

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Clore Shalom School

Hugo Gryn Way, Shenley, Hertfordshire WD7 9BL

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

Clore Shalom School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils strive to show the school's values of; chesed (be kind), resilience (try hard) and respect (everyone matters) in everything they do. At the breakfast club, on the playground and in the dining room, pupils greet visitors enthusiastically. They are proud to belong to this inclusive community. Pupils thrive in the school's warm, family atmosphere.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils rise to these expectations by behaving well. They are motivated to do this by earning praise and reward points. The school's expectations of pupils' academic achievements are equally high. Pupils work hard. Overall, their achievements in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are in line with or above national averages.

A wide range of roles develop pupils' sense of responsibility. These roles include well-being leaders, Jewish life leaders and school councillors. Extra-curricular clubs offer pupils the chance to develop new skills and talents, such as karate, karaoke and chess. Educational trips, for example a visit to a nearby wildlife park, are carefully planned to enhance pupils' learning. The 'CLORE awards' scheme recognises pupils' achievements in and out of school. It motivates them to realise their goals.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced several challenges, including changes to leadership. Leaders, including governors, have guided staff, pupils and their families through this period skilfully. They have maintained their focus on providing a high-quality education for pupils.

The curriculum is ambitious. It is carefully sequenced, so that pupils build their learning gradually, starting in early years. In geography, for example, children in the Reception Year draw maps of a story character's journey. They name the features of a place, such as house, tree and park. This prepares children well for mapwork and identifying features of their local area in Year 1.

The school has trained teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively, with consistency in the teaching approaches they use. Typically, teachers recap pupils' previous learning often, so that this becomes secure. They introduce new learning clearly and show pupils what they expect from them in their independent activities. Teachers check pupils' understanding frequently and address any gaps or errors that arise effectively.

These improvements support pupils to achieve well, overall. In lessons, pupils apply their existing knowledge to new learning. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils measure the internal angles of triangles. They use their addition, subtraction and multiplication skills to check whether the total of the angles is always the same. In English, pupils produce increasingly complex pieces of writing. For example, pupils in Year 5 create suspense in a narrative through deliberate language choices. However, some pupils' foundational writing skills, such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation, are not secure. Sometimes, teachers' expectations of the quality of work pupils produce are not consistently high. As a result, the standard of some pupils' recorded work could be better and their ability to express more complex learning is hampered.

The school promotes a love of reading. A rich and varied selection of texts underpins pupils' learning from the Reception Year through to Year 6. In early years and key stage 1, effective daily phonics lessons develop pupils' early reading skills. Skilled staff teach pupils the sounds and strategies they need to become confident readers. The school identifies pupils who need additional help with phonics. It provides this swiftly and effectively so that these pupils catch up.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately and quickly. Staff know these pupils well and understand their individual needs. Teachers adjust their teaching and adapt learning activities effectively for pupils with SEND. In some cases, additional adults provide targeted support. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school. The school prepares pupils well for life after Clore Shalom. Pupils learn essential knowledge about relationships, internet safety and personal well-being. They understand the fundamental British values and how these apply to them. For example, pupils know that democracy means 'I have a voice'. Pupils value diversity and are very well informed about the differences between people. They know these can sometimes lead to discrimination.

The challenges of recent years have led leaders to prioritise the well-being of pupils and staff. There is a strong pastoral offer. For instance, pupils who struggle to manage their feelings in the classroom can learn in the safe space provided by 'The Hub'. Staff welfare

is a high priority. School leaders and governors consider the impact of any changes they make on staff well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of foundational writing skills, such as handwriting, punctuation and spelling, is not as effective as it could be. Some teachers' expectations of pupils' recorded work are not consistently high. This hampers pupils' ability to show their progress and express more complex learning. As such, the quality of some pupils' work is not as good as it could be. The school should ensure that early writing knowledge and skills are taught effectively and practised regularly. It should ensure that teachers' expectations are consistently high, so that pupils' recorded work reflects the quality of their learning across the curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 131456 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10366655 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 186 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Sara Levan and Neil Rosen (co-chairs) |
| Headteacher | Gemma Blaker |
| Website | www.cloreshalom.herts.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 28 and 29 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There have been changes in leadership since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2023.
- Clore Shalom is a voluntary aided Jewish primary school. Its last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act was in November 2022. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of this date.
- The school runs its own wraparound care before and after school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers. The inspector also met with governors, including the co-chairs of the governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan, the school self-evaluation form, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance information, behaviour logs and safeguarding records.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She reviewed the responses to the online staff survey. In addition, the inspector spoke with pupils and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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