



Sinai Jewish Primary School

Jewish Studies Policy

December 2023 /5784

Intent

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

Through daily Tefillah, weekly Parasha lessons, weekly Oneg Shabbat events and periodic celebrations of Chagim, pupils have many opportunities for spiritual development. We enable them to engage in self-reflection in order to forge their own relationship with G-d. Our curriculum aims to develop an appreciation of G-d's role in people's individual lives and in history, to develop a sense of belonging to a community and to cherish a deep connection to Israel, as the Jewish homeland.

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.

Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

Sinai's Jewish Studies curriculum, alongside the National Curriculum, provides opportunities for pupils to grow personally and spiritually. It ensures that the emotional connection for Jewish life and learning is both meaningful and relevant. Over the course of their journey through the years at the school, pupils discover the value of making a daily connection with G-d. Pupils have the opportunity to recite Tefillah everyday with their Year group and periodically together as a whole school community. The whole school comes together for Sefer Torah assemblies every half term and for assemblies preparing for Chagim. Pupils are able to join in and experience uplifting singing and share songs they have prepared as a year group. They are more confident to participate in Shul services with their own communities, knowing that we belong to a community and a people with a shared history and a deep connection to Eretz Yisrael. Sinai pupils are also given time throughout the week for their own private Tefillah where they can develop their own relationship with G-d and learn about G-d's role in the development of the Jewish people and begin to develop an appreciation of His role in people's individual lives.

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.

The teaching of RW (Religion and World Views) and British Values throughout the school ensures that our pupils develop an awareness that, in a world created by G-d, 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% (minimum) of each week's timetable across the school. This comprises:

- One JS lesson per day
- Daily Tefillah (15 mins)
- Daily Birkat HaMazon (10 mins)
- Weekly Friday Oneg Shabbat (30 mins)

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 (Parasha and KS2 Chumash lessons)
- 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 is introduced.
- Chumash Studies require pupils to read parts of 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.
- A weekly Parashah sheet (personalised for each year group) is sent home in a designated Parasha folder for pupils to use as a review of the classroom learning and to trigger further discussion with parents about the relevant ‘middah’.

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.

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.
- 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 before receiving their Shevet Asher Tribe Siddur at their Chagigat HaSiddur; 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.

Homework

- In line with school policy, no written homework is set - (children complete secular homework on Google Classroom).
- 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 as well as Tal Am books and Iton Bereishit
- 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’. There is also a request that this is signed by the parents.

Middah of the Month

At the start of each Jewish month, usually on Rosh Chodesh, a new Middah (value) is launched. The aim is to instil essential values and character traits in children so that they can embody them in their daily lives as well as promote their personal growth and social development. The Middot are chosen to reflect what is happening during the month e.g. *Achrayut*/Responsibility for Tishrei (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur), *Chesed*/Kindness around anti-bullying week, *Tikkun Olam*/improving the environment in Shevat and Simcha/Positivity in Adar (Purim). The middah of the Month is shared with children in either Tefillah or Shabbat Oneg and at the end of the month, certificates are given to a child in each class who has displayed that middah exceptionally well.

Informal Education

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.

Year Groups

- Nursery Chanukah and End of Year Shows
- Reception - Completion of Aleph Bet
- Year 1 Chagigat HaSiddur
- Year 3 Chagigat HaChumash
- Year 5 residential Shabbat experience
- Year 5 Etgar Inter Schools Challenge
- Year 6 Siyum

Whole school

- Middah (Value) of the month
- 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
- Succah 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'Atzmaut whole day celebrations across the school
- Practical resource-making before each Chag, eg Chanukiah making, hamentaschen baking
- Family Education events run by Seed and School Rabbi as well as a parent/child craft event for each year group over the course of the year.
- Regular Tzivos Hashem Craft workshops include: Shofar workshop (Rosh Hashanah), Olive press workshop (Chanukah), Matzah bakery (Pesach), Sofrut workshop and Kashrut Workshop
- Charity initiatives
- Jewish lunchtime clubs e.g. Anim Zemirot, Pirket Avot, Gardening club with Hebrew vocabulary.
- 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 Head of Jewish Studies 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.

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 and/ or the Head of JS. 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. Head of JS has pupil progress meetings every term with each JS teacher to discuss the attainment and progress levels in each curriculum area.

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 RW policy which introduces pupils to important information about Religions and World Views, 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:

- Google Classroom messages to share the learning that has taken place and to make any announcements
- A weekly Daf Parashah

- Hebrew Reading
- Model Sedarim
- Chagigat HaSiddur/HaChumash ceremonies
- SEED parent/Child events
- Tribe events
- 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 Succah, Chanukah events, Purim Hamentashen Bakes, 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.

Impact

- Children at Sinai will have a thirst for learning.
- Sinai pupils will be enthusiastic and actively participate in both their formal and informal learning experiences and will develop detailed Jewish knowledge and skills throughout the curriculum.
- Sinai pupils will have good Hebrew Literacy skills and will be able to independently apply their skills to all areas of their Jewish Studies learning.
- Sinai pupils will have a strong spiritual connection and be able to articulate their thoughts and beliefs clearly and confidently
- Sinai pupils will take pride in their commitment to Israel
- Sinai pupils will display strong qualities of leadership and will be actively involved in religious and charitable work. They will be actively engaged in the community and be prepared for their next stage in learning.