

**FULL INSPECTION REPORT FOR
GATESHEAD JEWISH ACADEMY FOR GIRLS
(BEIS CHAYA ROCHEL)**

UKVI LICENCE No: 59CTJT000

Education oversight inspection of private further education colleges on behalf of the Home Office's division of United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

The overall inspection findings for this college

UKVI Standards for

courses and qualifications are	Met
teaching, learning and assessment are	Met
the cultural and moral development of students are	Met
welfare, health and safety are	Met
the effectiveness and suitability of staff are	Met
financial sustainability, leadership and governance are	Met
premises and accommodation are	Met
information and complaints are	Met

Compliance with UKVI Standards

The college meets all the UKVI Standards

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and scope of the inspection

Mainland Education is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) section of the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England, with a Steiner, Montessori or Eurythmy basis or background, or with a clear religious purpose. Inspection is designed to assess the college's compliance with the Standards for colleges agreed with the Home Office. These Standards cover the quality of education and welfare provided to all students, including those from overseas who are sponsored by the college for Tier 4 visas, and, where applicable, those who are under eighteen or are vulnerable adults. On-site student accommodation, where provided, is assessed for compliance with the Standards but is not subject to a full boarding inspection. Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the extent to which colleges meet the Standards. By placing reports in the public domain, the information they contain is available to students, the UKVI, and the wider community.

Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success. It helps colleges, their staff and trustees/governors/proprietors to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy their weaknesses in relation to compliance. The inspection also takes account of the college's financial performance over the last two years for new providers and since the last inspection for established providers. An assessment is also made of the college's financial sustainability going forward based on information provided by the college. Prospective students, their parents and agents should make their own enquiries into the financial viability of institutions before accepting a place.

Colleges are subject to a full inspection once every four years which is conducted by two inspectors over two days. In the intervening years, colleges receive an interim inspection and are kept under review. All reports state whether the college continues to meet the agreed Standards. The last full inspection of Gateshead Jewish Academy for Girls (Beis Chaya Rochel) was conducted in 2016 and the last interim inspection in 2019 both by the School Inspection Service, which Mainland Education Ltd has now replaced. This is the first full inspection of Gateshead Jewish Academy for Girls (Beis Chaya Rochel) by Mainland Education Ltd.

Characteristics of the college

Gateshead Jewish Academy for Girls, also known as Beis Chaya Rochel (BCR), was established in 1997 as the second seminary in Gateshead for the education of young women from the Orthodox Jewish community. The college seeks to provide an education with an emphasis on understanding the foundations of Jewish belief together with the practical application of Jewish law that a student would need to know to run their own home. The college offers a two-year externally certificated programme of Jewish biblical studies and practice, taught by an experienced team of rabbis. Through a partnership with a local further education (FE) college, students are also able to take a range of AS/A Level, GCSE and vocational qualifications. These courses are specifically tailored to the needs and interests of students from BCR and provide them with the knowledge and skills needed for future employment. There are currently 117 students on roll, of whom 90 are under 18. Most students are British, with 28 from other countries including Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland and the USA. 21 of the overseas students are on Tier 4 visas and 12 of those are under the age of eighteen. All the students live in accommodation provided by the college.

SECTION A: Main Findings and Actions Required

Main findings

Gateshead Jewish Academy for Girls, also known as Beis Chaya Rochel (BCR) meets the UKVI Education Oversight Standards. The college has a distinctive educational ethos, clear aims and well-established provision. It provides a comprehensive religious curriculum, together with teaching which is of good quality. Lessons are well-presented and rooted in a thorough knowledge of the subject: but could be improved in some cases by better use of visual materials, technology or artefacts and by the sharing of good practice. Students' work is carefully assessed through termly examinations and all students meet each term with a member of staff to discuss their individual progress. There is scope for the college to explore less formal types of assessment that can provide more immediate feedback for students on their progress during the term.

The cultural and moral development of students is a strength of the college. The students report that they are happy, make firm friendships and greatly value their full and immersive college experience grounded in Jewish heritage and religion. Good provision is made to broaden their cultural experience through the vocational and academic courses they take at a local FE college. The students show good levels of self-confidence and self-awareness, and have good social and communication skills. Their experience of the boarding community is an important element of their personal development as it allows them to take on responsibilities and to work with others. The range of productions, events, visits and residential trips plays a significant role in enhancing cultural and moral development.

The welfare, health and safety of the students are high priorities for the college. There are suitable policies and procedures for securing their health and safety, including well planned fire safety systems. Safeguarding provision is well established with strong and effective pastoral care which is in line with the Jewish ethos of the college. Staff with key safeguarding roles are well-trained and knowledgeable. There are four matrons who know the students well and provide very good day-to-day care. Medical care is effective and readily accessed. The students are safeguarded by dorm monitors who are resident overnight in the boarding accommodation. The college has excellent procedures for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff, and appropriate procedures are in place should any disciplinary action need to be taken against a member of staff. The college meets the Standards for financial sustainability, management and governance. The Covid pandemic and, more especially, changes in visa requirements following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, have resulted in a fall in student numbers since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the college has coped well and raised additional funds to cover the temporary shortfall in fee income. Accounts are thorough and show that the college is run efficiently. Committed and inspired managers are working on development and improvement plans and there is no

danger that students will not be able to complete their courses owing to financial failure. Premises and accommodation are fit for purpose and have been carefully adapted to meet the needs of the college. The quality of the boarding accommodation is acceptable but would benefit in part from redecoration. A very well produced prospectus and other informative documents give a clear and up to date description of the college, and prospective students also learn about the college from relatives and former students. There are suitable systems of communication with parents, and plans to further extend these to include more frequent reports to parents of students in the 16-18 age group. A complaints procedure is known to students; there have been no formal complaints in recent years.

Overall Main Finding	Compliance	Outcome for the College
The college meets UKVI requirements.	It meets all the Standards.	It will receive interim checks and a further full inspection in four years

Actions Required

- **No action is required**

SECTION B: Detailed evaluation of the standards

Standards for courses and qualifications

The Standards for courses and qualifications are met. The courses offered are at a suitable level for students. All the students undertake the same course in Jewish Biblical Studies and Practice and a variety of vocational and academic courses. The college provides a Level 3 course in Jewish Biblical Studies and Practice accredited by the Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE). In addition, a local further education (FE) college provides a good range of vocational and academic courses, including A and AS levels. The courses include subjects that are likely to help in gaining employment including AS and A Level mathematics, digital and information technology (IT) skills, graphics, photography, hairdressing, beauty, childcare and a Level 3 teaching assistant qualification.

Students come from English-speaking countries or pass the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) English language test at the appropriate level. The college ensures that during the application process prospective students are assessed for their level of English and the admissions process is designed to ensure competency in English. If needed, extra language support is available from the partner FE college. Students all come from specific feeder schools known to the academy, and individual reports are checked to ensure that the students are suitable to follow the college course. The Standards requirement for full-time study is met through time spent studying for the Jewish studies and vocational courses. The college ensures that externally validated qualifications requirements are met, with communications, reports and certificates showing evidence of regular contact with ATHE, the accrediting body. The vocational and academic courses taken by students are validated through the local FE college that works with the college. All the courses on offer meet the definition of approved qualifications for UKVI purposes. The curriculum is designed specifically to encompass the Jewish ethos of the college, teaching students about Jewish faith and practice while showing respect for others, and enabling them to gain skills and qualifications for future employment.

Standards for teaching, learning and assessment

The Standards for teaching, learning and assessment are met. Teaching is of good quality. There is a clear plan for the religious curriculum and rabbis prepare their lessons carefully to ensure that all constituent parts of the scheme of work are covered. The subject matter is typically delivered in lecture style from the front, but with pauses for questions and answers to engage the students and check their understanding. The subject matter is important and interesting. Frequently, the rabbis draw parallels between scripture and modern life, enabling students to develop the skill of using Biblical knowledge to grasp an underlying moral message and apply it to situations they themselves encounter, which, for example, encourage them to enjoy to the full

the precious gift of life, or learn humility. The rabbis' lessons are clear, sometimes amusing, and always well-presented, but could be even more effective with the better use of illustrations, technology or artefacts. The students are always respectful and for the most part they listen carefully, and some answer questions. Occasionally, the students' responses are too quiet for others to hear, and rabbis should encourage them to speak up, to make their participation more meaningful. Most students take notes. Generally, as they move through the course, they make progress which is at least commensurate with their ability to do so, thereby extending and deepening their knowledge and understanding of the Torah and of Jewish law and culture. The rabbis are well-qualified experts, who are experienced and patient teachers. Some have additional qualifications and Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status. Study of how students learn has prompted them to employ a broader range of teaching styles and techniques and to focus on students' understanding. This good practice could be usefully shared among all members of the rabbonim.

Assessment of students' work is made through termly examinations. The rabbis prepare students well for assessment through revision sessions; examination papers test thoroughly each part of the course; and marking is consistent and fair, as the students' test papers are anonymized and externally marked to a standard scheme. An important feature is that non-native speakers also have the opportunity to write the tests in their home language. Some students told inspectors that they would welcome more frequent feedback on how well they are doing. The college might like to investigate different forms of less formal assessment, such as quizzes, that can be used more frequently and conducted orally, where students can demonstrate in a quick and effective way their understanding of the key points in a topic and can get immediate feedback. All students have the opportunity each term to discuss their progress individually with a member of staff.

Around eighty per cent of students attain the Level 3 certificate in Jewish studies, but almost all girls complete the course of study and obtain a diploma from the college detailing the course components they have studied. Most students are native speakers of English; this year there are twenty-seven students with other home languages. All have reached an appropriate level of English to be granted a visa and so there is now less call for ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) services, although they are still available alongside strategies and expertise to support students with specific learning difficulties.

Teachers give time after each lesson to discuss concerns or questions with their students. The college arranges regular meetings between the principal, matrons and the students where progress is discussed and support for improvement is planned.

Standards for cultural and moral development of students

The Standards for the students' cultural and moral development are met. The main focus of the college is to provide an immersive and enjoyable education that enables

girls to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem through embracing and living out a Jewish way of life. The students say that the Jewish studies course gives them valuable insights into their religion and culture and its ancestral history, and they learn the practical application of the Bible and Jewish customs in daily family life. The curriculum also includes a range of vocational and academic studies which broaden their cultural development. A key theme of the college ethos is for students and staff to show respect and consideration to others, including the wider community with its varying cultural traditions. Students say that their time at the college enables them to develop the skills of living with and respecting others.

The students say they enjoy the independence that being away from home gives them. They benefit greatly from the experience of boarding and value becoming part of the close-knit boarding community. They enjoy the many opportunities they are given to accept responsibility and develop their talents. They vote each term for class representatives to take on responsibilities to help with the running of the college. They organise social activities, special events and holiday celebrations, including cooking, baking and creating décor. An annual production under the guidance of a senior female member of staff gives the students opportunities to develop their talents in, for example, acting, singing and dancing, as well as graphics and backstage work. Special events such as open-air swimming, hikes and day-break davening (or prayer) at a beach, as well as an annual weekend away in the countryside for the whole student cohort, are all designed to broaden and enrich the students' experience and give them further opportunities to take on responsibilities. The college has a Prevent policy and is careful to ensure students do not have access to any extremist or inappropriate materials.

Standards for welfare, health and safety

The Standards for welfare, health and safety are met. The college has the relevant policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and visitors. Maintenance checks are regular and students say that any necessary repairs are carried out promptly. The college has trained first aiders and first aid kits on site. There are suitable fire safety policies and procedures with regular assessments of fire safety equipment by professional contractors, fire safety signage and regular recorded fire drills. Staff are trained in fire safety, and senior students who are trained as fire marshals for the dormitory are able to say what their responsibilities are.

The college takes safeguarding seriously, and student welfare is promoted extremely well through strong and effective pastoral care which is in line with the Jewish ethos of the college. There is a comprehensive range of safeguarding policies which meet the requirements of the latest government guidance and cover key information on child protection; student behaviour, including tackling bullying; the staff code of conduct; and the college's response to students who go missing from education. Procedures for ensuring that these policies are implemented effectively are also strong. All staff have received recent and regular training in safeguarding, understand that 'an incident could happen here'; know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and her

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Deputy (DDSL) are; understand the procedure to follow in the event of a disclosure from a student or an allegation against a member of staff; and know how and where to report information, including any low-level concerns.

Senior staff with key safeguarding roles are well-trained and knowledgeable. The girls are very well cared for on a day-to-day basis by four experienced and sympathetic matrons who know them well. Medical care is effective. Hatzalah, the Jewish medical service, provides emergency medical care when necessary, and response times are excellent. Where girls need specialist external help or therapy, this is arranged efficiently by the college medical officer.

Every effort is made to protect students and keep them safe. This includes practical and effective security arrangements, clear staff recruitment and vetting procedures, strong filters on the college network and regular but unintrusive monitoring of its use by students. Additionally, the college empowers students to keep themselves and others safe in both the real and online world, by helping them to understand the pitfalls and dangers of modern life, including those represented by the use of electronic devices and the internet, and enabling them to build resilience through seminars and discussion.

The college monitors attendance regularly and frequently, so that it is aware of the students' whereabouts at all times. There are also systems for disseminating this information to the academic and pastoral staff who need it to follow up absence. These procedures ensure that attendance at lessons is high and internal absence correspondingly low. There is an effective missing child policy, and the college has the required reporting system to inform UKVI of any attendance issues. Attendance and other information is held on computer, but the college is currently developing recording systems further to make them more relevant and useful to their needs, so that senior staff may draw down a range of reports with the management information they need.

Standards for the effectiveness and suitability of staff

The Standards for the effectiveness and suitability of staff are met. The college has excellent procedures for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff. All relevant checks have been conducted on all members of staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. The checks have been initialed and dated; this information appears on the meticulous single central record of staff appointments as required, and is evidenced by staff files. The college does not employ supply staff to cover absence, so that the only agency staff used are the security guards. The college has obtained written evidence from the security agency of the pre-employment checks made on their staff, together with evidence of their safeguarding training. Due diligence was exercised in making redundant domestic staff connected with the boarding house which is currently out of commission. There has been no disciplinary action taken against any member of staff, but the college has appropriate procedures for this should it become necessary, and senior staff are aware of their duty to report such cases to

the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service).

Standards for financial sustainability, management and governance

The Standards for financial sustainability, management and governance are met. In recent years, the number of students has fallen, due in part to the Covid pandemic and, more especially, to changes in visa requirements following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. While this has prompted some economies, the college has coped well and raised additional monies through charitable funds to cover the temporary shortfall in fee income. The accounts are thorough and transparent, demonstrating that the college is run efficiently. The committed and inspired managers are currently working on a new recruitment drive; and forecasts give confidence in future developments, so that there is no danger that students will not be able to complete their courses owing to financial failure.

The proprietors, senior managers and trustees have ensured that the college has appropriate and up to date policies to cover all areas of its work, and that these are implemented effectively. They are all reviewed and signed off on an annual basis. Resources are sufficient to support the work of the college. Senior managers work cooperatively to support one another, ensuring that what is good and special about this college is retained and strengthened and that any weaknesses are rectified in a timely way. Teaching is monitored unobtrusively by senior staff through CCTV lesson observation and analysis of students' examination results. The senior management has produced a comprehensive development plan, to keep track of planned improvements.

Standards for premises and accommodation

The Standards for premises and accommodation are met. The college is on three sites, all within short walking distance of each other. The buildings are fit for purpose and have been carefully adapted to meet the needs of the college. The main block houses administration offices, as well as teaching rooms that are in good decorative order, of a good size and well-lit and ventilated. The dining area and kitchens, in a separate building, are clean and well maintained, and the kitchens have the necessary certification from the local Environmental Health agency. This building also houses dormitory accommodation that is not in use at present. The doorway into the dining room and kitchen building would benefit from some further tidying up following recent maintenance work. The boarding accommodation is satisfactory. All girls are currently accommodated in one of the boarding houses, in rooms which hold between two and six students. The quality of the boarding accommodation is acceptable but would benefit in part from redecoration, although the girls have made it homely with their posters, pictures and belongings. There is good storage space, and their possessions are safe. Showers have been recently refurbished and are an attractive feature of the boarding accommodation. There is sufficient hot water at peak times. Although generally clean and comfortable, some of the dorms are very untidy, and girls should

be encouraged to clear up after themselves. Much care is taken over the selection of girls in each dormitory, with foreign visa students interspersed throughout the rooms and among all groups. The girls report that they are very happy and make lifelong friends. They are very well cared for by the matrons and safeguarded by dorm monitors who are resident overnight in the boarding accommodation.

Standards for information and complaints

The Standards for information and complaints are met. In line with its philosophy relating to the use of information technology, the college does not have a website. However a very well-produced range of printed full-colour promotional materials including an application form gives a clear and up-to-date description of the college and what it has to offer to prospective students. In addition, students say that they learn about the college and its reputation from their previous schools, which members of the college staff visit to provide information prior to application. They also hear about the college from former students, including member of their own families. A well-established system of individual face-to-face meetings is in place by which the college principal and his pastoral colleagues meet termly with each student in turn, reviewing and reporting on their general progress. The college has established systems of communication with parents, and these are in the process of being extended to include more regular formal reporting on progress for the parents of students in the 16-18 age group.

Students are aware of the complaints procedure they can follow in the event of them wishing to lodge a formal complaint. The college needs to include in this procedure the name and contact number of the independent listener who is listed in the safeguarding information panels posted around the college. There have been no formal complaints in recent years.

SECTION C: COLLEGE AND INSPECTION DETAILS

Details of college

Name of college:	Gateshead Jewish Academy for Girls (Beis Chaya Rochel)
Address of college:	1 Shipcote Lane, Gateshead NE8 4JA
Telephone number:	0191 4776450
Email address:	office@bcrsem.org.uk
Proprietor:	BCR GJAG LTD.
Name of Principal:	Rabbi A. Katz
Licence number:	59CTJT000
Type of college:	Private Further Education

Details of student body

Age range	16-20		
Number on roll:		Male	Female
	Full Time:	0	117
	Part Time:	0	0
	Below 18	0	90
Annual fees:	£10,000 – 12,000 per annum		

Details of inspection

Type of inspection:	Education Oversight: Full		
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector:	Mr. Peter Jones	
	Supporting Inspector:	Mrs. Jane Cooper	
Dates of inspection:	31 st October – 1 st November 2023		

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