

Blackpool 2026



LJFS NEWSLETTER

"...the turn of the year." (תְּקוּפַת הַשָּׁנָה)
Exodus 34:22

As the Torah reminds us, there is a distinct holy rhythm to 'the turn of the year' (Exodus 34:22). Looking back from the beginning of this school year to its end, we are incredibly proud of the harvest of achievements, growth, and friendships our students have cultivated...

WELL DONE MISHPAT! SPORTS DAY

What an incredible day we had at the annual LJFS Sports Day 2026! The school fields were buzzing with energy as students demonstrated outstanding teamwork, determination, and community spirit across a brilliant variety of track and field events. From thrilling photo finishes on the track to massive cheers for house teammates in the field, it was a memorable day filled with healthy competition and fantastic sportsmanship. Congratulations to all of our athletes (staff and students) who pushed for personal bests, and a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to making this year's event such a resounding success!

JULY 2026

Announcements

Return to school

WEDNESDAY 2ND
SEPTEMBER @8AM

School re-opens to students as normal.



SAVE THE DATE
JANUARY 20TH & 21ST
2027

LEEDS JEWISH FREE
SCHOOL WILL BE
PUTTING ON A
PANTO!

"OY VEY ITS A
PANTO"



Inspiring Students

Through an inspiring collaboration with Jlife magazine, LJFS students have been given a truly enriching platform to express their voices on issues that matter most to them. Exploring the theme of “Inside Teen Spirit”—where modern teenage life intersects with tradition—our students have embraced the opportunity to write with insight, honesty and creativity, sharing their perspectives with confidence and purpose.

At LJFS, we may be small, but we are undoubtedly mighty. As the saying goes, “From little acorns grow mighty oaks,” and we see this reflected daily in the achievements of our pupils. Whether through thoughtful written work or active participation in junior leadership, our students are already making meaningful contributions that ripple beyond the classroom.

Food for Thought

LJFS Year 10 student Libi Doerfler explores how everyday school rules and Jewish laws play a vital role in preserving identity and community.



Sometimes it's hard to fully understand why certain rules exist, especially when they seem strict or limiting. But when I think

come from biblical laws that have guided our community for generations. They set boundaries to help us live in a way that respects our faith and culture.

For example, the rule about not singing in front of boys isn't just about control;

it's about preserving modesty and respect, which are core values in our culture. A lot of people in our school wish it were more of a Jewish environment, filled with more Jewish people, but if we stop following these rules, that reduces the opportunity for more religious people to join the school. When we follow these laws, we're not only obeying rules but also showing respect for the traditions that have kept our community strong. Doesn't that make you think about how much history and meaning lies behind what might seem like a simple rule?

I understand why it can be frustrating, especially when some people don't follow the rules.

One thing that really stands out is how, if even one person breaks the kashrut laws, it can affect everyone. For example, if someone thinks it's okay to secretly bring a non-kosher sandwich to school, they may not realise that by eating it on the tables, they could make those tables non-kosher

for someone who keeps kashrut strictly. It's like the whole community feels the impact, and suddenly the trust and respect we've worked so hard to maintain is weakened.

On school trips, when it's hot and I wish I could wear shorts, I understand why modesty is emphasised. It's not about being uncomfortable for no reason; it's about honouring the values that connect us to our faith and to each other.

So, next time a rule feels frustrating or unnecessary, pause and ask yourself: what does this protect and who does it connect me to? These biblical laws and cultural traditions are more than just restrictions – they carry the values, history, and identity of an entire community. When we choose to respect them, even when it's difficult, we're choosing to be part of something bigger than ourselves. And maybe the real question isn't why the rules exist – but what kind of community we want to be if we choose to follow them.

“Remember to Remember”



Zara Sefton is a Year 10 student at Leeds Jewish Free School. She travelled with over 200 members of the Leeds Jewish community and beyond on the 'Unity is Strength' day trip visit to Krakow and Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, organised by Rabbi Alby Chait and the team at UHC Leeds.

Two days after returning from Auschwitz, I sat down to write this piece. At first, the words didn't come. I simply couldn't put my swirling thoughts into words. But then, I remembered the words of Dov Forman, author of 'Lily's Promise' and guest on the trip. He spoke as we came together to eat before heading back to the airport and home to Leeds after a very long day visiting the old Jewish Quarter of Krakow followed by the horror of Auschwitz and Birkenau.

He said: "History is something that exists in the past, often reduced to facts and statistics. But memories are what truly remain. Memories are love. Memories are identity. Memories are humanity."

Memories don't just exist in the past – we carry them in our present lives. It made me wonder, what memories do we all hold onto? Time causes memories to slip into the distant fragments of history. Facts.

Statistics. Things that may lack meaning and true understanding.

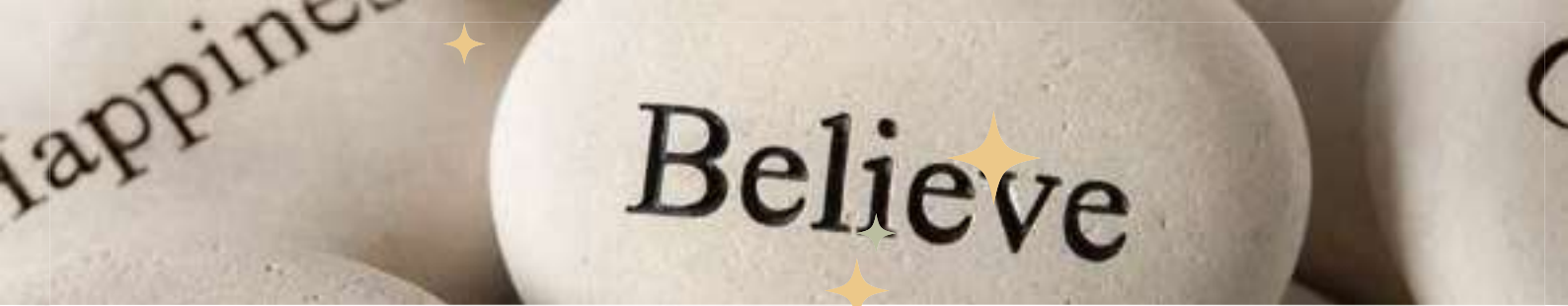
In psychology, there is something called prospective memory. It means 'remembering to remember'. It reminds us that we must not only remember the tragedies of the Holocaust today but take our own memories – the ones of being surrounded by friends, praying together with loved ones, and even the simplest moments of life – and remember to remember them.

Remember how lucky we are that we can experience things like this. Remember how blessed we are that, not only can we experience moments of love and joy, but we can also hold onto them. And most importantly, remember the millions of innocent people who were stripped of this ability in the tragedies of the Holocaust.

When I visited Auschwitz, something that really stuck with me was seeing the vast piles of thousands of shoes and glasses. Things that are so often taken for granted. Even the simplest of things – being able to walk and see clearly – were taken away from victims of the Holocaust. They were dehumanised, tortured, and oppressed. It made me realise how I often forget how lucky I am. I was able to leave Auschwitz,

able to see, and able to walk comfortably. Don't just remember how lucky you are now. Carry it forward with you. Carry your gratitude in all that you do. So, I end with this: stand up to hatred, choose love, and above all – remember to remember.





Inspiring Students

We are particularly proud of three recent alumni—Sofia Sefton (Class of 2023–24), and Sarah Cohen and Tamara Cohen (Class of 2024–25)—who have each secured the highly coveted role of Principal Student at Allerton High School. Their success is a testament to the strong foundations built during their time at LJFS. All three of these former students were on the student leadership team of LJFS.



Sofia Sefton

As a former student of LJFS, I am incredibly grateful for the leadership opportunities I was given, particularly through my role as Head Girl. This experience not only strengthened my confidence but also inspired me to pursue further leadership positions beyond LJFS. It gave me the self-belief to apply as an external candidate and stand out among a cohort of over 200 students.

In my current role as Principal Student, I have had the privilege of leading a wellbeing initiative focused on supporting Key Stage 3 students. Through this project, I have been able to advocate for their mental health, helping to ease their transition into secondary school and enhance their overall school experience.

Without the strong foundations, encouragement, and opportunities provided by LJFS, I would not be the person or leader I am today. The skills, confidence, and values I developed there continue to shape my journey and empower me to make a positive impact on those around me.

We are both so honoured to have been appointed as Principle Students at Allerton High sixth form, especially as we have only been at the school for a year.

We are certain that the leadership skills we learnt as part of the LJFS junior leadership team certainly stood us in good stead. What we have seen first hand is how our LJFS core values apply not just at LJFS but in the wider world.



Tamara Cohen and Rachel Cohen



This year, we were incredibly fortunate to be awarded a grant from the Yael Foundation, a global organisation dedicated to strengthening Jewish identity and ensuring that Jewish children around the world have access to high-quality Jewish education. The Foundation works tirelessly to support schools, educators and communities, investing not only in educational opportunities but also in the long-term sustainability and growth of Jewish life across the globe.

Through the generous funding we received, we have been able to make significant improvements in three key areas. Firstly, we have enhanced our ICT provision by securing much-needed equipment to support the teaching of STEM subjects. Secondly, we have guaranteed Hebrew teaching for the next 12 months, helping to ensure that the language continues to live and thrive within our community. Finally, we have invested in developing areas of the school that required improvement, enabling us to take our sports and performing arts provision to the next level. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Yael Foundation for everything they have done for us this year. Meeting their team, working alongside them, and seeing their commitment to Jewish education first-hand has been nothing short of transformational for our school and our community.



Thank you for working with us....



Year 10 GCSE Geography students visited Hornsea as part of their compulsory fieldwork. Students measured the height of the sand around the groynes and sketched the sea defences. Students, alongside Mr. Musgrove, also got in the very cold water to measure the rate of longshore drift using oranges. All students had an excellent day, accompanied by fantastic weather!



Our hub students have been gaining valuable hands-on experience through weekly work placements at the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board. Throughout their time there, they have contributed in various areas including the playroom, the café, and the restaurant. Their hard work and dedication have been met with glowing praise from both staff and customers. They were even featured in the J Life magazine. These placements have been instrumental in helping the students develop important skills essential for adulthood. The program has been so successful that it will continue beyond September, offering ongoing opportunities for growth and learning. We are proud to see our students thrive and look forward to supporting their journey towards independence and confidence.

Work Experience





Beamish Museum Visit

As part of Enrichment Week at LJFS, students visited Beamish Museum to explore life in the past. They rode on historic trams, visited traditional shops and homes, and experienced what school was like for children in Victorian times. The trip brought history to life through interactive activities and gave students a fun and memorable day of learning outside the classroom.



Jorvik Centre Visit

During Enrichment Week, LJFS students travelled to York to immerse themselves in the world of the Vikings at the Jorvik Viking Centre. They journeyed through a recreated Viking city, discovered how people lived over 1,000 years ago, and examined genuine artefacts uncovered by archaeologists. The experience gave students a fascinating insight into York's Viking heritage and helped them bring their classroom learning to life in a unique and memorable way.

Blackpool

To celebrate the end of a successful school year, LJFS students enjoyed a fantastic trip to Blackpool. They spent the day exploring the seaside, enjoying the attractions, and making lasting memories with their friends. The trip was a great opportunity for students to relax, have fun, and reflect on their achievements before the summer break.





Oy Vey...Its a panto!

Snow White
and the Seven Schleps

COMING SOON