



Sinai Jewish Primary School

Jewish Studies Policy

2020 / 5781

Principles and Aims

As a United Synagogue school that embraces both orthodoxy and modernity, we seek to provide a formal and informal Jewish education that blends an authentic, immersive and enriching experience with a sensitive understanding of the wider culture in which our pupils live.

We aim to nurture children who are committed to and involved in Jewish practice, ethics and traditions and to immerse them in our Jewish beliefs and values so they are motivated as lifelong Jewish learners. We aspire to develop confident Hebrew readers who acquire knowledge and textual skills through the study of selected classical texts. Our purpose is to create responsible Jewish citizens, who play an active role in the Jewish and wider community and who take pride in their commitment to Israel.

Statement on Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

All schools that follow the National Curriculum will be able to provide opportunities for pupils to grow personally and spiritually. A Jewish school will provide a particular context for this growth through the wisdom and tenets of Judaism. Sinai pupils recite Tefillah every day. The singing is uplifting; the discussions are appropriately spiritual, personal and relevant. Over time and in a natural way, pupils discover the value of making a daily connection to God.

Weekly Parashah lessons include an age appropriate middah that emerges from the storyline. Pupils are inspired by the actions of biblical personalities and learn about the relationship they had with G-d. Using this as the reference point, pupils learn to engage in self-reflection, discover the value of sharing with others their understanding of their own life experiences and start to forge their own relationship with God.

Experiencing the weekly Oneg Shabbat and celebrations of the Chagim in school present an opportunity for pupils to learn that we make 'time' and 'place' special; that we belong to a community and to a people with a shared history ; that we cherish a connection to Israel. Pupils learn about God's role in the development of the Jewish People and begin to develop an appreciation of His role in people's individual lives.

The teaching of RE and British Values throughout the school ensures that our pupils develop an awareness that, in a world created by God, we are required to show respect for all of humanity and a sense of responsibility for the world that we all share.

Curriculum

The JS curriculum occupies 25% of each week's timetable across the school. This comprises:

- One JS lesson per day*:
 - Nursery: 25 mins per group
 - Reception: 45 mins

- KS1: 45 mins
- KS2: 45/60 mins
- Daily Tefillah (15 mins)
- Daily Birkat HaMazon (10–15 mins)
- Weekly Friday Oneg Shabbat (30 mins)

*On Fridays for duration of winter timetable -Tefillah and Oneg only

The school's Jewish Studies curriculum seeks to transmit Jewish values, knowledge and skills, thus ensuring that pupils are well equipped and motivated to continue their studies and their Jewish way of life. This is achieved through both formal and informal learning.

Formal Education

The formal curriculum comprises the study of four areas of learning which are:

- Hebrew Reading, Writing and Language (using modern Israeli pronunciation)
- Torah
- Jewish Living
- Tefillah

Hebrew Reading, Writing and Language (using modern Israeli pronunciation)

- In EYFS, Hebrew language is introduced through song, games and activities.
- In Reception and KS1, Hebrew Reading is taught using the Aleph Champ programme. In KS2, a progressive succession of different established programmes and digital resources is used to enhance Hebrew Reading: Aleph Champ Brown and Grey, the JCP Chumash Curriculum, Tal Am, and Israeli programmes such as Shetef Kriah, Gamba, Iton Bereshit and Aggadah.
- In Year 3, pupils start to develop their ability to read Siddur texts. They also learn to write and read cursive script Hebrew letters.
- From Year 4, Rashi script reading can be introduced when appropriate.
- Chumash Studies focus on parshiot from Chumash Bereshit (Years 3 – 6) and may extend to Chumash Shemot (Year 6).

Torah

- Nursery – Year 6 learn the weekly Parashah and its related middah, in accordance with the JCP Curriculum and guidance.
- In Chumash Studies, Years 3 – 6 learn from Chumash Bereshit; Year 6 may also go on to study parts of Chumash Shemot. Lessons are planned using the JCP Curriculum and guidance.
- In the last term of Year 6, pupils learn Nach (Nevi'im Rishonim) using material written and developed by department staff internally within the school.

Jewish Living

- This includes Chagim, two Jewish Living Skills Weeks (one on Kashrut and one on Shabbat), and an array of informal experiences (see list below), provided across the school from Nursery to Year 6.
- The formal aspects of Jewish Living are taught using Curriculum Maps and material written and developed by department staff internally within the school.

Tefillah

- This includes daily morning prayers and daily Birkat HaMazon across the school, from Nursery to Year 6, using a Curriculum Map and Learning Objectives written and developed by department staff internally within the school.
- The progress made by pupils is reflected in the Siddur designated for use by different age groups. In Reception, the Siddur Yonah Big Book is used; in Year 1, each pupil uses a school-owned copy of Siddur Yonah; in Years 2 – 5, pupils use the Shevet Asher Tribe Siddur; in Year 6, pupils use the Koren NCSY Siddur Tribe Edition.
- In KS2, an additional timetabled opportunity may be provided each week during summer timetable for the study of Tefillah, the content of which is guided by the JCP Curriculum Aims of Tefillah.

A clear, easy-to-follow Overview has been formulated for each of the four areas of learning, which addresses the curriculum for each Year Group.

Each Overview provides the curriculum outline for the year (the long-term plans). JS teachers use the Overviews to plan for the medium term (half-termly) and for the short term (weekly plans).

Nursery and Reception plan in accordance with the EYFS areas of learning.

- Homework:
 - In line with school policy, no written homework is set.
 - Hebrew Reading material is sent home weekly for pupils to develop their accuracy and fluency. Pupils are expected to practise three times per week for 5 - 10 minutes per session. Parents are requested to complete and sign a Record Card. In Reception, activities are given to develop confidence in basic reading skills; in KS1, Aleph Champ material is practised; in KS2, material produced by the school is practised.
 - A weekly Parashah sheet is sent home for all pupils, individually created for each Year Group, to use as a review of the classroom learning and to trigger further discussion with parents about the relevant 'middah'.

Informal Education

Nb. During the Academic year 2020/21 activities may be adapted or restricted due to Covid 19 risk mitigation measures

We seek multiple ways to instil a love of Judaism as well as to provide practice in the skills that pupils will need to participate in Jewish rituals. Informal learning experiences and celebrations enhance the Jewish life of the school and extend and enrich our pupils' Jewish knowledge and understanding.

Whole school

- Sefer Torah assembly for Year 1 – Year 6 in each half-term
- Weekly Oneg Shabbat for each Year Group
- Year 1 – Year 6 assemblies including Hebrew songs immediately prior to each Chag
- Sukkah visits including use of Arba Minim
- Whole school Chanukah candle-lighting
- Purim whole day celebrations across the school
- Pesach Model Sedarim for each Class or Year Group
- Yom Ha'Atzma'ut whole day celebrations across the school
- Practical resource-making before each Chag, eg chanukiyah making, hamentaschen baking

Class

- Reception Show to celebrate Jewish Studies achievements
- Year 1 Chaggigat HaSiddur
- Year 3 Chaggigat HaChumash
- Year 5 residential Shabbat experience
- Year 5 Etgar Inter Schools Challenge
- Year 6 Siyum

Miscellaneous

- Regular Tzivos Hashem Craft workshops include: Shofar workshop (Rosh Hashanah), Olive press workshop (Chanukah), Matza bakery (Pesach), Sofrut workshop and Kashrut Workshop
- Charity initiatives
- Israeli dancing lunchtime club
- School choir
- Visits by Tribe, Bnei Akiva, Maccabi, GIFT, US Rabbis

Monitoring and Responsibilities

All teachers, both JS and Secular, are responsible for implementing this policy. The Headteacher and Leader for JS will be responsible for monitoring the policy and it will be reviewed regularly in consultation with staff and the JS Governors.

Teaching and Learning

The JS department has a comprehensive monitoring schedule which assesses teaching and learning once each half term. This includes planning scrutinies, book scrutinies, lesson observations and performance management meetings and reviews, comparable to all that takes place for Class Teachers.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

JS staff complete an annual schedule of continuing professional development through weekly JS Meetings, weekly INSETs (both whole school and JS), the annual LSJS National Conference for Primary Kodesh Teachers and through JCP Chumash training. In 2020 - 2021, further development of the current JS interactive provision will be made possible through training in the use of online tools and the creation of online resources through the JI Prime Silver scheme.

Assessment and Pupil Progress

Pupils are regularly assessed in a variety of ways within each strand of the curriculum. All assessments are moderated by the relevant curriculum lead or the JS lead. Assessments provide data for tracking pupil progress and feedback is given to parents on their child's progress during the year through the Parents' Evenings held at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms and through the annual end of year report.

Cross-curricular elements

JS staff incorporate the School's PSHE policy, promoting respect and understanding of diverse communities and religions. This is complemented by the School's RE policy which introduces pupils to important information about world religions, allowing for the development of accepting difference. Within JS lessons, Jewish Studies teachers seek to explain the differences of customs among Jewish groups, such as Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Opportunities for cross-curricular linking within the National Curriculum are identified whenever possible (both by JS teachers linking to the National Curriculum and Class Teachers linking to JS). Where possible, joint planning is done with JS for focussed days such as a Roman Day and an Egyptian Day.

Parental Partnership

Parents are encouraged to be involved with their child's Jewish education and the school offers a range of opportunities for parents to support and join in with their children's learning and experience of Jewish events. Currently this is done through:

- Tribe events
- Parental/carers participation at Tefillah, Oneg Shabbat, Chaggim assemblies and end of year shows in the Nursery
- Chagigat HaSiddur/HaChumash ceremonies
- SEED's Generation Sinai (annual parent-child learning programme pre-Shavuot)
- Model Sedarim

- A weekly Daf Parashah and weekly newsletter about each Year Group emailed home
- Hebrew Reading - parents are encouraged to help their children to practise if possible
- In addition, the PTA is very active and provides exciting opportunities for parents and children to feel connected to the school's Jewish identity as well as raising funds for the school. Events have included Pizza in the Sukkah, Chanukah Fetes, Purim Challah Bakes and Yom Ha'Atzma'ut Fetes.

Equality, Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion

The JS department is committed to ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. The curriculum is differentiated as are the teaching and learning opportunities for children. No member of the school should suffer or be disadvantaged by direct or indirect discrimination. JS Teachers will adapt the curriculum as necessary to meet the needs of children who may have emotional or physical difficulties or special educational needs. All pupils are given the same opportunity to be involved in learning irrespective of Synagogue affiliation and additional cultural backgrounds. We are accepting of difference.

The JS department of Sinai School is committed to giving every child the opportunity to expand their Jewish learning as they progress through the school and is always striving to develop and to achieve excellence.

Date: November 2020/Cheshvan 5781

Date of Review: November 2023