

However, as long as the administration of the school demonstrates a non-positive attitude towards Jewish observances and practices, no progress can possibly be made within the individual JS lessons. We all know the comment repeatedly made in Jewish communities that it is no good for pupils to learn one thing at their JS lessons and see quite another at home. It is far more serious when they learn one thing at the school JS lessons and see the reverse enacted within the very school itself. In fact, a most important factor which influences the attitude and interest of pupils within the school is the attitude of the administration of the school towards encouraging Jewish practices and observances.

If an administration is going to remain at best aloof from Jewish practice, or worse, decides not to respect Jewish practice, one cannot expect the pupils to act any better and any attempt by JS staff to teach these practices will largely be nullified. The pupils will naturally consider that the acquisition of Jewish knowledge regarding Jewish practice has no relevance within the school community itself and will therefore interpret logically that Jewish practices have no relevance for "those who are not Rabbis". This in turn will be a direct factor in causing pupils to lose any interest they might have had in JS.

Sadly, the attitude of the administration of the school leaves much to be desired in this matter. We shall therefore go into detail in this memorandum to give concrete examples of this attitude towards Jewish practices and observances. Supporting documentation will be quoted or enclosed.

//Abbreviations used://

RAC Minutes = Minutes of the Religious Advisory Committee
JSSA Minutes = Minutes of the Jewish Studies Staff Association

THE ATTITUDE OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN THE KD HIGH SCHOOL TOWARDS
JEWISH PRACTICES AND OBSERVANCES

Religious services are a most important part of the curriculum and enable pupils to put into practice what they learn in their JS lessons. (The legislators of the 1944 Education Act were also fully aware of the importance of religious acts of worship within the school timetable.)

However, for pupils from Year 4 upwards, there are NO Jewish services. This means that once a pupil reaches the age of 14 or so there will be no opportunity for him to lay tephillin, daven, or hear the reading of the Tora (RAC Minutes: 9.12.75; 3.2.76; 14.9.76; 25.10.76;). Thus, the effect of teaching these subjects in JS is largely nullified and pupils start wondering why these subjects were ever included in the syllabuses. An enquiry with the 4th year boys reveals that almost ALL have STOPPED laying tephillin. Senior CHRISTIAN pupils, however, DO have religious services, twice a week.

The Junior Jewish Assemblies have on a number of occasions been curtailed in length or completely cancelled to make time for such tasks as collecting dinner money (see below, "Cancellation of Periods").

Unlike ALL other Jewish schools, there is no Mincha service included in the curriculum. Pupils must give up their afternoon break every day for Mincha and credit must be given here for the 15 or so pupils who daily do make this sacrifice. Sadly, it must be recorded that neither the Headmaster nor the Deputy Headmaster ever attend this service which gives rise to the impression that Mincha

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF JEWISH STUDIES EXAMINATION TAKEN
BY PUPILS ENTERING KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL FROM KING DAVID
PRIMARY SCHOOL

by Rabbi Dr. Chaim Simons, Director of Jewish Studies,
King David High School, Liverpool

January 1976/Shevat 5736

Last November an examination consisting of questions on very basic Jewish Knowledge was taken by the 49 pupils (aged 11-12) who had come up from the King David Primary School that year.

An analysis of the answers produced by these pupils to some of the questions is given in Appendix 1. From these results, a number of important conclusions can be derived. IT SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT ALTHOUGH THESE CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN STRONG LANGUAGE, IT HAS NOT BEEN DONE FOR THE SAKE OF CRITICISM BUT IN ORDER TO GET AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION SO THAT WE MAY TRY AND IMPROVE IT.

- (1) The questions in this examination were on very basic Jewish knowledge which should be learnt year-in year-out. The fact that such poor results were produced indicates that this knowledge was not taught thoroughly enough - if at all. Is enough time devoted to the teaching of basic Jewish knowledge?
- (2) The results for the Berachot questions, indicate that the pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to make Berachot.
- (3) From the questions on the songs we can clearly see that the traditional songs are not taught before the Festivals.
- (4) The number of correct answers were boosted by pupils who learnt the material from their homes etc. rather than from the school.
- (5) Four pupils joined the school from non-jewish Primary Schools. Their results were not appreciably worse than the average results of the 49 King David Primary School pupils.

APPENDIX 1.

With which Festival or Fast do you associate the following :-

| | Correct Answers | Incorrect Answers |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Megillat Esther | 30 | 19 |
| Charoset | 41 | 8 |
| Kinot | 3 | 46 |
| Tekiah | 24 | 25 |
| Tal | 2 | 47 |
| Neilah | 9 | 40 |
| Hadassin | 27 | 22 |
| Chol Hamoed | 15 | 34 |
| Milk Foods | 8 | 41 |
| Kol Midrei | 17 | 32 |

N.B. For Chol Hamoed giving just one of the correct answers is counted as correct.

Continued/

Committee of Inquiry
King David Schools.

86 Childwell Valley Road
Liverpool 16.
March 13th 1977

Gentlemen

You ask for opinions and suggestions on Hebrew & Jewish Studies at the Primary School. There are many matters affecting the Jewish atmosphere of the school that disturb me, but I will confine myself to points that I have been able to verify in conversation with my daughter's teachers and other mothers I know of nearly from hearing.

One of the reasons that I send my child to a Jewish school is so that I should not have to withdraw her from a non-Jewish assembly & from non-Jewish hymn practice. I imagine then my distress when my daughter

Part of letter from my wife to the Committee of Inquiry

came home from school singing church hymns. I assured she had learned these from non-Jewish pupils. As she assured me that she learned these in "hymn lesson" and sang them in school assembly, I went to inquire at the school, not wishing to base my objection on a child's say-so. The non-Jewish teacher I spoke to agreed that she taught the children these songs chosen for their religious and moral aspects. The headmaster informed me that "Any song taught or sung in assembly is vetted by me to ensure that there is no Christological content." Unfortunately these songs seem equally to lack any positive Jewish content and I understand that they are taught to children in Church Sunday Schools.

My daughter began school half-way through the year in the January intake and was therefore backward in both Hebrew and English reading by her second year. She was

inquiry. (We had a daughter in the Primary School.)

- E5. The JS curriculum should be more tightly controlled so that the yearly cycle sees a development and not a repetition of what has gone before.
- E6. There should be some external measure of how successful teaching has been, by taking examinations set by an external organisation such as the Jewish Schools Torah Council and taken by other schools.

High School

- E7. The Jewish origin and character of the School should be much more strongly emphasised in various ways including the following
- i) The Head and Deputy Head must be seen to identify with the Jewish aims of the School and to be ultimately responsible for Jewish activities and for much greater cooperation between the MH and JS Departments. iv)
 - ii) At the meeting with parents of new entrants in the summer (when nearly all the 30 non-King David new entrants are non-Jewish) the efforts of the Jewish Community in founding and maintaining the Schools, and even subsidising secular activities, should be noted with pride, and the determination of the Governors to achieve Jewish as well as secular aims should be emphasised. v)
 - iii) Every effort should be made by the Head and Deputy Head to communicate to the non-Jewish staff the importance of the Jewish activities,

and the Head at Staff Meetings should have at the top of his agenda a review of Jewish activities over the last period and a discussion of those to come in the next period. The Heads of the MH and JS Departments, with the backing of the Head and Deputy Head, should make every effort to involve non-Jewish staff in the artistic and musical side of Jewish activities. At interview, applicants for posts must be informed of the positive Jewish nature of the School and asked whether they could see any difficulty in working in such a School. We feel that, as a once-for-all exercise, there should be a meeting before the end of the current term at which the Governors would meet the non-Jewish staff and discuss with them the Jewish aims of the School.

- iv) Elements of Jewish values should be introduced into as many secular subjects as possible, for example artistic and musical themes could be partly Jewish, cookery could introduce Jewish aspects etc.
- v) Correction for late arrival or non attendance at Jewish Assemblies and Assembly Periods, or for misbehaviour in MH and JS periods, should be as efficiently applied as for other breaches of discipline. We were pleased to learn that, as suggested during interview, the seating arrangement at Assemblies was being modified so as to allow checking of attendance.

If pupils of this age (about 11½) have not yet mastered these basic Jewish skills after seven years of study, they will already enter the High School bored with J.S. The boredom may be largely latent at this age, but it is soon manifest when the pupils reach 12-13 years.

E7 We cannot agree more that the Jewish origin and character of the School should be much more strongly emphasised. (A French assistant was in the School for nearly half a year before she realised it was a Jewish School!) It is bad enough when a pupil sees one thing at home and another at School. It is far worse when they learn one thing in their JS lessons and see the opposite in the running of the School, and this just makes a complete mockery of the JS lessons in the School.

i.) It is extremely important that the Jewish Staff, particularly those at the top, must, both in the activities of the School and in their own practice both inside and at least publicly outside the School, show that Jewish observances are not just for "JS teachers" but also apply to the "masses".

With regard to "much greater co-operation between the MH and JS departments", it should be remembered that there are two ways of approaching the teaching of MH. One is that it is taught in a religious way as "Lashon Kodesh" by Orthodox teachers - co-operation is then possible with JS. The other is when it is taught as just "another language" with no regard to the Orthodoxy of the teachers and the sanctity of the language. Sadly, in our School, the latter method prevails making a "much greater co-operation" impossible.

iii.) This communication "to the non-Jewish Staff (of) the importance of the Jewish activities" is extremely important and if this were done the comments made at Staff Association meetings and in the Staff-room would be minimised or even eliminated.

iv) We completely agree that Jewish values should be introduced into as many secular subjects as possible and we would be happy to assist the secular staff to implement this.

vi.) It goes without saying that Assemblies of the whole School (which are about 60% Jewish, 40% non-Jewish) should be completely secularised. Jewish pupils do not go to a Jewish School to sing Church hymns or to take part in "Mixed worship".

E8. The Statement "For MHJS the dividing line in emphasis should be the end of the 2nd year" is not clear. If it means increasing the time devoted to MH at the expense of JS, then this is totally unacceptable to us. At present, the time devoted to JS decreases with each successive academic year, whereas the time for MH remains constant in the first three years and then radically increases in the 4th year. If one wishes to increase the time devoted to MH then it must be done at the expense of a secular subject. If one is concerned with JS, one does not decrease the time devoted to it - on the contrary it should be increased.

We are quite amazed at the suggestion that Jewish Assemblies should be limited to the 1st and 2nd years. The Ministers have repeatedly expressed concern that there are no Jewish Assemblies from the 4th year upwards, and that as a consequence pupils are no longer laying Tephillin and davening. Now the CoI are suggesting that Assemblies for the 3rd year should cease! Another point is that if Jewish Assemblies were limited to the first two years, for most of each academic year, there would not be a Minyan in these Assemblies.

We welcome the recommendation that the 3rd form Assembly period should be integrated into the normal timetable, and hope this will be in operation from this September.

The CoI state that they "can see no net advantage in integrating the 4th and 5th form Assembly periods into the normal timetable". Unfortunately they do not give any indication of how they arrived at this conclusion. However, we can only reiterate what we have stated on numerous occasions in the past; that having these subjects before the official start of the school day lowers their dignity and prestige and hence the respect pupils accord to them.