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Support Builds for First Inclusive Jewish Secondary School *- Multi-million pound bid goes to Government*

The JCoSS (Jewish Community Secondary School) Committee today took the next step towards opening the UK's first inclusive Jewish secondary school by 2009, by announcing the submission by Barnet Council of a £46 million funding bid to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

The bid document and 74-page business plan - backed by JCoSS partners Norwood, Anglo Jewry's leading children & family services charity, and ORT, the world's leading educational specialists - goes in on the same day the Committee publishes independent research, which reveals huge demand for an inclusive Jewish secondary school at the New Barnet site.

The research has found that parents from every section of the Jewish community – by a difference of 64% to 16% – would prefer to send their children to an Jewish, rather than a non-Jewish, secondary school. (20% expressed no preference.)

The survey by Carrick James Market Research, uncovered an overwhelmingly preference for faith-based secondary education. That preference was dominant not just among practicing Jews but also amongst Jews who were not members of any synagogue (57% to 21%). Furthermore, 60% of respondents (against 23%) thought it was also important that such a school should have an inclusive ethos.

Commenting on the independent research findings, Jonathan Fingerhut, Joint Chair of JCoSS, said:

“These figures are simply staggering. Whether it is parents seeking to instil into their children a moral and ethical framework, or merely wanting to escape the job culture, there can be no doubt that demand for JCoSS is far deeper and broader across the whole Jewish community, than we had ever dared to believe.

“What these figures show is that an inclusive Jewish secondary school will thrive and be capable of attracting large numbers of pupils whose parents would never consider sending their children to any of the existing exclusively Orthodox options.

“As a result not only is the popularity of the school assured - even in the face of potentially fierce competition - but it is now also clear that it has a major role to play in bringing back to Judaism young people who might otherwise lose their identity and be lost to the community,” he added.

The research reinforces the unprecedented levels of interest in the school, following its approval by Barnet Council less than two months ago. Since then, despite being *four years* before it opens at the East Barnet site, over 200 parents have registered their children as prospective pupils by visiting JCoSS’s website (<http://www.jcoss.org/>).

The DfES bid will not only enable JCoSS to be built on the current East Barnet Upper School site at Westbrook Crescent, New Barnet, but will also allow the East Barnet School to be redeveloped concurrently with a completely new building complex on a single campus at Chestnut Grove, New Barnet.

ENDS

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Notes

1. JCoSS – to be located on the site of the current East Barnet Upper School at Westbrook Crescent, New Barnet - will be the UK’s first *inclusive* Jewish state secondary school. JCoSS will offer educational excellence based around equal treatment of all strands of Jewish belief and practice, augmented by the teaching of wider multiculturalism. It will be open on an equal basis to all Jewish children, irrespective of birth or synagogue affiliation. It will include a specialist unit for children between the ages of 11-19 with a range of profound and multiple learning disabilities.
2. The research was conducted in April 2005 by Carrick James Market Research, specialists in child and youth research. Five minute face-to-face interviews were carried out with 509 validated parents (Jewish with children under 11 years old) in predominantly Jewish areas of London and South Hertfordshire. 60% of interviewees belonged to Orthodox synagogues, while 40% belonged to a non-Orthodox synagogues or were unaffiliated, to create an representative sample of the Jewish community as a whole.