

Yavneh College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134985
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	316299
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Phillips HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	228
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcolm Gordon
Headteacher	Dr Dena Coleman
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Hillside Avenue Borehamwood WD6 1HL
Telephone number	0208 736 5580
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Age group	11–13
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. An independent inspection, *Pikuach*, under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was carried out at the same time as this Section 5 inspection.

Description of the school

Yavneh College is a modern-Orthodox Jewish voluntary-aided secondary school located in Borehamwood. It opened in 2006. Most, but not all, students join the school from Jewish primary schools. Very few students do not have English as their first language. The majority come from homes where there is a good tradition of education with parents from professional or business backgrounds. The numbers of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of students who find learning difficult is average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need. Most of these statements are for moderate learning difficulties, physical difficulties, or for autistic spectrum disorders.

Yavneh College holds the Sportsmark award; it has designated specialist status in business and enterprise, commencing officially in September 2008. A sixth form is also due to open in September 2008; the projected roll of the school when it is at full capacity is 1,000 students from ages 11–18.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In the five terms since it opened to students, Yavneh College has already become a good school with outstanding features. This rapid progress, together with the accurate self-evaluation made by the school and the outstanding personal development of the young people themselves, including exemplary behaviour, and strong moral and spiritual awareness, indicate that the school has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Standards of work are exceptionally high, maintaining the high standards that students achieved in their primary schools. The school told inspectors that students are making good progress overall and the inspection evidence confirms this to be the case. Teaching is good. Excellent relationships in most lessons help students to enjoy learning. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, although in some lessons teaching is too instructional and does not provide enough time or space for students to enquire or think creatively for themselves. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is outstanding because it meets all statutory requirements and the needs of the students and their communities exceptionally well. It is complemented by an innovative and varied range of enrichment activities. The school recognises that the next challenge is to provide an equally excellent curriculum for Key Stage 4 and the sixth form to meet the different needs of older students. Scrupulous attention to safeguarding matters underpins excellent care, guidance and support. The small size of the school at present allows all staff to know every student extremely well, and academic progress is monitored thoroughly. Students know how well they are doing and have clear targets to meet. Although there is not a specialist special needs coordinator at present, the assistant headteacher has worked extremely hard to create an effective support system for students who require additional help that is particularly appreciated by their parents.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and her deputy headteacher have brought vision and a wealth of experience that has been essential to the secure foundation of the school, complemented by an enthusiastic and able team of middle managers. Exemplary forward planning by the school's founders and governors is a key reason for the efficient construction of the splendid new buildings and the school's financial security. Understandably though, governors have yet to realise their role fully in holding the school's performance to account and this is now an area for their development. Everyone at the school – students, staff, and governors – has high ambitions for Yavneh College. Parents, too, have exceptionally high expectations, and the overwhelming majority are very content with the school. Writing to inspectors, the parent of a Year 8 student reflected the views of many, saying: 'My daughter loves going to school. She enjoys all parts of school life. The head and teachers have developed a fantastic relationship with the children and their families. I hope the school can maintain the high standards they have set so far.' The school recognises the importance of translating the good progress that students make in lessons into outstanding test results, and is looking forward to the first external examinations in 2009. As importantly, the school recognises the challenge of maintaining the excellent levels of personal care and support as the school grows so that standards of all students' personal development also remain high. Evidence from this inspection suggests that the school is well placed to meet these challenges.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all students, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), make outstanding progress in their national test results and other aspects of their learning in lessons, particularly their skills of enquiry and creative thinking.
- Provide a 14-19 curriculum that builds on the outstanding programme of study in Key Stage 3 and meets the particular needs of older students.
- Ensure that, as the school grows in size, all students continue to enjoy a high level of personal care, guidance and support and continue to make outstanding progress in their personal development and well-being.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Test results from feeder primary schools together with the school's own assessments show that students join Yavneh in Year 7 with standards that are exceptionally high, particularly in literacy skills. Standards of work seen in lessons and work samples during the inspection showed that these standards are maintained not only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but also in other areas, for example, in high-quality art work and singing.

The school's self-evaluation judged that, in the absence of externally validated test or examination results and value-added data, students in both Years 7 and 8 are making good progress. The good progress observed in lessons during the inspection confirmed this, together with monitoring records that show students to be on track to meet their appropriately challenging targets. Whilst they still make generally good progress, students with LDD are not so consistently well on track for their targets as other students. Recognising this, the school has put strategies into place to accelerate the progress of these students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of students' development are all outstanding. The school sets a high moral code and students have an extremely clear sense of what is right and wrong. Pupils can name an adult to whom they would go if any personal difficulty arose. Students told inspectors that they feel very safe and have a uniformly high level of respect for each other, despite the wide background and range of religious observance of the families from which they come. Visitors to the school are made to feel exceptionally welcome, and inspectors were treated with great courtesy by students. Bullying is rare, but if it happens, students say it is dealt with speedily and effectively. No racist incidents have been reported since the school opened. Students have an excellent understanding of, and show good regard for, adopting a healthy lifestyle by taking part in sporting activities in and out of school and by choosing to eat and drink healthily. Behaviour in class and around the school is almost always exemplary.

Students show high levels of responsibility. School council members take their responsibilities very seriously and show good leadership skills. All students participate in eight hours voluntary community service, which does much to develop their sense of citizenship. There is an exceptionally strong commitment to charity work. Attendance is good, and improving. Exceptionally high standards of basic skills, together with opportunities for all Year 8 students to participate in workplace shadowing and interview practice provide excellent preparation for students' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned well. Clear learning objectives are shared with and understood by students, so that they know what is expected of them. A good range of resources is used particularly well by teachers to engage students in lesson activities. These include an electronic visualiser in every classroom, which allows teachers to share examples of good work with students. Monitoring the progress of pupils is good and this information is used well to plan for individual needs. Assessment is a key priority in the school development plan. Marking is thorough, and students frequently assess each other's work. One student remarked that by doing this, his own work improved as he learned from others.

In a minority of lessons, there is overemphasis on teacher-led activities where students are instructed what to do, step-by-step. This approach does not always help students to develop the skills of enquiry that are important for their future learning. Similarly, teaching assistants are not always deployed in a way that enables students with LDD to develop their independence or integrate with other members of the class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

What makes the Key Stage 3 curriculum outstanding is the way that it meets all statutory requirements as well as the distinctive needs of Yavneh students and the communities that they live in. The teaching staff provides appropriate expertise in all curriculum areas. There is good provision for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. All students learn two modern foreign languages – Modern Hebrew, and French – and there is good provision for both. Four hours a week is allocated appropriately to Jewish studies. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught well. Students are provided with good opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures, and what it means to live in the wider community as well as their own.

In order to provide this curriculum, the school day is extended well. It provides a comprehensive range of enrichment activities that are enjoyed by every student, meeting their high aspirations and those of their parents. Every day, every student opts into a vast range of enrichment activities including the arts, technology, and

political debate. In addition, there are many educational trips and visits. A high number of students receive additional music tuition, and the annual music-theatre production is extremely popular and well-received. These activities contribute enormously to students' excellent personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and well documented. Parents, too, are confident that their children are safe in school. The school promotes healthy living well. Absence is monitored rigorously, complemented by positive promotion of good attendance. Exclusions are exceptionally low. The very rare instances of misbehaviour are dealt with firmly but fairly.

All pupils have targets for English, mathematics and science and in all other curriculum subjects including Modern Hebrew. The majority of pupils know what they need to do to reach their targets, and their progress is tracked efficiently through central systems and through monitoring sheets in students' books. Year 8 pupils attend job shadowing and have mock interviews in preparation for future careers. Individual education plans for students with particular needs, including those who need help to behave appropriately or those with medical difficulties are well thought out. There is particularly good involvement of parents, students, and teaching staff in regularly reviewing and revising these plans.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Senior leaders have very high expectations of their staff, pupils and of themselves. Excellent strategic planning has resulted in the appointment of staff to senior roles well before the next stages of the school's growth. With nearly every teacher having at least one leadership responsibility, there is good leadership and management at all levels. Monitoring of classroom practice is regular, ensuring that there are consistent expectations for lesson planning, assessment and the good progress made by students. All staff lead by example to promote the high quality of care and personal development enjoyed by students. All people who work in the building are valued. School leaders are particularly sensitive to the different backgrounds of staff and students.

The governing body is led exceptionally well. Governors have recently completed a self-evaluation and are already acting upon its findings. They recognise that their main concern has been with establishing the school and that their role in challenging and supporting the headteacher and senior team has not been as rigorous. Nevertheless, excellent use has been made of funds to provide some extremely impressive facilities for teaching and learning. Similarly, there is excellent and efficient strategic deployment of the small but rapidly increasing staff to give outstanding value for money.

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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
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



15 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Yavneh College, Borehamwood, WD6 1HL

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and great courtesy that you gave our team when we visited Yavneh recently. As well as giving us your views and showing us your work, many of you were keen to know what we thought about your school. I am writing to you now with a summary of our findings, and I also encourage you to read the full report that is being sent to your parents. As you know, Yavneh has been open for just under two years, but already it has become a good school with many outstanding features. You are taught well and you are making good progress in your learning. The adults at Yavneh take exceptionally good care of you, and the school's leadership is outstanding. One of the most significant reasons for the school's success is the exemplary behaviour and attitude to learning shown by you, the students. For this, I offer you many congratulations.

Yavneh has made a good start to its life. We believe that it has outstanding capacity to be even better still, and the inspection has come up with three challenges for you to work at over the next few years.

- With the help of your teachers, turn the good progress that you are making in your lessons into outstanding test and examination results. We would also like to see you thinking for yourselves more in some lessons!
- As you move into Key Stage 4, the school is aware that you will need a different curriculum that is equally as exciting and challenging as the excellent curriculum that you are enjoying in Key Stage 3.
- As the school gets bigger, we hope that all students will continue to get the same, excellent quality of care and support that you enjoy now and that student attitudes and behaviour remain equally excellent.

You will have a vitally important part to play in all this, because you can be the role models in 'The Yavneh Way' that sets the example for younger pupils. You have helped to make the school what it is already and, with the excellent support of your parents, you can help the school to become truly outstanding.

With very best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector