

newsletter

Shevat שבט 5773

January 2013

Dear Parents

As I write, it is the weekend of Tu B'shevat: bang on cue the snow has melted, a few green shoots dare to poke through (if not yet, it seems, the type that might signal an economic recovery) and minute by tiny minute the hours of daylight increase. The festival of New Year for Trees is a good time to think about what we are building and planning for the future: the lesson change bell for the first few weeks of term has been the late great Debbie Friedman singing that nursery classic, "Let's dig a hole and plant a tree" (especially popular with the more sophisticated members of Year 9...) and in this my first newsletter as the permanent Headteacher of JCoSS it is a good time to show the shape of the orchard that I hope JCoSS will be.

Firstly, for those of you who don't know me so well, I thought you might like to know my journey to get to this role: my 22 years in teaching has included schools that are selective and non-selective, mixed and single sex, independent and maintained, faith-based and non-faith-based. With a degree in Philosophy and Theology from Oxford, my teaching subject is Religious Studies and I have in my time led two academic departments and was responsible for 7 years for the pastoral and academic wellbeing of a 250-strong 6th form at Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls. My first interview at JCoSS in 2009 began with a hard hat and wellies as we toured the building site (still minus a roof) and since starting as Deputy Head the school has been a big part of my life.

As I take the reins as Headteacher, JCoSS remains committed to its unrelenting drive for high academic standards, its cross-communal Jewish ethos, its welcoming inclusive atmosphere and its pursuit of excellence. The key question, however, is, "And what's that all for?" My reply – and as an educator what motivates me – is that it is to enable human beings to become whatever they have it in them to become. This of course varies from one person to another, and we often need help to identify the shape of our own potential: we need to disentangle our own hopes and dreams from those that surround us. But it is important to keep the big picture in our sights, and not be solely limited by obvious outcomes, important as they are. Not everything valuable can be measured, and not everything that can be measured is of lasting value.

It's a vision that has a wide scope – and deliberately so. Not all of it will be achieved in our school years; but then becoming ourselves is a life-long process, and we should keep in mind the words of Pirkei Avot: "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it". Both halves of that are important!

In 4½ years' time our first cohort will finish their education at JCoSS. I want them and all our students to leave feeling they have been stretched, supported, nudged and prodded a little; to be accomplished and well-qualified, able to defend their integrity and to respect that of others, confident of their roots and aware of the perceptions of others. I want them, in other words, to leave us equipped for the world and equipped to make the world better. But above all I want them to be conscious of the big picture – the goal of fulfilled human lives, their own and others', which will give shape to all they do.

Back to the melting snow: thank you for your forbearance during the difficult weather and disruptions of recent weeks, and let us work together to ensure that the various seeds we are planting and tending will grow and flourish in the months and years ahead.

Patrick Moriarty
Headteacher

Date Reminders

Spring Term 2013

Starts **Monday 7 January**

1st Half Term ends Friday 15 February

Half Term holiday Monday 18 – Friday 22 February 2013

2nd Half Term Starts Monday 25 February

Term ends **Friday 22 March** (*Passover 26 March – 2 April*)

Summer Term 2013

Starts **Monday 8 April** (*Bank Holiday 6 May, School closed for Shavuot 15-16 May*)

1st Half Term ends Friday 24 May

Half Term holiday Monday 27 May - Friday 31 May

2nd Half Term starts Monday 3 June

Term ends **Friday 19 July** (Wednesday 24 July for staff)

Please also note when we close early

School will close at the earlier time of 2pm (buses leave at 2.10pm) on the following occasions:

- Prior to each Jewish festival (*erev yom tov*) and on 14 May 2013 (Shavuot).
- All Summer Fridays (from 12 April – 19 July inclusive).
- Training sessions for staff are on the 23rd January, 9th May & 8th July. School will close at 2pm on these dates.

Friday Closing Times

School will close at 1.25pm (buses leave at 1.35pm) every Friday until 22nd March

Forthcoming Parents' Evening Dates:

Thursday 28th February 2013 – Year 9 Options Evening – 6pm to 9pm

Thursday 18th April 2013 – Year 8 Parents' Evening #1 – 4.30pm to 7.30pm

Tuesday 22nd April 2013 – Year 8 Parents' Evening #2 – 4.30pm to 7.30 pm

NEW DATE – Monday 13th May 2013 – Year 7 Parents' Evening #1 – 4.30pm to 7.30pm

NEW DATE – Thursday 23rd May 2013 – Year 7 Parents' Evening #2 – 4.30pm to 7.30pm

Just a new year reminder for parents to contact Student Services regarding any absences, including appointments and illnesses.

Congratulations to Tom Stepsky and Talia Fenton for Outstanding Performance throughout the Autumn Term across all subjects. They have achieved the most positive logs in year 8 and were presented with their award in the Celebration Assembly. Well done.



Year 7s were tasked to create a home-made instrument as part of a Science Specialist project.

JCoSS 6th Form: Calling all parents..

As you know we recently welcomed our first 6th form to JCoSS. They are a great group of enthusiastic students who are keen to progress from school to university, work and/or training after the 2 years they spend here. We are committed to helping them make the best choices they can and in view of this we want to ask for the help of our Year 12 parents. Jaz Eskenzi, a Year 12 student has come up with a simple way to help students gain work experience.

The white board in the 6th form common room will have a chart with the areas of parents' skills and professions and students who are interested in these areas will contact them directly. Our students are interested in a wide range of careers including medicine and law as well as PR, working in travel, music or setting up their own business.

Here is what Jaz has to say about her idea;

'I find it is increasingly challenging to find work experience and internships. For many of us, we are desperately trying to make our CVs look as dazzling as possible. We need a variety of work experience to ensure the best CV possible and help with our university applications.

What better way to do this than to all try and use each other's contacts in order to gain work experience? The range of professions that each student is linked to, could be put to use, if we each write the areas of industry we are interested in on a white board. Then we can see if our parents or friends could offer work experience for that specific industry. Working as a community features highly in the JCoSS ethos, and by working together we can ensure that everyone gets great work experience to add to their CVs which will hopefully enable better jobs and university places to be gained in the future.'

Clare Raff, Head of Careers and Jaz Eskenzi Year 12

News from the PSRP

On Sunday 21st January 2013, we went to the Mad Hatters Tea Party at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London. This was the annual event organised by the London Taxi Driver's Fund for over 600 hundred children. The PSRP students were all invited.

We had lots of fun, heaps of sandwiches, cakes, buns and jellies. We met lots of characters including Iron-Man, Storm Troopers and Darth Sidious from Star Wars and the Nando Chickens. Around the hall there were Police who were taking fingerprints, Fireman who were giving away toys, Army Cadets who were letting us look and play with their training equipment, face painters and men who made different animals from balloons. There was even a fantastic disco.

We also met the Cheeky Girls, the Herfordshire's Got Talent Winner and best of all we met the Crystal Girls who are the Crystal Palace Cheer Leaders.

When it was time to go, the Taxi Drivers Fund gave all the children at the party a going home present. Oliver took home an air hockey portable game, chocolates, fruit and teddies whilst Jack took home a bad of chocolate, fruit and a model army truck with figures.

We had a fantastic time and can't wait to go again next year.

By Oliver Harta and Jack Foreman (PSRP)



A Celebration of Judaism at JCoSS

I have been delighted to return to JCoSS after my 9 months of maternity leave, to what can only be described as a celebration of Judaism.

This term in Year 7 the students are learning about the Responsibilities of the Parents to the Children according to the Talmud (Oral Law) in Masechet Kiddushin 29b. Amongst other things these obligations include: 'to teach your children'. This obligation is found in the text of the Shema: 'and you shall teach them diligently to your children'. (Devarim 6:7) 'What do you think your parents should teach you?' we have asked each of the students. The responses have been inspirational: to read and write; to be good people; to be a mensch; to make the world a better place; to love respect ourselves and each other; to love Jewish tradition.

This unit will culminate in the research and creation of the Year 7 Family History project. In previous years this piece of work has been a highlight of the year, and has at times brought tears to the eyes of the teachers assessing them. Your children will be interviewing and photographing you; their grandparents, and great grandparents. We look forward to reading about where your families originated and what brought you to this country, and how your Jewish identities have developed. This large scale project is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family to collaborate on a piece of work.

Our Year 8's have started their study of the History of the Jewish People and our Year 9's have been grappling with the dilemmas of Leadership. One of the most challenging dilemmas of all time for Jewish Leadership has been the role of the Judenrat during the Nazi Holocaust. The Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of Loving Kindness) project for the Year 12 is well under way, with volunteering taking place at various venues around North London.

Next time you visit JCoSS, do look out for the new art work in the Canteen: a beautiful display of the Seven Species of Israel based on the verse: 'For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey. (Devarim 8:7-8)

We will also be launching a school wide Mosaic project this term in which each student will have an opportunity to participate. The Romanesque mosaic will fill the imposing back wall of the Heartspace and will represent Judaism through the ages and the unique identity that is JCoSS.

I'm delighted to be back at school, and am thankful to Mr Rosenberg once more for his sensitive and inspirational direction of the Jewish Education Department. I look forward to seeing you all soon, please feel free to pop into my office to say hello.

Mrs E Robinson
Assistant Head, Director Jewish Education

Welwyn Garden City Youth Drama Festival 2013

This is our third year of participating in the WGC Youth Drama Festival. Despite some setbacks regarding rehearsals due to bad weather (!) it is now full steam ahead for the next few weeks!

The Festival runs from Monday 4th – Saturday 7th March. Each evening, three schools or drama groups perform plays of between 20 and 50 minutes. There is always a variety of Junior and Senior entries.

JCoSS will perform as part of the Junior section at 7.30pm on Thursday 7th March at the Barn Theatre, Welwyn Garden City. We have been successful in this Festival for the last two years, winning first place in 2011 and second place in 2012. You are most welcome to support JCoSS and/or the Festival. Tickets are available from the Barn Theatre Box Office through the website: <http://www.wgcydf.org/>

Miss S Miller
Head of Creative and Expressive Arts Faculty

LRC News

The Bookbuzz January Challenge!

We hope that Year 7 students enjoyed reading their free book from the "Bookbuzz" scheme kindly funded by the JPA.

Thank you to the students who have handed in their bookmarks with a review of the book they have read. The best bookmark will be laminated, given out to every Year 7 student and displayed on the plasma screen. The winner will also receive a book token. Watch this space!



Scholastic Book Clubs

The "Great Big January Sale" catalogues will be distributed to students soon. You can also access the website to browse the offer <http://clubs-school.scholastic.co.uk/jcoss> and you can also order on-line. Deadline for ordering is Wednesday 6th March.



Amazon Wish List: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/>

Very many thanks and Mazel Tov's to the following students and their families who donated books to the LRC last month: Noam Solomons-Wise (7S) and Samuel Danker (8N).

Thank you very much to Mr Greenhouse who donated a subscription to "Time" magazine which is now available in the LRC.

Mrs Mulkis
Librarian

BBC School Report 2013!

Every year, JCoSS runs the BBC School Report, an exciting project in which students write about the news that is important to them. This year we are creating a BBC News programme that will be filmed and edited to be screened on News Day - 21st March 2013.

Budding JCoSS journalists were invited to apply for the project, and the successful candidates have just been given the good news in the last 24 hours! These journalists will meet weekly to learn about news creation, writing news stories and presenting the information, before creating videos of their own to go into the JCoSS BBC News programme.

Watch this space for videos, articles and photos taken for BBC School Report over the next few months.

For more information visit www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport.

Ms J Eyres

Head of Media Studies

Activity Ideas for February Half term

There are lots of FREE activities and events at Centre of the Cell over the coming months! Book online at www.centreofthecell.org or call 020 7882 2562.

FREE Events during Half Term February 2013

During half term (20th to 22nd February), The Royal Society will be running Pod sessions and a fascinating new workshop called 'Something in the Air'. Booking is essential. Each session lasts approximately two hours and consists of a Pod show and a 'Something in the Air' workshop. To book events, please go to <http://royalsociety.org/events/>

Mrs H Follet

Assistant Headteacher - Science & Specialist Status

Reach for the Stars!

As the Spring Term starts and the staff now feel they are really getting to know the strengths and talents of our students, I thought I would write to give parents an update about the Gifted and Talented provision at JCoSS and the variety of activities offered by the school to enrich and develop learning.

This year's Gifted and Talented provision differs slightly from last year's in that currently the government requirements about Gifted and Talented census returns are changing. For this reason we are holding back on the writing of a Core Gifted and Talented register until the situation is further clarified. We are however, producing Subject registers, and you will be notified of these in due course.

The Brilliant Club:

JCoSS' participation in the Brilliant Club is a new and exciting venture for us that we hope will really enthuse our able students and help develop their independent learning skills. We are running the programme in the Spring and Summer terms, in conjunction with an outside not-for-profit agency, for students in Years 9 and 12. Students in these year groups will be given the opportunity to work with a PhD student from a Russell Group university on a topic within the field of Science, Humanities or Social Science. They will take part in a launch day and first tutorial at Sussex University, four tutorials at JCoSS and then a graduation ceremony at Oxford University. In tutorials they will discuss and debate the topic area at hand, and they will be required to complete pre-tutorial research. At the end of the course they will write a formal extended essay which will then be marked by the PhD student.

This is wonderful preparation for higher study and will be a great addition to any UCAS form. It will really give students the chance to see what higher level study at distinguished universities is like and will encourage them to develop skills of research and argument beyond those expected in a full Key Stage 3 or examination classroom.

Year 9 and Year 12 will be taking part in a launch assembly on Friday 1st February and in the assembly there will be more information about how to apply for the course. The deadline for applications will be Monday 11th February and all applications will need to be submitted in writing to Miss Kemp by 4pm on that date.

STEM Days: In April we will be hosting two STEM days for students in Years 7 to 9. These days will be open to a small group of students and will give them the chance to apply their Science and Humanities learning in a new context, as they work out how best to restart a planet after a natural disaster or how to man a successful expedition to Mars. It will suit students with strong problem-solving skills and a talent for Science, Humanities or Citizenship. Places for these events will be limited and students will be asked to apply for places nearer the time.

Architecture Day: We will once again be hosting an Architecture Day for students with a talent for Design Technology, Art, Maths and Science or simply those with excellent spacial awareness and constructions skills! This will be open to Key Stage 3 students, though we would value some supervision help from interested Sixth Form students. More information in the Summer Term.

P.E. Stars: Mr Mitman and Mr Smith are launching a new initiative for gifted sportsmen and women this term and you will soon receive a letter home explaining how to register your son or daughter's interest in the programme. We are aiming to really celebrate the sporting achievements and potential of all our students, whether they play for fun or compete inside or outside of school so please do get in touch with the PE department with any information about your child's sporting talents.

BBC School Report and the Great JCoSS Bake Off: JCoSS will be taking part in the *BBC School Report* and the *Great JCoSS Bake Off* again this year. Entries for both last year were amazing and the English and Food Tech departments are hoping to go one better this year! More details to follow from Ms Eyres and Ms Mawdsley.

JCoSS students are a very talented group of young people and we look forward to offering them more and more opportunities to develop and shine as we grow as a school. Watch this space!

Miss V Kemp

Gifted and Talented Lead Teacher

JCoSS Sports

District Cross Country : The JCoSS Cross Country team performed exceptionally well when they travelled to Queen Elizabeth Girls School for the annual district competition. The conditions were atrocious with the snow, wind and mud making the course a real test for even the hardiest of runners. The JCoSS team did us proud with each pupil finishing in the top half of each race; an achievement glorified by the fact each race contained over 80 participants. There was standout performances from Sophia Godfrey in the U13 girls race where she managed to finish 1st by well over 300m. Danny and Oliver Miracco finished strongly to gain 2nd and 3rd position in the U15 boys race, whilst Aidan Raphael put in a dogged performance by coming 11th. These four pupils now qualify to represent the District at the Middlesex Championships in a few weeks. If they are successful there then they will go on to represent Middlesex at the English Championships.

Year 7 / U13 Results:

Sophia Godfrey - 1st, Tom Rackind – 22nd,
Ben Ziff - 38th; Poppy Gordon – 23rd

Year 8 & 9 / U15 Results:

Aidan Raphael - 11th,
Jack Margolis – 28th; Tom Stepsky – 43rd;
Josh Shack – 22nd; Danny Miracco – 2nd;
Oliver Miracco – 3rd; Sam Morris – 28th



Basketball: JCoSS vs Finchley Catholic. JCoSS lost 40 points to 12 in what was an enthralling spectacle. After a dismal first quarter the boys started to find some form. Saul Shimoni scored the first basket after some neat play from Or Rappaport and Ben Felt. Some great defensive work from Jonathan Jennycloss and Luka Janjic kept Finchley at bay for the final two periods whilst Harry Brodin and Zack Azulay were quick to break forward and create opportunities for the lively Ben Felt and Jonathan Brown.

Maccabi Basketball: The Year 7 and 9 basketball teams competed in the Maccabi Basketball tournament at JFS on Thursday 24th January. With both JCoSS teams playing against boys a year group above them they found the going tough against much sharper, taller and physically stronger opposition. The Year 7 team found some form in the third game by beating King Solomon School with Or Rapaport and Saul Shimoni scoring the points. Not even with the talents of Jake Chweidan could the Year 9's find victory in their league. For both sides it turned out to be a real test of their mettle and their strength of character really shone through. Well done to the following Year 7 and 9 pupils: Saul Shimoni, Or Rappaport, Harry Brodin, Luka Janjic, Ben Felt, Jack Earle, Zack Azulay, Sammy Bradley, Gavin Vaughan, Mitchell Vaughan, Jake Chweidan and Sam Lavender, Nathan Caplan and Max Mydat.



G&T Physical Education – Are you Gifted and Talented?

The Physical Education Department have now started to identify their most Gifted and Talented sports pupils. However, we need your help. Parents will receive an email to help in the identification of our most able PE students. If you participate in any team or individual sport outside of School then please let the PE department know as soon as possible as you may qualify to be one the Gifted and Talented register.

JCoSS Elite Performers

Sports Profile

Name: Adam Regan

Year: 9

Sport: Football

Club: Brentford FC, Tottenham Development

Previous accomplishments:

Player of the Year 2009/10

Player of the Year 2008/09

My Training Programme:

Tuesday - 18:30 - 20:30

Thursday - 17:30 - 19:30

Friday - 18:30 - 20:30

Saturday - 09:00 - 11:30

Sunday - Match day



Best/Worst things about competing in my sport:

The best thing about competing in my sport is that I get to play to a high standard. The worst thing about competing in my sport is that I hate losing.

My role model: David Beckham

Most memorable moment: Winning Player of the Year for the second year running.

Targets and hopes for the future: To keep improving and eventually become a professional football player.



Thank-you to our students who made and sold cakes at the Chanukah concert and raised over £80 towards our school charities.