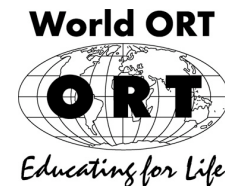


**Embargo –10.30 Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005**



## **New Jewish Community Secondary School to Open in Barnet in 2009**

- Barnet Council to bid for funds for JCoSS and the redevelopment of East Barnet School
- JCoSS, ORT and Norwood working in partnership across the Jewish community
- New facilities – special education needs facility, theatre, sports hall, all-weather pitches - for wider Barnet community

The JCoSS (Jewish Community Secondary School) Committee today announced plans to open JCoSS, the UK's first inclusive Jewish secondary school, in 2009. This follows the decision last night by Barnet Council to support the establishment of JCoSS through a funding bid to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

JCoSS will be a first of its kind – a truly inclusive school, open on an equal basis to all Jewish children, irrespective of birth status or synagogue affiliation and with due respect for differing traditions, beliefs and practices. The teaching of Judaism will be a fundamental element of the school and will respect all strands and traditions of faith. JCoSS will offer unparalleled educational excellence at all levels within a unique Jewish ethos, augmented by the teaching of wider multiculturalism. In partnership with ORT and Norwood, leading Jewish educational and children's charities it will include world-leading provision of information and communications technology throughout the curriculum as well as an integral, specialist 60-place unit for children between the ages of 11-19 with a range of learning disabilities.

The DfES bid will be made by Barnet Council and will seek to establish JCoSS on the current East Barnet Upper School site at Westbrook Crescent, New Barnet. At the same time, East Barnet School would be redeveloped as a single campus school at Chestnut Grove, East Barnet. The JCoSS facilities including a theatre, sports hall and all-weather sports pitches will be available to the wider community in Barnet outside of school hours.

JCoSS will be a voluntary aided, state-of-the-art six form entry Jewish secondary school with places for nine hundred pupils in year groups 7 to 11 and a further 360 students in its sixth form. The JCoSS syllabus will adhere to the National Curriculum and will be developed in partnership with ORT, one of the largest non-governmental education and vocational training organisations in the world, which teaches 280,000 students annually in 800 educational institutions in 60 countries. ORT, in coordination with the Community and Local Authority, will also provide assistance and training on integrating information and communications technology to other teachers in the Barnet area.

The JCoSS development will include the Norwood Specialist Resource Unit which will incorporate its new planned school for over 60 children between the ages of 11-19 with a wide range of learning disabilities. This will replace the Annie Lawson School, which is currently located at Ravenswood Village in Berkshire and will operate alongside the mainstream school, thus becoming the specialist resource unit of the new JCoSS school. Alongside this, Norwood which is Anglo-Jewry's largest Children and Family Services organisation will provide learning support to the mainstream school pupils at JCoSS who need specialist help through the provision of its special education outreach service, Binoh which will be available on-site. Norwood will run the Specialist Resource Unit, which will also be open to pupils from the wider Barnet community who have special educational needs.

JCoSS is actively supported by the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, Liberal Judaism and the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues – together with the Jewish Community Day Schools Advisory Board as well as leading figures in the Jewish community including Lord Janner of Braunstone, Gerald Ronson and Stephen Rubin. In addition, parental research undertaken on behalf of JCoSS has identified overwhelming support for the school from across the whole spectrum of the mainstream Jewish community.

**Jonathan Fingerhut, Co-Chair of JCoSS** said: “We are delighted that Barnet Council has backed the vision both of JCoSS and of parents across wider London for a groundbreaking and truly inclusive Jewish secondary school. Independent research has already shown that existing secondary provision simply cannot meet the needs of the wider Jewish community. Working in partnership with ORT and Norwood we will be able to deliver an exceptional quality of teaching as well as an integrated special education needs facility in a single, cost-effective site. The redevelopment of East Barnet School together with the modern facilities JCoSS will offer to the wider community outside of school hours will be of benefit to children, parents and the wider Barnet community.”

**Councillor John Marshall, Barnet Council Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning** said: “The bid Barnet Council is submitting to the DfES to redevelop East Barnet School and establish JCoSS is good for the wider community of Barnet as well as Jewish parents. I know that more and more Jewish parents would like to send their children to their choice of Jewish secondary school. The JCoSS proposal will enable them to do so. I am sure that the school will be very successful academically and will widen choice for many parents. Barnet Council has been impressed with work of the JCoSS Committee both in the detailed planning undertaken and in the determination they have shown to make the school a reality. I do hope that they will be successful.”

**Robert Singer, Director General of World ORT** said: “I am delighted that ORT is working in partnership with JCoSS on this most exciting and innovative new secondary school. For many years now, ORT has nurtured an aspiration to be involved with a school in this country that will match ORT’s exacting educational and technological criteria, maintained around the world in our 800 educational institutions. We believe that in JCoSS we have found such a partnership. We will be working closely with JCoSS in developing a curriculum, ethos and resources in the best tradition of ORT in the last 125 years.”

**Norma Brier, Chief Executive of Norwood** said: "The announcement today that Norwood will be providing a special education resource unit at the new JCoSS school is great news for the children and families we support. It means that we can fulfil a long-held vision, in line with the Government's model for a more inclusive education system in the UK, giving severely disabled young people in our community the same educational opportunities as their peers, in the most effective way. We have wanted for some time to bring our school for children with learning disabilities closer to the heart of the community, so that we can fulfil demand and offer access to all Jewish children and families. The partnership with JCoSS is a cross-communal initiative as we share a vision and commitment to provide state-of-the-art educational services to all Jewish children. By working together and developing all educational facilities on a single site we will be providing a groundbreaking service to the community. This is a visionary project, which will set new standards in its field."

**Further information on JCoSS is available online at [www.jcoss.org](http://www.jcoss.org)**

**Ends**

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