

Jewish Studies

Aims

- Our aim as a department is to ensure that when any student leaves Immanuel College he or she values being a proud, identified Jew and demonstrates this through religious commitment, continued Jewish learning and involvement in the Jewish community.

Objectives

- To develop our students' love of Jewish learning and Jewish living.
- To teach our students the skills necessary to read and interpret primary Jewish texts, emphasising how these texts have relevance and meaning for the modern world.
- To teach our pupils how to express religious and philosophical ideas in writing and in speech.
- To guide our students in their own spiritual development and prepare them for the religious, moral and ethical dilemmas of adulthood.
- To strengthen our students' love of and identification with Israel.
- To develop within our students a sense of religious duty founded upon a personal relationship with G-d.

Organisation

The department consists of the Director of Judaism, Co-ordinator of Jewish Life, Head of Biblical Hebrew, four full-time and three part-time teachers, all of whom have studied at Yeshiva or Seminary.

Every effort is made to develop the skills of each individual pupil and to help each of them on his or her own spiritual journey.

Our teachers encourage pupils to study texts through varied methods and media, including chevruta (one-to-one study), drama, film, ICT and guest speakers to stimulate our pupils whilst providing a high standard of Jewish learning.

The Jewish life of the school

Teachers in the Department, with the help of the Immanuel College Beit Midrash, organise a wide range of experiential education.

a) General informal education

The Immanuel College day is an intensely Jewish one, which starts with traditional Shacharit or an abbreviated service and which includes Mincha. Pupils learn not only how to participate in, but also how to lead, religious services.

On special occasions such as Erev Yom Kippur, Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, Purim and Yom Ha'azmout the whole school davens together and experiences a joyful and inspiring Tefillah.

Purim merrymaking features pupil bands, dramatic sketches and dancing. Yom Ha'azmout is celebrated with festive Israeli meals, music and dancing. Many other informal education activities take place, such as Shabbatonim, Matza baking, Shofar making, and Lulav and Etrog dissection in Succah workshops.

b) The Immanuel College Beit Midrash

The Immanuel College Beit Midrash provides voluntary daily learning, a halachah shiur for senior pupils at lunchtime, a mishnah shiur for junior pupils at morning break, a short Dvar Torah at the end of the daily Minyan and sessions after school. The members of the Beit Midrash have formed strong links with a diverse range of pupils, both through their voluntary learning sessions and through their enrichment sessions within the Jewish Studies lessons for pupils who are learning at a different pace from their peers.

c) School journeys

1. Year 7 cross-curricular visit to Clifford's Tower in York to explore a tragic episode in British Jewish history.
2. Year 9 Israel Educational Journey for four weeks at the end of the Shavuot Term.
3. LVI journey to Poland as part of Holocaust education for one week during December.

Who studies what and when?

Years 7-9

Pupils study Torah SheBa'al Peh (Rabbinics) and Torah SheBichtav (Bible). In the subject of Torah SheBa'al Peh, some pupils make a comprehensive study of basic Jewish knowledge over the course of Years 7-9, studying the practical side of the Jewish festivals, Shabbat, Kashrut, the Jewish life-cycle, Jewish history, the "Jewish Bookshelf", "Jewish etiquette", Hebrew reading, and Tefillah. Other pupils delve more deeply into the sources, exploring topical life-inspired issues, "Mi-passuk le-pesak" – through the linear perspective of the biblical, talmudic, rabbinic, and contemporary Jewish texts. In this way the pupils gain age-old learning skills and see Torah as a relevant guide for their 21st-century lives.

Continued on page 32