The percentage of students gaining five or more good passes, including English and mathematics, has improved each year and in 2007 was almost double the national average. This represents excellent progress from their starting points. For the last three years, the school has been in the top 5% nationally for the progress made by students from Year 7 to 11. The good, and sometimes outstanding teaching, makes a significant contribution to students' high achievement. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan their lessons well. Students play their full part too. They come to school ready to learn and are eager to contribute to lessons. Their exemplary behaviour means that lessons are not disrupted and can be conducted at a good pace and in a positive climate.

There are other factors which, when added to the good teaching, means that students' achievement is excellent. The school, students and external consultants all identify the benefits for other subjects that derive from the Jewish studies programme. As one student said, 'It helps me to think things out clearly and the importance of leading a good life and pursuing a career'. Parents attach a high priority to education and encourage and support their children. The standards are maintained at a high level by the vigilance of the senior managers and very effective use of data to identify and correct dips in performance by individual students. There are very robust procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching. This has helped the school to navigate very successfully a period of difficulty in appointing some key staff. The school's own monitoring shows that standards of teaching have improved in recent years.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Consequently, students feel very safe and very much enjoy school. This is shown by their excellent attendance and the very high numbers who continue into the sixth form. Students have a good understanding of healthy-living issues. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with very effectively. The school has a 'zero tolerance' policy. This is reinforced well through assemblies and the personal and social education programme. Students have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and relationships in the school are harmonious. An outstanding feature is the way older students support younger ones. They organise activities for them within the school and the wider community. Students raise considerable sums for charities, volunteer to help with several organisations in the community, and older students also take on youth leadership roles. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

The school's specialism fits well with the entrepreneurial spirit that it aims to foster and nurture. Students speak enthusiastically about 'capital venture' and business-related activities. The school is using its specialist status to broaden its good curriculum further. It is seeking to meet the needs of its lower attaining students as outstandingly well as it does for its more able students. As a result, there are more vocational courses on offer but the initiative is only partly successful. There has been limited take up for some of the courses. For instance, the school has not overcome a resistance to information technology in the girls' school and it missed its targets for increasing participation. Some of the targets for attainment in the specialist subjects have also been missed. The school consistently meets other very challenging targets.

The school has strengthened the senior leadership and has successfully devoted considerable resources to improving the leadership and management at all levels. There is a strong culture of accountability and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses very well. Together with its impressive track record this means that capacity to improve further is excellent.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is a thriving community which is growing in popularity. This reflects the high regard that students have for their school. It makes best use of its limited accommodation. However, the rapid growth over recent years means there is no private study area in the boys' school. Students make good progress as a result of the good teaching and good support they receive. Many students make excellent progress and so A level results are well above average overall. However, there is more variation in performance between subjects than at GCSE level. The school is taking rigorous action to remedy this inconsistency. It has also correctly identified that students' progress in Year 12 for AS courses does not always reach the high rate demanded by the school. Progress accelerates in Year 13 because of the introduction of rigorous tracking procedures allied to effective support and challenge. The academic curriculum is broad and meets the needs of the students well. Progression rates to University are impressive. The specialist status has stimulated the introduction of more vocational courses. This is partly successful but some courses that are offered do not attract sufficient numbers in one of the schools. There is sharing of staff between the two schools but not courses because of religious considerations. This means that a few students cannot study subjects they choose initially. Nevertheless, the sixth form is managed well and capacity to improve further is good.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school derives maximum benefit from its specialist college status and meets the targets it identifies for this initiative.

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**Annex A**

# Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

## Achievement and standards

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

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Annex B



## Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

22 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Hasmonean High School, London, NW4 1NA

Thank you for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. You told us how much you enjoy life at school. You spoke with pride about your school. In discussions with us, you frequently referred to the 'family' and the strong supportive community. You feel safe in this secure environment. We did not inspect Jewish Studies. However, you were very clear that you learned skills on this course that enable you to do better in other subjects too. In particular, you say the course makes you think things out well. You tell us that your school is unique in the way it expertly combines Jewish and secular studies.

We think that Hasmonean is a good school with many outstanding features. These are some of the things we liked best.

- You make excellent progress in your work in Years 7 to 11 and attain exceptionally high standards in the GCSE examinations.
- There is a very strong religious ethos that permeates everything the school does.
- The sixth form is a thriving community and A level results are well above average.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You develop into very mature, considerate young people.
- You have good teachers who look after you very well.
- The school is very well led.
- The school is seeking to build on its specialist status to provide more vocational courses to widen your choice.

The school is not complacent. The governors and your parents contribute to keeping the school on its toes so that it is always striving for excellence. We have asked the school to do one more thing in order to continue to improve.

- Make maximum benefit of the school's specialist status and ensure that it meets the targets it sets for itself in this venture.

Yours faithfully,

Barry Jones  
Lead Inspector