

# SACKS MORASHA JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

## PIKUACH INSPECTION REPORT

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Local Authority: Barnet

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates: 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**This inspection of the school was conducted under section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Type of school: Primary

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of children: 4 - 11

Mixed /Single sex: Mixed

Number on roll: 209

Chair of Governors: Zoe Silverman

Headteacher: Rachel Barbanel

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## Inspection team

**Lead Inspector: Esther Colman**

**Team Inspector: Rebbetzen Esther Cohen**

## Introduction

Inspectors make judgements on the following three Key Areas

- The Quality of the Jewish Education
- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development
- The Leadership and Management

The inspection was carried out over two days by two inspectors. The inspectors observed eight lessons or part of lessons from Reception to Year 6. The inspectors also attended *Tefillah* (prayer), *tefillah* assemblies, *bircat hamazon* (Grace after meals). All lessons were observed jointly with the Headteacher or Head of *Kodesh* Jewish Studies. Meetings were held with the school's JS governor, the joint vice-chairs of governors, the senior leadership team, the Head of *Kodesh*, the school's Rabbi who is also the honorary principal, and other key members of staff, as well as meeting many of the pupils and their parents.

## Information about the school

- Sacks Morasha Jewish Primary School is a modern Orthodox school serving the London Jewish community. It promotes a commitment to Orthodox Jewish practice, a love of and commitment to Israel and active involvement within the Jewish community, the British community and the wider world.
- Sacks Morasha opened in September 2008 and became part of JCAT, the first Jewish Multi Academy Trust, in March 2019. Pupils come from a range of family backgrounds in terms of religious knowledge, ethos and practice.
- The school is a one-form entry primary school with a bulge year in its current Year 3. Pupils have 9 *Kodesh* lessons per week and one *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) lesson per week, which is taught as a modern foreign language. 35% of the school week is *Kodesh* including *tefillah*.
- There are no pupils receiving Pupil Premium. There are 6.7% of pupils on the SEND register. Two pupils have an Education Health Care Plan. The school has 7.14% of pupils listed with English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- The current headteacher has been in post since April 2022. The previous headteacher was in position since the school opened and left in January 2022 to head another Jewish primary school. There was an interim Headteacher during the spring term.

## Inspection judgements

## Grade

Overall effectiveness	1
Quality of Jewish Education	1
Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development	1
Leadership and management	1

## What it is like to attend this Jewish school?

- Sacks Morasha Jewish Primary School is an outstanding school where pupils love their Jewish education and are inspired by it. Parents tell us that their children share their knowledge with them on Friday night and sometimes ask such deep questions that the parents cannot answer. Jewish Studies teachers provide a meaningful and challenging learning experience, ably led by their Head of *Kodesh*. Parents shared comments such as "The *Kodesh* staff are really wonderful. They are all approachable and my child has good relationships."
- The quality of Jewish Education is outstanding. The school's Jewish curriculum intent is very strong and provides memorable experiences for all pupils including SEND pupils (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), who are fully supported in their JS lessons through the collaboration between the SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) and the *Kodesh* team. This enables them to fully embrace the learning.
- Developing and implementing tracking systems was one of the areas for development in the previous Pikuach report and indeed Classroom Monitor has been used since 2015 for logging Hebrew Reading/Writing formative and summative assessments. Classroom Monitor has been used for *Chumash* from September 2017, and for *Mishnah* since Summer term 2018. The objectives are regularly reviewed and modified to reflect the school's aims and outcomes.
- Pupils enjoy their *Kodesh* lessons and are enthusiastic about their Jewish experiences in the school. They describe *Kodesh* lessons as "fun" and tell us that they like learning *Parashah* (weekly *Torah* portion) because they learn lessons from the different stories such as not to embarrass people. One Year 4 pupil said, "Sometimes I use these lessons when I am making choices."
- Pupils benefit from a warm, caring and nurturing environment with particular emphasis on Jewish values. These are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school – underpinned by the "SMART" values system. S is for *Simcha* – joy, M is for *Middot* – good character traits, A is for *Achdut* – working together, R is for *Ruach* – atmosphere and T is for *Torah* – Bible study. The school's distinctive Jewish character has a high profile – visible from entry into, as well as throughout, the school. The whole school community embraces these values in the everyday life of the school, and this spills over into their life beyond the school gates.

- Pupils are proud of their Jewish heritage and British values, receiving a holistic education which is modelled by the Headteacher and Head of JS working together. This sets the tone for the *Kodesh* and *Chol* (secular) Departments to work in collaboration, fully supporting the core values and ethos of the school. Parents tell us: “My child has an incredibly strong Jewish identity that has been shaped in large part by Sacks Morasha and the incredible ethos that has always been present at this unique school.”
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards Jewish learning because the curriculum enables them to actively engage in Jewish texts and to experience and participate in Jewish practice. They are exposed to 21<sup>st</sup> century technology in the *Kodesh* lessons which makes their Jewish learning exciting and engaging for example in a Y5 class, the pupils were tasked with producing a video of their “SMART” value.
- Safeguarding at Sacks Morasha Jewish Primary School is effective. Pupils feel safe when at school, know who to speak to if they have a concern and are confident that their issue will be addressed. As a Year 4 pupil said: “If we have a problem in the playground, we tell a teacher, and they sort it for us.” This was also evident from the Year 5 and 6 pupil survey.
- Pupils are enthused by their *Kodesh* studies and there is a strong connection between what they learn at school and what happens at home. The Sacks Morasha community and *shul* (Synagogue) communities, particularly at Kinloss, have strong links especially as Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence was appointed as the Honorary Principal in September 2014. He serves as the School Rabbi and is an integral part of the leadership of the school as a whole. His wife is the governor with responsibility for *Kodesh*, which ensures an even more seamless link between school and *Shul*.

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

### Quality of Jewish Education

- Since the last inspection in 2015, the proportion of outstanding lessons has greatly increased. The teaching is supported by a rich and ambitious Jewish curriculum, which is constantly being reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to all pupils. As a result of the current review of the school’s *Mishnah* (Oral Law) curriculum by an outside consultant, under the guidance of the school’s *Chumash* (Written Law/Bible) and *Mishnah* coordinator and Year 5/6 teacher, an exciting and innovative *Mishnah* curriculum is being developed. This is taught with excellent results as seen in a *Mishnah* lesson in Year 6 where groups of pupils were preparing for their *siyum* (end of learning celebration) by creating a video based on a *Mishnah* from *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) which they linked to their group’s “SMART” value. The pupils were engaged and enthusiastic about their learning.
- Teachers create a positive environment that allows pupils to focus on their Jewish learning in an atmosphere of respect and inclusion, irrespective of their background, gender, religiosity and culture. Parents are particularly appreciative of the learning opportunities given to their daughters in line with those given to their sons, for example in the learning of *Mishnah*: “Morasha reflects a modern Orthodox Jewish ethos and a positive Judaism. It also treats boys and girls equally and teaches respect for those who are different,” a parent commented in the Parents’ survey.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their *Chumash* lessons because staff have excellent subject knowledge and are highly skilled at providing support and encouragement. The teaching follows a systematic structure in each year group and pupils’ progress is continuously

monitored and tracked through the rigorous assessment system of the school. From the data the inspectors observed it is clear that the pupils have made significant progress over time, particularly taking into consideration the Covid era. For example, 71% of Year 5 pupils in Summer 2022 are working at or at greater depth in *Chumash*, compared to 60% the year before, when expectations were lowered due to Covid. Inspectors were impressed by the level of understanding expressed through pupils' questions on the text in a Year 3 lesson. The pupils were learning about the story of Abraham welcoming three guests, one of whom tells Abraham that he will have a son. One pupil wanted to know why this news was not given to Sarah and the teacher validated her question and said he would try to find an answer for her among the commentaries to the Bible. The next day, another pupil suggested an answer to this question that came from her previous knowledge and showed outstanding learning and higher order thinking skills.

- Parents value the school's way of learning *Chumash*. As one parent commented: "The school teaches the children the tools to "decode" the Hebrew to translate themselves, rather than chanting endless *pasukim* (verses) in Hebrew with the translation and so they can use these skills in other places, even though they have not covered as much ground as if they learned to parrot off the *pasukim*." There has been excellent practice shared from middle leaders in the past few years in *Chumash*, which ensures that all pupils have the very best opportunities for a high standard of Hebrew literacy appropriate to their age and ability.
- Achievement in Hebrew Reading is excellent, and children make improvements at each stage of their journey as is recorded in the Hebrew Reading Assessment file and on Classroom Monitor. Here again school data reveal that pupils' achievements are back to pre-Covid levels. For example, by the end of spring term 2022, 74% of pupils in Year 6 were working at or at greater depth of what was expected. The Hebrew Reading coordinator and middle leaders follow each assessment cycle with Pupil Progress meetings with teachers to ensure targeted interventions are implemented as effectively as possible. Parents support their children's Hebrew reading through regular homework and say that they receive good information regarding reading progress. They like the school's reading scheme as it is easy to chart achievement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Hebrew reading now incorporates reading for meaning, which is delivered in small ability groups by the *Ivrit* teacher, thereby enabling a more focussed individual approach and yielding excellent results. Reception pupils learn their letters through a range of multi-sensory activities as depicted on a wall display.
- Pupils have excellent Jewish educational experiences at Sacks Morasha, and these ensure that they are very well equipped for the next stage of their Jewish education. Pupils participate in the "Yehudi" project run by *Mizrachi*, as well as engaging in activities provided by GIFT. The feedback from secondary schools confirms this as many of the school's graduates are placed in top sets for *Kodesh* in their chosen high schools. Where pupils are not going onto Jewish high schools, they are initiating Jewish experiences for Jewish students such as a *Megillah* (Scroll of Esther) reading by the pupils at Haberdashers' Girls' school.
- Pupils benefit from a strong working alliance between the SENDCo and the *Kodesh* Department, with strategies being used across all subject areas. Regular meetings are held with *Kodesh* teachers where pupils' issues are flagged up and dealt with. When observing lessons, inspectors saw SEND pupils engaged and making progress while being supported by designated adults. In a Year 2 Hebrew Reading lesson, where one pupil's special needs had recently been identified, appropriate differentiated work was set, and the pupil was supported by the Head of *Kodesh* during the lesson to assess progress. Many examples of differentiation (setting work according to the ability of groups of pupils) for high attainers were also observed in other lessons across the school, including *Chumash* and *Mishnah*.
- Pupils' work and contributions to various topics are beautifully shared in attractive displays across the school, showing that pupils' work in Jewish Studies is valued and acknowledged. Particularly noteworthy are displays on Israel and the "SMART" values of the school. These

displays create a Jewish atmosphere which is enhanced by Hebrew words and phrases in key places which stimulate pupils' Hebrew reading and understanding.

- The impact of the Jewish Education at Sacks Morasha is strong. The great majority of pupils are enthusiastic learners as they move through the school, displaying a thirst for learning, active participation in both formal and informal Jewish learning and an ability to share meaningful insights. Highlights include the number of pupils who sign up for *Megillah* Club each year where they learn to read from the scroll with the correct notes, as well as special celebrations when receiving their *siddur* (prayerbook) or *Chumash* (Bible), Key Stage 2 (KS2) *Rosh Chodesh Minyan* (monthly prayer service) and parent-child learning events.

## Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

- Most pupils participate and feel included in the prayer life of the school. Key Stage 2 *tefillah* has meaning and encourages pupils' active participation. Some teachers actively support pupils and help them to join in with *tefillah*, while others stay in the background saying the prayers. Pupils would benefit from their involvement. Opportunities for personal reflection are created before and in between the *tefillot* (prayers), for example, the Head of *Kodesh* asked the pupils, "When do you feel closest to *Hashem* (God)?" A pupil responded, "When I am by the *Kotel* (Western Wall), because that was the wall of the *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple)". Another pupil said, "I feel closest to *Hashem* during *tefillah*."
- The quality of Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development is outstanding because pupils are encouraged to think deeply and to connect their *Kodesh* learning to life outside the classroom and school. This help shape pupils' life's perspectives using their "SMART" values (*Simcha*, *Middot*, *Achdut*, *Ruach*, *Torah*).
- The school consistently provides rich Jewish experiences in a coherently planned way, through its formal and informal curricula, links with the community and other organisations. The school organised for the pupils to hear a talk about Kisharon, an organisation that supports children and adults with complex learning disabilities. One pupil, inspired by what he had learned, decided to carry out a fun bake that raised £1000 to help this organisation. This is just one of many examples of pupils displaying qualities of leadership in Jewish religious, charitable or social activities.
- All members of staff embrace the "SMART" values and are good role models of pupils' personal behaviour, attitudes, and spiritual development. One member of the *Chol* staff explained that "There is an expectation that we will approach things in a positive way. *Simcha* (joy) is an expectation in this school. Learn and be happy."
- Most pupils exhibit a keen awareness of *Hashem* and spirituality in humankind and display high level of personal conduct. During pupils' interviews, one pupil said *Hashem* created fun "So that we would not be bored, otherwise people would never smile."
- Pupils attend a monthly *Rosh Chodesh Minyan* which involves parents, governors and trustees joining Key Stage 2 pupils for *Shacharit* (morning prayers). This benefits the pupils as they are exposed to a guided '*shul*' (Synagogue) experience. Year 6 pupils mentioned that they look forward to being able to lead and read from the *Torah* when they are older and can return to the school as alumni to join the service. Pupils enjoy singing the prayers with their families and feel that the *Minyan* is special.
- At Sacks Morasha, pupils begin to develop their relationship with *Hashem* and the *Torah* from the beginning of their school journey. In Reception, pupils were fully involved in *tefillah*, including SEND pupils, who were supported by an additional adult. Time during *tefillah* was shared between singing prayers and short discussions, such as when pupils were asked why the *Torah* is so important. A member of the class shared, "If we didn't have the *Torah*, we

would be fighting. We wouldn't have rules." The *tefillah* experience contributes to building religious identity.

- Pupils learn to develop awe and wonder of the world around them through cross-curricular activities that help their personal and spiritual growth. Pupils in Year 6 spoke about their experience of working on an allotment to plant potatoes that they intend to donate to Jewish Care. A wall display shows how every child in the school has taken part in different planting projects, including one where they planted poppy seeds that were then replanted outside the school to enhance the site.
- *Birkat Hamazon* is said in all the classes across the school. In Year 1, pupils were following in their *siddur* and sang with gusto and with respect. They know that they are thanking *Hashem* for their food and have a developing knowledge of the prayer, having progressed from singing just the first paragraph to now saying several. Year 4 pupils sing all of *Birkat Hamazon* but some pupils are not as engaged as they could be, despite being led by two able members of the class. When the Head of *Kodesh* came in and supported the singing, enthusiasm for the prayer increased. It would be helpful if all adults present in the class ensured that children join in. Year 4 pupils were able to explain the importance of *Birkat Hamazon*, saying that "We need to be grateful for what we have because there are people who are less fortunate."
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to experience holiness in everyday life and to connect learning to practice. The school runs different *tzedakah* (charity) projects aiding a range of Jewish and non-Jewish charities. One pupil in Year 6 wrote, "We have been donating food and medicine for the children and families who need help in Ukraine and some children from our choir are singing in a special 'Summer Concert for Ukraine' to help raise money."
- Another charity project that inspired pupils and taught respect for all humankind was ably described by a Year 2 pupil who said that pupils were allowed to wear odd socks for one day to show that we are all different. They brought money for *tzedakah* that was to be donated to 'Action for Children'.
- Pupils show care and compassion to humankind, emulating the "SMART" values by looking out for one another. An instance was noted during play time when a pupil sat on the side looking gloomy. Two fellow pupils approached their friend and asked, "Why don't you come and join us in our chat?"
- Pupils are able to internalise what they learn in class to help shape their moral compass. A pupil in Year 4 shared that she did not think the story of *Kamtza* and *Bar Kamtza* could be true as the *Torah* says that we are not allowed to embarrass people and people would surely follow that.
- Pupils' Jewish character and values are developed by the school's holistic approach to Jewish Education. The impact on pupils' understanding and attitude to life's challenges are worthy of note. When asked to name their inspirational Jewish *Torah* character, one pupil in Year 6 replied, "*Calev* (Caleb) gave a good review. Despite the other spies, he came back with a good report. Despite our situation, we can have a positive attitude. It is a privilege to be Jewish and to say *Modeh Ani* (I thank You). To have a positive mindset is one of the biggest privileges of being Jewish and being part of this community. Like *Shabbat*, while most kids are looking for sweets, the Morasha kids will be sitting and *davening* (praying)". Another example from a Year 6 pupil was, "My favourite *Torah* character is Miriam. Despite the fact that *Moshe* (Moses) was in the spotlight, and she was not, she still helped everyone. She inspires me. Whatever she went through, she took it so well and had trust in *Hashem*. Whatever I might go through, you need to put even more trust in *Hashem* and know that things will go better."

## Leadership and management:

- The school has a full senior leadership team (SLT) in place, consisting of the Headteacher, Head of *Kodesh* who is also Deputy Headteacher, and Assistant Headteacher. In addition, there is a part time SENDCo who contributes to SLT discussions on vulnerable children. Together with the governors, they articulate and communicate their strong vision for the school of a commitment to high standards of work and to pupils' Jewish spiritual development and well-being. They, along with staff, have developed a shared clarity of where they want the school to be beyond the short term.
- The school's leadership ensures that teachers receive focused professional development. Within the *Kodesh* Department, the Head of *Kodesh* is supported in leading the school's Jewish Education by the *Chumash* and *Mishnah* and History Co-ordinators who have been at the school for a number of years, as well as the Hebrew Reading Co-ordinator who has been at the school since January this year and is leaving at the end of term. The school would do well to ensure that they appoint a new Hebrew Reading Co-ordinator to maintain the high standards the school enjoys.
- Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for *Kodesh* effectively, because the systems employed are robust and searching and make a real impact on the raising of standards of teaching and learning. They also initiated the review of the Jewish learning curriculum which has already yielded positive results.
- The Head of *Kodesh* models excellent practice in academic and spiritual matters and works successfully to encourage the enthusiasm of staff and to challenge their efforts and skills to good effect. This was particularly in evidence during the Key Stage 2 *tefillah* assembly when he asked reflective questions that helped the pupils focus on their relationship with *Hashem*. All the teachers show great respect to each other and to the Head of *Kodesh* as mentioned in the teachers' survey: "The *Kodesh* team work really hard and well together. They are passionate educators and inspire the children's love of learning."
- The Head of *Kodesh* has an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development in all aspects of the school's Jewish education, as seen in the very detailed school self-evaluation. He has the unwavering support of the Rabbi of the school, *Kodesh* Governor and Headteacher to achieve the highest standards possible, building on the suggestions made in the *Kodesh* review.
- Although the new Headteacher has only been in post since April, there is a real sense of partnership between her and the Head of *Kodesh* which was very evident in our discussions with both. She understands the school's vision and ethos and is keen to continue to deliver excellence in Jewish Education in the school.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

Further develop the Quality of Jewish Education by :

- With the appointment of new *Kodesh* staff, the school should ensure that they designate a new Hebrew Reading Coordinator to maintain the high standards in the school.
- Continuing to improve and encourage the engagement in *tefillah* , particularly in Key Stage 2, by providing training for all staff on how to support and involve pupils during their prayer assemblies.



Statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (tefillah)	Met
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## Summary of Questionnaires

**Pikuach invited parents and carers of pupils at Sacks Morasha Jewish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 62 people responded to the survey. The responses were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. 100% of parents agree or strongly agree that their child enjoys and is inspired by his/her Jewish learning.**

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- My daughter is proud to be Jewish and loves *Shabbat* and the *Chagim* and the *chessed*/social action side of Judaism. The GIFT programme about *tzedakah* was excellent and we had a number of conversations about it at home, as it certainly inspired her to think about how she could help and give to others.
- The key to our daughter's happiness and the school, and the key to understanding all that the school has done for her, can be found with the school's SMART values, which permeate every aspect of the school's operation. She has left not only with a great *Kodesh* education, but also strong character development which she will carry with her throughout her life.
- The school is aware of what is happening in the playground and intervenes when there are bullying issues early to manage the situation. Also, in the classroom, the teachers have helped my daughter to manage her insecurities and to feel safe to participate and speak up in front of her peers when it is not something she would have otherwise felt confident to do.
- Morasha reflects a modern Orthodox Jewish ethos and a positive Judaism. It also treats boys and girls equally and teaches respect for those who are different, including those of different sexual orientations, whilst being firmly based in our Orthodox Morasha. I strongly support this.
- This school lives and breathes *Kodesh* and fosters the love of Judaism. My children have gained so much from being here.
- My child has an incredibly strong Jewish identity that has been shaped in large part by Sacks Morasha and the incredible ethos that has always been present at this unique school. We feel extremely lucky to be part of such a warm, innovative and inclusive Jewish community school.
- I also have an older child who left the school 2 years ago and now is at a non-Jewish school. When he has encountered antisemitism or ignorance surrounding Israel, he has been able to respond positively because of the knowledge base he has been given by Sacks Morasha, and the confidence they gave him too. I think that speaks volumes about the educational experience at Sacks Morasha and is a sign of the strong sense of identity and knowledge base the school provides.

**Pikuach invited pupils at Sacks Morasha School Jewish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 57 pupils responded to the survey.**

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- I have learnt so much about being Jewish, and my parents are really proud of me for that and using my knowledge at home and out of school.
- Like in the morning before *tefillah*, our head of *Kodesh* tells us to close our eyes and tell *Hashem* what we thank Him for, ask Him for and praise Him for.
- In *tefillah*, we sometimes talk about these things and what I learn helps me to understand why and how to have a stronger connection with *Hashem*
- I do things for Gift and recently I have hosted a project for child refugees, so they had entertainment. Soon we are volunteering in a kitchen for elderly people who can't care for themselves.
- My and my friends we create bake sales and toy/teddy sales to raise money for different charities and anyone can buy stuff.
- Sometimes I do fundraisers and charity collections such as bake sales/exercise and collections.
- It has made me believe in *Hashem*, believe in myself, believe in my friends, believe in the world.
- It helps to expand my knowledge on what is important to me so I understand it better and can know why I reflect on it and what parts I reflect on.
- I love how they try to make school more than it is.
- The level of Judaism in this school is absolutely, extremely, utterly, awesomely, epically FANTASTIC

**Pikuach invited members of staff at Sacks Morasha Jewish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 20 members of staff responded to the survey.**

- The children are respectful of each other and staff – and the true test is when they're offsite. Not only are they well behaved and polite, but they're also complimented by others for their attitude, *ruach* and *simcha*.
- SEND and pastoral discussions happen daily; staff are never 'satisfied' with how much provision they've made for differing needs in their classes! This is a driver for improvement. SENDCo always open to meeting with staff to help them implement and develop strategies.
- I feel the school has a very strong Jewish spiritual identity which is reinforced throughout numerous aspects of school life.
- The JS team inspire the children's love of learning and instil a strong Jewish identity in all of them.

## GLOSSARY

### WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

GRADE	JUDGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its' pupils needs.

Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its' pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its' pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its' pupils.