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EDUCATION

BY JC REPORTER

SINAI JEWISH Primary School sits proudly in the middle of a sprawling three-acre campus, next door to JFS (to which it recently secured feeder status) and educates more than 630 children, making it the largest Jewish primary school in Europe. The school will celebrate its 40th birthday this year, under the leadership of Juliette Lipshaw, who herself was a pupil at the school in the 1980s. She became headteacher in 2017.

Educationally the school is at the top of its game and Lipshaw's mission to take the school from "good to great" is evident in its latest Sats results and impressive phonics score. As a Maths Mastery school, Sinai has revolutionised its teaching of maths from reception onwards.

Last year Sinai was asked to join the Mayor of London's Schools for Success programme – to mentor other schools and share how Sinai has helped its children make significant progress, to become one of London's top six per cent of schools.

Sinai is in the unusual position of educating children from seven different boroughs. So how does it tackle the challenge of bringing a community feel to a school that welcomes families from such a wide geographic area?

"Bringing a community feel to our school has been something we have been working on over a number of

Seven boroughs but one big community



years," says Lipshaw, "and we are seeing that hard work come to fruition. We have a wonderful parent body who are committed to supporting the school and share a love for the teaching, the teaching staff and what the school stands for. Being a big school means we can offer big opportunities to all our children while ensuring the big beating heart of our school community is the focus."

Her passion for education is clearly shared by her staff, who love their jobs and the children, who take pride in their school.

Sinai also embraces the opportunities of such a diverse Jewish school population. The children are just starting their educational journey but the values they are taught and the people they meet, including friends and teachers, from nursery and through their time at Sinai, will stay with them for life.

The diversity means the children are accepting of difference from an early age and they learn to adapt and build long-lasting friendships that continue well past their primary education.

Sinai's location in Kingsbury means it stands on a large campus with extensive facilities from which all the children can benefit. The school is surrounded by playgrounds and outdoor spaces, with nursery enjoying two playgrounds and reception a shared playground for their three classrooms – both include outdoor learning areas.

Key stage one (infant) and two (junior) both have their own outdoor spaces and sports facilities. This, no doubt, is a contributing factor to the school's recent sporting successes – Sinai is the reigning champion in Brent for both girls' and boys' five-a-side football. The school regularly takes part in sporting competitions across football, rugby, gymnastics, netball, swimming and athletics.

PE teacher Robbie Solomons says: "Sport is a great way to bring the children together. To represent your school is both an honour and an achievement and means the children work together towards a shared goal. I love to see the camaraderie and friendships grow across the year groups."

The school also celebrates a strong Jewish ethos, which fosters a love of Jewish traditions and culture in a modern and innovative way. "This undoubtedly brings our families and school community together," says Jewish studies teacher, Michael Drucker. "We bring Jewish studies to life and ensure that the children and our Sinai families embrace the joy of Judaism and experience formative Jewish moments. The different religious blends we have at Sinai give us a different perspective and allow us to be tolerant of one another and celebrate in a meaningful way for everyone."

The love of and pride in Judaism fostered by Sinai expands into the wider community, as Sinai pupils are seen leading children's and youth services on Shabbat or festivals.

The school also prides itself on its regular and transparent communication with the parents. Debbie Joseph, head of operations and communications, says: "We like to share our news and successes with our parents and to keep them involved and active in their children's learning. We know the parents appreciate us sharing educational highlights and we ensure there are plenty of opportunities for our parents to gain a valuable insight into the daily learning and laughter within our school, whether

that be through online learning journals in nursery and reception, to our social media pages, or a weekly headteacher bulletin which includes operational updates and a Shabbat message. Good communication builds a strong and knowledgeable community. For Sinai, community is key and together the families from across the boroughs form a strong and happy alliance."



Headteacher
Juliette Lipshaw



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