

Hasmonean High School

Holders Hill Road, Hendon, London, NW4 1NA

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The senior leaders' vision of 'balancing the religious with the secular and having respect and desire for excellence in both' is the cornerstone of the school's success. Students have a genuine hunger to excel in all areas of their life at Hasmonean.
- The proportion of students who gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including mathematics and English considerably exceeds the national average.
- Students make outstanding progress in their learning, including those in the sixth form.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Their advanced spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is supported by the strong curriculum, especially Jewish studies.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging work for students.
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The compassionate and visionary executive headteacher successfully leads a senior team which is relentless in the pursuit of excellence.
- Leaders use highly effective methods to improve teaching which have resulted in a large increase in the number of outstanding lessons.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- Forty-two lessons and 42 teachers were observed.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, parents and carers and staff. Telephone discussions were held with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 84 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View in planning the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at achievement data, the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, records of lesson observations, case studies of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and attendance data. Inspectors also scrutinised 50 staff questionnaires.
- A section 48 inspection of religious education took place at the same time as this section 5 inspection.

Inspection team

Samantha Morgan Price, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Roger Garratt	Additional inspector
Patricia MacLachlan	Additional inspector
Kevin Morris	Additional inspector

Information about this school

- This larger-than-average-sized school is split into two sites where boys and girls are taught separately. The sites are one and a half miles apart. Students come from orthodox Jewish families living mainly in North London.
- The school converted to a stand-alone academy in October 2011.
- Approximately a third of the school day is assigned to Jewish studies. The school allows for this by extending the school day.
- Most students are from White backgrounds; half are White British.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is much lower than average.
- The proportions of disabled students, those with special educational needs, those supported by school action and those who have a statement of special educational needs, are all lower than average.
- Students do not attend alternative, off-site courses.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise further the proportion of outstanding lessons by encouraging students to work independently and ensuring that teachers:
 - ask challenging questions that always build upon and broaden students' learning
 - give students clear guidance on how to improve their performance when they mark their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are above average and attain high standards in their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. They reach similarly high standards in the sixth form. Over 80% of students attained five GCSE at grades A* to C including English and mathematics in 2012. This is much higher than the national average and is an improvement on 2011.
- The targeted support and detailed monitoring of students contribute extremely well to their success, especially for those most at risk of not reaching their targets.
- The proportion of students gaining A* to A grades at GCSE has increased considerably. Over half the students gained the English Baccalaureate. The standards achieved on A-level courses also rose in 2012. Over three quarters of A-level students achieved A* to B grades; this is significantly above the national average.
- The average point scores for the very few students who are eligible for the pupil premium are average. The school is closing the gap extremely well between these students and others.
- Students who are not doing so well in mathematics and English are being entered early for GCSE examinations in these subjects for the first time this academic year. The school wants to give these students more opportunities to improve their grades. Almost all students make outstanding progress. In the past, the small groups of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are disabled, or who have special educational needs, did not make the same exemplary progress as others. Because of highly effective support, all these groups are making at least good progress and many are making outstanding progress in their learning. The school is closing the gap for these groups extremely well.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding. This is because teachers plan well and set targets which stretch and challenge students.
- Students learn at a good pace and their experience in lessons is complemented well by excellent workshops and learning outside the classroom.
- Teachers set tasks and activities that skilfully develop students' critical thinking. Teachers' precise, complex questions help students to develop their skills of debate and oracy.
- Students are encouraged to work independently. Occasionally, their independence is inhibited when teachers do not give students sufficient opportunity to develop their work or set questions that allow them to progress unaided.
- Students are comfortable making appropriate challenges to their teachers to deepen their own understanding. Excellent examples were seen where students' high-level questions changed the direction of the lesson and it was common to hear students say, 'I know what I am expected to achieve but it is not good enough for me!'
- The rich curriculum has suitable breadth at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Jewish studies integrates personal, social and health education extremely well and is also a strong platform for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge ensures that students obtain the most up-to-date view of their subjects and can relate it to what is happening in the wider world.
- The school's reading, writing, communication and mathematics initiative works well. Teachers are increasing the opportunities for students to develop their literacy and numeracy in their subjects.
- High-quality marking in some subjects, including English, provides excellent guidance to students

on how to improve their performance. However, this good practice is not universally applied across the school or even, sometimes, within subjects. Some comments are too brief and do not give students an adequate understanding of how to improve their work.

- Teaching assistants work well with students and support their progress in lessons effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The main reason why students' behaviour is exemplary is their thirst for knowledge and their drive for individual excellence. There is a strong desire and willingness to learn. Students hold staff in high regard and are extremely courteous to and respectful of each other.
- They attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. They act responsibly and take on leadership roles including those where older students teach and mentor at lunchtimes.
- Students say they feel safe and well supported by staff. The responses from Parent View and from staff support this.
- Bullying is rare and the very few occurrences are dealt with effectively. The level of exclusions is very low.
- Procedures to keep students safe and promote their welfare meet statutory requirements. The school has been successful in supporting disabled students to achieve very well by, for example, adapting the layout of the school to accommodate students with complex physical needs.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Senior leaders' high expectations have resulted in a culture where staff continuously ask, 'How can we do better?' Staff are supportive of the school leadership team and are of the view that the school is extremely well led and managed.
- Senior leaders keep themselves well informed of students' attainment by effectively analysing the available data. This enables them to act quickly to address areas of concern or to target any students at risk of underachieving. The school promotes equality of opportunity excellently; the few students who were not achieving as well as others are now doing much better than they did last year.
- Senior leaders know the school very well. Actions to improve the school's provision are successful because they are based on their extremely accurate self-evaluation.
- This attention to detail is illustrated well in the improvements to teaching. Leaders provide a strong network of support that includes the close monitoring of weaker teachers followed by action planning, the sharing of the best practice and mentoring and peer support where necessary. These measures have enabled the school to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Performance management makes a positive difference to the quality of teaching. Leaders and governors will not let staff progress through salary scales if their performance does not meet high expectations. There is strong mentoring and effective support for new managers.
- The ever-evolving curriculum is founded on Jewish studies. There are excellent examples where the curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of small groups and individuals. There are a few students who have elected to join the school even though their complex needs could have been better addressed in special schools. Their curriculum is appropriate, challenging and is helping them to achieve high standards.
- Good initial advice and guidance in Years 8, 11 and 13 mean that students are well informed of the options available to them. There are suitable vocational courses for students wanting to take less academic programmes; new courses recently introduced include photography.

- Parents and carers say that the senior leadership team is highly visible and approachable. Leaders respond quickly to parental concerns when regular support has not resolved a problem and listen to parents' and carers' concerns. The school has made course adjustments in response to parental requests.
- Senior leaders have faced significant financial challenges when improving the boys' site. The site is very restrictive and was not built for such large numbers of students. However, this has not affected the quality of the education that the boys receive.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know about the school's priorities and make suitable challenges to the work of the school's leaders. For example, they have suggested revisions to the students' admission procedures. Governors are visible and their email addresses are publicly available. There is an awareness of how effectively the funding for the pupil premium is being spent and of the benefits for those students who are eligible. Governors know that attainment for this group of students is rising. However, governors do not question whether senior leaders have made the best decisions on how to deploy the pupil premium funds or whether there are alternative ways of using these resources.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137539
Inspection number	403705

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,012
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Moshe Adler
Headteacher	Rabbi David Meyer
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	020 8203 4294
Fax number	020 8202 4256
Email address	email@hasmonean.co.uk

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