

# Vishnitz Girls School

49 Amhurst Park, London N16 5DL

**Inspection date**

10 May 2017

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 2(1) and 2(1)(a)*

- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that a suitable curriculum policy and schemes of work meet requirements. They cover all the required areas of learning for the proposed increase in age range, from three to eight years to three to 12 years. However, schemes do not pay enough regard to developing respect and tolerance for those who may have protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equality Act.
- The requirements for this paragraph are not met.

#### *Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(d)(ii)*

- The first progress monitoring inspection in October 2016 identified that the schemes of work for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education did not meet requirements. The schemes did not pay enough regard to developing respect and tolerance for those who may have protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equality Act.
- In the action plan, the proprietor stated that the PSHE curriculum policy and schemes of work would be revised. Additional time (two hours per week) would be allocated for the teaching of the PSHE curriculum. An external consultant and a compliance officer had been appointed to advise in this area. However, the plan only mentioned three out of the nine protected characteristics.
- Since the inspection in October 2016, leaders have revised the PSHE curriculum policy and schemes of work. Despite this revision, during the visit leaders were not able to show that pupils are taught explicitly about issues such as sexual orientation. This restricts pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and does not promote equality of opportunity in ways that take account of differing lifestyles.
- The requirements for this paragraph are not met.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4*

- Evidence gathered from pupils' books and from the school's assessment information indicates that pupils make good progress. They are well motivated, have positive attitudes to learning and are confident in thinking for themselves.
- Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies to plan and provide interesting activities for pupils of different ability levels. These tasks engage them well in their learning.
- Helpful assessment information is available for teachers. They draw on it to plan activities at the right level for their pupils to succeed. Leaders are able to show convincing evidence that teachers plan interesting activities using information about pupils' earlier attainment. The school's assessment framework also enables staff to make comparisons between their pupils' achievement and the results of national tests.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and high-quality classroom resources inspire pupils with enthusiasm for learning and to achieve well. Staff apply the school's behaviour strategies consistently and to good effect, helping pupils to behave well and to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Pupils are not taught explicitly about issues such as sexual orientation. This restricts pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and does not promote equality of opportunity in ways that take account of differing lifestyles. As a result, pupils are not able to gain a full understanding of fundamental British values.
- The requirements for this paragraph are not met.
- Not all the requirements for this part are met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

*Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b) and 5(b)(vi)*

- At the time of the first monitoring inspection in October 2016, leaders had not ensured that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils had due regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act. At the time, the proprietor and leaders agreed that the school's policy on the protected characteristics meant that the school could not meet these standards.
- The school's approach means that pupils are shielded from learning about certain differences between people, such as sexual orientation. The school's culture is, however, clearly focused on teaching pupils to respect everybody, regardless of beliefs and lifestyle. Leaders and proprietors recognise the requirement to teach about the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. However, they acknowledge that they do not teach pupils about all the protected characteristics, particularly those relating to gender re-assignment and sexual orientation. This means that pupils have a limited understanding of the different lifestyles and partnerships that individuals may choose in present-day society.
- The requirements for this paragraph are not met.
- Not all the requirements for this part are met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- The first monitoring inspection identified that pre-employment checks on staff were incomplete and that the required staff safeguarding training had not taken place. Leaders lacked sufficient knowledge and understanding of the latest statutory guidance and they did not monitor the implementation of policies relating to the safety of pupils robustly enough.
- The action plan stated that the compliance officer would check that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, including testing the knowledge of staff. Evidence was provided that staff have been registered to receive suitable safeguarding training and that senior leaders completed the NSPCC safer recruitment training in February 2017.
- Since October 2016, all staff have undertaken local authority safeguarding training. In addition, the two headteachers have completed safer recruitment training. Leaders use a range of strategies to check the staff's understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- The requirements for this paragraph are met.

#### *Paragraphs 11, 12, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The October 2016 inspection found that leaders had not ensured that the written health and safety and risk assessment policies were implemented effectively. Leaders did not ensure that identified risks were followed up swiftly. In addition, risk assessments did not reflect the range of risks identified by the school's health and safety policy.
- The action plan indicated that the compliance officer would ensure that the health and safety policy and risk assessment procedures were compliant. Logs would be kept to record how and when actions are completed to reduce risk. Fire safety and first aid training had been arranged.
- Since October 2016, health and safety and risk assessment procedures have been strengthened and are now compliant. The school has a clear and appropriate written risk assessment policy. Risk assessments relating to the premises, individual pupils and educational trips all show that appropriate actions are taken to reduce risks and help to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. Suitably detailed logs are kept which report clearly when actions are completed.
- Fire safety and first aid training took place last term. Leaders have ensured that the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. All checks, including those for the fire alarm system, fire safety equipment and emergency lighting, meet requirements. On the day of the inspection, a fire drill took place, in which pupils were safely evacuated from the main school building in Amhurst Park within three minutes of the alarm sounding.
- The school's comprehensive and effective safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016), and 'Working together to safeguard children' (March 2015). The school does not have a website but this policy and all others are available on request from the school's office.

- The proprietor and leaders have created a strong safeguarding ethos in the school. They take safeguarding very seriously and engage well with parents and outside agencies to help keep pupils safe. All staff have completed the required safeguarding training, including on the 'Prevent' duty.
- The requirements for this paragraph are met.
- All the requirements for this part are met.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

##### *Paragraph 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(b), 21(1), 21(3) and 21(3)(b)*

- In October 2016, the progress monitoring inspection found there were weaknesses in the school's recruitment procedures. Leaders were not always carrying out the necessary prohibition checks of applicants' names against the list of individuals barred from working in schools before new staff took up their appointments.
- A safer recruitment checklist was submitted with the action plan, which showed that all the required recruitment checks have been implemented.
- Checks on prohibition from working in schools are now undertaken as a matter of routine for all staff. Scrutiny of the single central record of recruitment checks shows that all the required checks have been completed and now meet statutory requirements.
- The requirements for this paragraph are now met.
- All the requirements for this part are met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

##### *Paragraph 24, 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b) and 24(2)*

- The progress monitoring inspection in October 2016 identified that the medical rooms on the two sites did not include suitable washing facilities or allow for privacy.
- Leaders have successfully created and resourced appropriate medical room facilities on both sites, as proposed in their action plan. These areas are each equipped with a bed, suitable medical supplies and a water supply. They are located next to the pupils' toilets.
- The requirements for this paragraph are now met.

##### *Paragraph 25*

- In October 2016, the first progress monitoring inspection found that the maintenance of the school premises was poor and put at risk the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Risks, including those relating to the storage of hazardous chemicals, were not managed effectively.
- The action plan stated that actions to rectify these shortcomings would be completed by November 2016.
- Since October 2016, the maintenance of the school's premises has been improved to a high standard. Hazardous chemicals are now stored in a locked cupboard that is clearly labelled with the required hazard sign. Classrooms are clean and tidy and provide an

attractive learning environment.

- The requirements for this paragraph are now met.

*Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c) and 28(2)(b)*

- The inspection in October 2016 found that drinking water facilities around the school were not correctly labelled.
- The action plan stated that actions to rectify these shortcomings would be completed by November 2016.
- Since October 2016, suitable drinking water facilities, correctly labelled, are available around the school. In addition, bottled water is available in every classroom.
- The requirements for this paragraph are now met.
- All the requirements for this part are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor and senior leaders have made good progress towards meeting the unmet independent school standards. They have appointed staff and consultants to help them make the improvements required to meet more of the independent school standards.
- Leaders, including the proprietor, have successfully addressed many issues relating to the quality of education provided, pupils' welfare, health and safety, recruitment checks on the suitability of staff and the premises.
- Staff in leadership posts have the necessary skills and knowledge and an increasingly good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in addressing the remaining unmet parts of the standards identified at the last inspection in October 2016. Nevertheless, there is still some work to be done to ensure that all the requirements of the independent school standards are met.
- The requirements of this paragraph remain unmet.
- The school does not meet the requirements for this part.
- The inspectors were asked to consider the school's proposal to extend the age range and increase the number of pupils on roll. The required schemes of work and suitable resources have been prepared to reflect the proposed increase in the age range and number of pupils, and the building has the capacity to accommodate such an expansion. However, this inspection does not recommend the proposed extension in the age range from three to eight years to three to 12 years, or a rise in the number of pupils on roll from 124 to 300. This is because the school does not yet meet all the independent school standards. The inspectors found that the number on roll is over the agreed limit of 124 pupils. This includes pupils who are older than the school's agreed registration upper age limit of eight.

## Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

- The Department for Education (DfE) asked inspectors to check the school's compliance with the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.
- This inspection found that the school complies fully with all the requirements of sections 1, 2 and 3 of the early years foundation stage framework.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection*

- Ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work is drawn up and implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1) and 2(1)(a)).
- Ensure that the written policy, plans and schemes of work do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (paragraph 2(1)(b)(ii)).
- Ensure that the personal, social, health and economic education encourages respect for other people, paying regard to those who may have protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equality Act (paragraph 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(d)(ii)).
- Ensure that teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (paragraph 3, 3(i)).
- Ensure that teaching does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act (paragraph 3, 3(j)).
- Ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school encourages respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act (paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), and 5(b)(vi)).
- Ensure that the persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge relevant to their role, and fulfil these responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of pupils so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), and 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

## **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

- Ensure that teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3, 3(a)).
- Ensure that teaching fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 3, 3(b)).
- Ensure that teaching involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraph 3, 3(c)).
- Ensure that teaching shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3, 3(d)).
- Ensure that teaching demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraph 3, 3(e)).
- Ensure that teaching utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (paragraph 3, 3(f)).
- Ensure that teaching demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3, 3(g)).
- Ensure that teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3, 3(h)).
- Ensure that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).
- Ensure that the proprietor makes arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- Ensure that the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12)).
- Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- Ensure that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act. Alternatively, any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction (paragraph 18(1), 18(2) and 18(2)(b)).
- Ensure that the proprietor keeps a single central register, which shows that the school has undertaken the relevant recruitment and identity checks, including those of any disqualification, prohibition or restriction (paragraph 21(1), 21(3) and

21(3)(b)).

- Ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils, and the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 24, 24(1), 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(b)).
- Ensure that accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided that it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) (paragraph 24(2)).
- Ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- Ensure that suitable drinking water facilities are provided, are clearly labelled and are in a separate area from the toilet facilities (paragraph 28, 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2) and 28(2)(b)).

## School details

Unique reference number	138516
DfE registration number	204/6006
Inspection number	10035531

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

Type of school	Orthodox Jewish day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Steiner
Chair	Rabbi Schneebalg
Headteachers	Leah Weiss and Rachel Fogel
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,200
Telephone number	020 8800 0490
Website	No website
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@vishnitzgirlsschool.co.uk">head@vishnitzgirlsschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	3–4 July 2013

## Information about this school

- Vishnitz Girls' School is an Orthodox Jewish independent day school that is currently registered to accept up to 124 girls between the ages of three and eight years. The school is located in Stamford Hill, north-east London. It was registered in 2009 as an early years setting and registered as a primary school in 2012.
- Most girls speak Yiddish as their first language but they are also very familiar with English. Kodesh (Jewish studies) is taught in Yiddish. Chol (secular studies) is taught in English. In the early years, girls are taught through a combination of English and Yiddish.
- The school is open five days a week, from Monday to Friday, with half the time being devoted to the teaching of Kodesh studies.

- The school provides for early years children at 85 Lordship Road, London N16 0QY, and for primary-aged pupils at 49 Amhurst Park, London N16 5DL.
- At the time of the last standard inspection in July 2013, the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good. An emergency inspection took place in February 2016, following safeguarding concerns. The emergency inspection found that a number of independent school standards were unmet. In October 2016, the first monitoring inspection found that several independent school standards remained unmet. This is the second progress monitoring inspection to check whether the school meets all the independent school standards.
- At the time of the first progress monitoring inspection in October 2016, the number of pupils on roll exceeded the school's registered capacity. The age range for pupils attending also exceeded the school's registration for three- to eight-year-olds.
- Since the last full inspection in 2013, the school has acquired new premises and has admitted more pupils. There are currently 212 girls on roll, whose ages range from three to 11. There are 70 children in the early years provision. All children in the early years receive government funding and attend full time.
- Pupils older than the school's agreed registration age of eight are currently being educated there and leaders have exceeded the school's registered capacity of 124 pupils.
- Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View).
- The school does not make use of any off-site training for older pupils.
- The school does not have a website but all the required policies are available from the school office upon request.
- The school's vision is 'to deliver a high-class education, that is firmly based on the principles of the Torah and combined with a strong Chol curriculum to enable all pupils to become productive and upstanding citizens.'

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- This second progress monitoring inspection focused on the school's progress in meeting particular requirements in Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the independent school standards. It also checked standards 1, 2 and 3 of the statutory requirements for the early years.
- The DfE wrote to the school on 20 April 2017 to confirm that the action plan submitted on 14 February 2017 had not been approved.
- The inspectors were also asked to consider the school's proposed increase in age range from three to eight years to three to 12 years and an increase in the number on roll from 124 to 300.
- The inspectors held discussions with the proprietor, two headteachers and senior leaders. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation related to the independent school standards, including teaching plans and schemes of work. Accompanied by senior leaders, they made 11 visits to classrooms to observe learning on both sites. The inspectors also reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding and child protection.

## Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Milan Stevanovic	Ofsted Inspector

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