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Welcome

On behalf of our governors, staff and pupils we would like to welcome you to Simon Marks Jewish Primary School.

This prospectus is designed to provide parents and carers with valuable information about our school, values, ethos and the school's functions to ensure that our pupils have the very best opportunities to be as successful as they can.

Simon Marks is a one-form entry primary school within the London Borough of Hackney. We are close to Stoke Newington train station and local bus routes. Stoke Newington is a vibrant area and a popular location for young families. We cater for children between the ages of three through to 11. We have a capacity for 236 children and the class sizes are a maximum of 30.

We commit funding to ensure that classes and pupils have the support they need. Some classes will have

a teaching assistant in addition to their class teacher. Staff work extremely hard to ensure that we provide the very best education for all our pupils.

At Simon Marks we speak a number of different community languages including Hebrew. Everyone is valued as part of our friendly learning community. We treat everyone fairly and everyone is expected to work hard and do their best. We are a Scopus school which is part of the United Synagogue family. We recognise that our children come from a variety of Jewish and other backgrounds. The religious character of the school is that of modern orthodox Judaism.

We very much value parents and carers as partners in their children's learning. The school works really hard in fostering positive links between home and school. We aim to create motivating and exciting learning opportunities for all our children and recognise the importance of parental support.



At Simon Marks we have high aspirations and expectations. We inspire all children to attain their very best, we want our children to be confident lifelong learners with the skills to be successful in society.

Ms G. Metin Asdoyuran

Headteacher

"There is clear evidence of music and art being used to provide excellent learning opportunities both in lessons and beyond the school environment."

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A brief history of Simon Marks Jewish Primary School

In 1956 the Clapton Jewish Day School was established next to the old shul (synagogue) in Lea Bridge Road. As time passed and the population grew there was a demand for larger premises.

In May 1973 the school was opened on the present Cazenove Road site as **Simon Marks Jewish Primary School**, gaining voluntary-aided status.

Today, the school is proud to be the only remaining mixed Jewish school in inner London. We rely on voluntary financial contributions to support Hebrew and Jewish Studies as well as a full range of activities aimed at strengthening our ethos and wider effectiveness. The Jewish context of our local area is varied. There are Charedi, modern orthodox, Masorti and a range of progressive communities including a mix of Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions. The school is a Zionist school – our children learn about and celebrate the State of Israel.

We work closely with schools in the local area and are proud of our work in the community. We welcome children from across the spectrum of Jewish practice and also from local families who are sympatheic to the school's Jewish and inclusive ethos.



"The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school."

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Our Vision Statement

We are committed to ensuring that every pupil leaves our school with high aspirations, an enduring enthusiasm for learning and the confidence to address the world on their own terms. We are committed to the concept of lifelong learning by identifying opportunities for professional development, Jewish family education and community learning of a high standard. Central to our success is the significance we attach to the relationships between the school, parent body and local community.

Simon Marks is a school where children learn to achieve through working with and helping other people, respect the diversity of the community in which they live and learn and contribute to Jewish continuity and wider society.

We teach key skills and knowledge that leads to understanding and developing confidence to succeed.

We are committed to providing a caring, happy and welcoming environment which meets the needs of each child and ensures that all children have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum including interaction with, and appreciation of, the arts.

Our learning community is facilitated by a leadership structure which clearly communicates the purpose and direction of the school and a system of informed continuous professional development. Our professional staff team actively seek to take up opportunities to further their own knowledge and skills.

We aim to prepare children for a changing world through wisdom – ancient and modern – with Jewish and British values exemplified by:

תורה עם דרך ארץ

'Torah im derech eretz' Torah with a worldly outlook



We are committed to inclusion, believing that every child has the right to succeed. We take ownership of the responsibility to ensure that any barriers to learning are overcome and that all children experience success in a highly relevant context. Our parents and community are key partners and we are committed to working together to sustain a strong sense of community, promote educational achievement, raise children's self-esteem and engender a sense of pride in our schools and communities.

Organisation

School Staffing

Our leadership team is dedicated to delivering high standards of education. The assistant headteacher is lead for Jewish Studies and strategically plans and ensures that our Jewish Studies curriculum is integrated within the National Curriculum.

All our classes are mixed ability and mixed gender. Class teachers have overall responsibilty for class progress and outcomes. They are supported by senior leaders and support staff members. Class teachers have timetabled sessions out of class to plan their teaching.

We have a dedicated music and Hebrew teacher both of whom deliver lessons to all pupils. The school also has Norwood therapeutic services working on-site for additional pastoral care and a learning mentor for support across the school.



"Leaders have ensured that the special educational needs funding is spent on effective provision. Information about current pupils' achievement shows that those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported to make good progress from their starting points."

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School times/Supervision of children before and after school

The school day runs from 8.55am through to 3.30pm for full-time pupils.

The bell sounds at 8.55am and staff come into the playground to collect children in their lines to go into their classrooms.

Playtime is between 10.30 and 10.45am.

Lunchtime runs from 12.30-1.30 pm for Years 2-6.

Early Years and Year 1 start lunch from 12.05pm.

Although the school gate is opened from 8.45, it is parents' responsibility to ensure children are supervised until the class teachers come down to collect them. There are always school staff available in the playgrounds at both the start and end of the day. Once children are collected from their teachers at the end of the day, supervision is handed over to the adult collecting the children.

Staff will get to know parents and other adults collecting children (if you need someone else to collect a child, please contact the school office in advance).

The school always has two security guards on duty throughout the school day.

Breakfast Club

The school offers a Breakfast Club run from 8.00am until school starts. There is a small daily fee for this provision.

Children have a selection of cereals and toast followed by table-top activities to further develop social skills.



After-school Club and Clubs

We provide after-school provision until 5.45pm. Our After-school Club is run by Granary as a separate school provision. We also run additional clubs until 4.30pm, these range from arts and crafts, sports and self defence through to other areas of interest as discussed through our School Council. We aim to provide pupils with activities that interest and motivate.

We also provide Year 2 and Year 6 pupils with booster classes and additional tuition to help with SATs preparations.



Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance and punctuality is really important to us – they are life-skills needed beyond school. Please ensure your child comes to school every day and arrives on time. Children who are persistently late or absent do not achieve as well as other children. We hold our daily tefillah (prayer) sessions first thing in the mornings and late arrivals miss out on this. It is important that we participate together first thing

in the morning (five minutes late every day is a total loss of around two hours of learning a month).

If your child is going to be late you must let the school office know. We need to ensure the correct number of lunches are booked on a daily basis.

For pupil absences, the school operates a 'first day calling'

policy and we will call you to confirm why your child is not at school. Absences are recorded on each child's record and persistent absence will be picked up by our school attendance officer. Not all absences will be authorised, unauthorised absences could lead to fixed penalty notices being issued. Term-time holidays are never authorised and you will be at risk of being fined should you take time out of school.

"Parents contribute to building a strong picture of their children's needs and achievements. They can access the school's online assessment system and enter comments about what their child is enjoying at home."

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Helping Your Child at Home

As you are all aware, children thrive on love and encouragement. Time and interest in what your child does at school is really important and demonstrates that you care about their learning and school experience. Support with reading is vital, sharing a book with your child and spending 15 minutes a day reading with or to your child makes a huge difference. Having fun with reading or rote learning is a real bonus, learning nursery rhymes and other songs off by heart will help children with memory skills. Children love playing and learning through games, all of this makes learning fun.

We send homework home every Thursday and this is returned every Tuesday. Homework is used to consolidate learning in class and to develop key skills such as times tables or spellings.



Health & Safety/Safeguarding

As parents, carers, staff and governors, we all have a duty to keep children safe and safeguard children. We take this very seriously.

Immediate health

We always have a number of first aid-trained members of staff on site and when we go out on trips and outings. We also have staff that are trained in paediatric first aid. The school also has a named school nurse who makes regular visits and has links with outside medical agencies. Our school nurse works closely with families where there are significant medical needs and also helps to formulate medical health care plans.

Children who are ill or have had an accident in school are seen by a qualified first aider. If it is felt that the child needs additional medical support or is unfit to be in school then parents will be notified. The school will not hesitate in calling an ambulance in the event of a serious injury or illness.

The school is able to administer prescribed medication only after parents have completed a request form and signed with permission for administration. The school is unable to administer over-the-counter medication.

It is really important that records are up to date and that we have the correct contact details for family members, especially telephone numbers. We will periodically request these are updated as numbers can change frequently. You should also nominate additional contacts in the event of us not being able to get hold of immediate family members.

Safeguarding

All staff receive regular safeguarding training and are aware of the DFE publication *Keeping children safe in education*. In addition the school has four designated safeguarding leads that are always prepared for safeguarding related matters arising. If we have any safeguarding concerns we have a legal duty to report this to Children's Social Care (CSC).



School Meals

We offer children a daily fresh and hot meal. Meals are cooked on the premises in our kosher kitchens. We provide healthy, well-balanced meals. Along with a daily choice we provide a salad bar, vegetarian options and we cater for special diets. Our kitchen is meat only – dairy foods are not permitted.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and in Year 2 are currently entitled to a free meal. If you are in receipt of Universal Credit your child may also be entitled to a free school meal. We would encourage you to complete a free school meal application form if you receive Universal Credit regardless of the year group your child is in. The school office team are available to support you with this process.

The current prices for school meals are available from office staff.

As packed lunches might compromise Kashrut standards we do not allow packed lunches on site. School-prepared packed lunches are available for trips.



Water

Keeping hydrated is very important. We encourage all children to drink water at play and lunchtimes. Water is always available but we also encourage children to bring a bottle of plain water to school so that they can also have a drink during class times.

School Uniform Behaviour

Our school uniform is seasonal – summer and winter uniforms have subtle differences. All children are required to wear our uniform so they look smart and have a proud school identity. The school website has up-to-date information on our uniform and links to where items can be purchased.

Children are not permitted to wear jewellery and pierced ears must be decorated with small studs only. Children with long hair should tie their hair back. This is for the children's own safety in school. We allow children to wear watches at parent's discretion. We do not accept any responsibility for lost watches.

LOST PROPERTY

From time to time children lose items of clothing. We encourage all parents to write their child's name on clothing so that lost items can be returned swiftly. We have a lost property box in school and school council members return lost property to classrooms as part of their roles and responsibilities.

We have very high expectations of behaviour at all times. We encourage children to take responsibility for their actions, help them to understand the consequences and the reasons why certain types of behaviour are unacceptable. We aim to raise pupil self-esteem and awareness of the wider community and societal expectations of good manners and personal conduct.

It is the right of every child at Simon Marks to feel safe and secure whilst at school. They have the right to learn in a calm and secure learning environment, free from distraction.

We place great emphasis on self-discipline and reflection. We accept that on their learning journey children will make mistakes and it is part of our role to show children right from wrong. We integrate behaviour management into all areas of school life through a structured and consistently applied hierarchy of praise and sanctions.

We are a 'no fighting' school and do not encourage children to retaliate physically if confronted by another child but to approach an adult for a resolution. We ask that parents support us in this role-model approach.





Voluntary Contributions

Like other Jewish faith schools we have a voluntary contribution scheme to ensure the continuation of vital elements of the school's curricular and extra-curricular activities. Our Charitable Trust supports the school by collecting voluntary donations from the parents and wider community and gifting them to the school.

The school offers a variety of enriching educational services which are not covered by the local authority. These include:

- Jewish studies and Ivrit teaching as a modern foreign language
- Daily Tefillah and the weekly celebration of Shabbat
- Chumash education via Pajes (Partnership of Jewish Schools) curriculum designed to motivate and inspire pupils in their understanding of Torah
- Learning about all the festivals throughout the Jewish calendar starting with celebrating Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at the beginning of the academic year

- A strong connection to, and projects connected with the State of Israel
- A link Rabbi who visits the school regularly and often leads assemblies

Parental contributions are essential as none of these activities can be funded by the school.

The Simon Marks Jewish Primary School Trust funds 10% of all capital works necessary to maintain and improve the school buildings.

This is an obligation for all voluntary aided schools.

Donations provide vital support to make the school a better place.

Our voluntary contributions administrator, Mrs Sue Zion is available to discuss any questions regarding your contributions. If you would like to contact her, please phone the school office or by email at: szion@simonmarks.hackney.sch.uk

Please be assured that all conversations will be treated in the strictest confidence.

"Children learn well in early years because leaders ensure that there is a good range of activities to engage them."

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Early Years

The school has a newly furbished Early Years block. This is a separate building from the main building and can hold up to 56 children. We have 30 reception class places and 26 nursery places (14 full-time and 12 part-time, morning or afternoon). Entitlement to nursery places is dependent on circumstances. Please speak to a member of the school administration team for further information.

The Early Years curriculum begins when a child begins nursery and finishes at the end of Reception year. It comprises of six areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Expressive arts and design
- Physical development
- Understanding the world

From the beginning of their school journey children are encouraged to develop as independent learners. Activities are planned for individual and group learning as well as to motivate and stimulate curiosity. There are always combinations of adult-led and child-led activities. Children always have an indoor and an outdoor selection of activities throughout the day.

Phonics is taught in Early Years. Children start with experiencing different sounds and move onto using sounds to name objects and letters. Children are encouraged to write and sound out as their skills develop. They are monitored for progress and the Early Years team always plan activities around their interests and needs.





Our Curriculum

National Curriculum

The National Curriculum sets out the content and our programmes of study. We aim to provide a broad, balanced and integrated curriculum. We aim to ensure that pupils meet the end of year standards for each year group and ensure greater depth understanding is embedded in our work. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered throughout the week and we encourage cross-curricular links.

We recognise that reading, writing and mathematics are core to our teaching and plan so that we cover all aspects of the curriculum meaningfully. We integrate Jewish Studies into our core curriculum and plan cross curricular links to our work.

Reading has a high status in our school and we actively encourage reading throughout the school day. We want our children to be confident, fluent and lifelong readers. Children are

encouraged to bring home reading books regularly and we encourage parents to read with their children on a regular basis.

Writing also plays a major part in our work. Children are encouraged to write all the time. We aim to build up stamina for writing for all children. We want them to be creative and learn that we write for different purposes. Our children are also encouraged to write independently whilst out of school and after our first half term children have 'free writing' books to take home and be creative with language.

Mathematics is also very important. Getting children familiar with numbers and number operations from an early age means they can channel their energies on reasoning and problem solving in mathematics. We encourage children to learn their

times tables as soon as they are able to, then apply these skills to different aspects of number work. We are really keen for children to articulate their understanding and often ask them how they have got to a response.

Our modern foreign language is Ivrit and this takes place across the school and in all year groups.

In addition there are opportunities in the school calendar for parents to come into school and look closer at specific skills being developed; examples include art, science, and design and technology days.

We are also committed to enabling children to learn musical skills. We offer peripatetic teaching and have our own school band that regularly performs in school and at events across the local authority.

Jewish Studies

The year at Simon Marks follows the rhythm of the Jewish calendar for assemblies and whole school activities as well as in Jewish Studies and Ivrit teaching and learning. Jewish festival themes and values from the weekly Torah portion are further integrated into the wider curriculum.

In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Jewish learning is integrated with the EYFS curriculum so that children read books about festivals and values as part of literacy. Jewish learning is linked wherever it is meaningful. Children celebrate Shabbat every week by taking part in Kabbalat Shabbat and using authentic objects to learn about and celebrate festivals. Children have the opportunity to learn the basics of Jewish history and values through interaction with the weekly Torah portions, and through celebration of festivals throughout the year.

Key Stage One (KS1) pupils learn from, about and experience the festivals (chagim) and the weekly Torah narrative linked to values. The PaJeS Parashat Hashavua curriculum is used as a structure to ensure that pupils are building on existing knowledge and skills and they are encouraged to formulate their own response to the stories and values. They also learn the Hebrew Aleph Bet including the vowels to enable them to start reading their tefillot (prayers) in Hebrew at the end of Year 2.

In Key Stage Two (KS2), children continue to learn about and from the Chagim, with links made to Literacy and wider learning areas. We adopt an experiential approach to teaching the festivals and children take increasing responsibility in leading assemblies related to Chagim as well as using drama, art and other methods to explore the Chagim in more depth.

They also start to learn Chumash, where they access and analyse the Biblical Hebrew text through close reading and analysis and apply the values to their own lives. Using the same approach as they do in Literacy, children are able to develop higher order thinking skills of inference and application to delve deeper into this complex text and to learn more subtle and profound messages that are relevant and valuable to their own lives. Following the PaJeS Chumash curriculum means that there are clear learning outcomes and progression of knowledge, skills and understanding that are clearly assessed and tracked across the Key Stage.

Children continue to work on their knowledge and experience of tefillah (prayer), both learning the meaning of Hebrew prayers in order to help them say it meaningfully, as well as thinking about what prayer and spirituality mean to them personally and how they link to their identity.

"Pupils take part in a range of local and national events such as Jewish dance festivals and the local authority's arts festival. Creative projects are taught through Jewish studies, which really enriches pupils' learning."

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In Year 4, pupils participate in the Tzedek sustainable development programme, twinning with a Ghanaian school, which is linked to Jewish values and the National Curriculum. In Year 5 they take part in the Etgar national inter-schools quiz, which consolidates their Jewish general knowledge and enables them to interact with their peers from Jewish schools around the country.

The school is proud to be a partner with the Three Faiths Forum. Over the years we have linked with three Islamic schools and are currently involved in a partnership with our neighbours at Olive Primary School, an Islamic Free School. This affords the children the opportunity to interact with their peers in an ever-changing, increasingly diverse world.



We teach Hebrew (Ivrit) as a modern foreign language using a range of pedagogical tools, including interactive learning.

Children learn to speak and listen to Ivrit through songs and conversations and they build up a bank of key words and phrases that are core to their Jewish learning and identity. Through play and music, children naturally build up a vocabulary so that Ivrit becomes a meaningful language to them.

In Key Stage 1, Ivrit is learnt using the Eizeh Kef programme where specific themes are used to develop children's vocabulary and communication as well as their listening skills. This gives them

a strong foundation for developing reading and writing skills in Ivrit.

In Key Stage 2, Ivrit lessons are delivered using the PaJeS online resource lyrit BeClick. This resource includes graduated study units dealing with a variety of topics. Central to each unit is a short video clip depicting a situation in daily life, and the rest of the unit is made up of interactive activities and games, worksheets, flash cards, and other materials.

Children learn how to recognise, read and speak basic Ivrit from the Early Years Foundation Stage, and by the time our pupils leave the school they

are proficient in reading, writing and speaking. A love and respect for Israel, its rich and diverse history and culture is a fundamental part of the Ivrit curriculum. We believe it is essential for pupils to appreciate that Ivrit is a modern living language and our teaching about Israel reinforces this understanding.

A highlight of the school year is the celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day). Children come to school wearing blue and white clothes representing Israel's national colours and take part in a range of exciting activities including lighting birthday candles for Israel, Israeli dancing and eating birthday cake and falafel.

Assemblies

We start each week with a Havdalah assembly, led by Year 5 pupils, who perform a ceremony that starts the week after the holy Shabbat (Sabbath). This is an opportunity for the whole school to reflect on our weekly value that is linked to a festival or the weekly Torah portion and to say tefillah (prayers) together.

During the week, pupils have tefillah in their classrooms but they also take time to focus on and learn new tefillot once a week.

Every Friday there is a Kabbalat Shabbat assembly, led by Year 6 pupils, where pupils light candles and make Kiddush and hamotzi as they would for Shabbat at home. Guests from other year-groups are invited to sit at the table and participate in the ceremony and the delicious challah bread is shared with the school. Chagim also have special assemblies that are led by different year-groups either performing a short play about the festival or sharing an integrated learning topic that are relevant to the Chag. Our school minister Rabbi Mason visits regularly for Chag assemblies as well as Kabbalat Shabbat.

In addition we hold 'golden achievement' assemblies where children are rewarded for their successes in different aspects of school life.

We also hold regular attendance assemblies, where classes are rewarded for the highest attendance.



Assessment

Children are continuously assessed as part of their journey through school. Teachers monitor pupils' progress throughout the year and parents receive annual reports on how well children are doing. Parents also get updates throughout the year through parents' evenings.

The school is required to report on pupils' progress and attainment at various points in their education.

On leaving Reception class the school reports on attainment towards standardised measures Good Level of Development.

Year 1 pupils are also required to have a phonics screening test which is also measured against children in Year 1 nationally. In Year 2, pupils are tested through a combination of actual testing and teacher assessments to gain an accurate picture of how children are performing against all other pupils nationally.

Year 6 pupils sit the public examinations called SATS (Standardised Assessment Tasks). These are again measured against all other pupils nationally.

Pupil Voice

Pupil Voice plays a big part in Simon Marks. Our curriculum is designed to encourage debate and discussion. Pupils are asked to explain their reasoning as well as answer questions in lessons.

We have a very active School Council whose members lead class council meetings and feedback ideas between the school leadership and pupils.

We have a team of Peer Mediators in the playground; these children have been trained in conflict resolution and playground games. They are a constant support and role model for other children in the playground and around school.

We also have Green Team members, with responsibility for ecology and gardening. We encourage efficient use of electricity and make our own compost for use in gardening sessions throughout the year.



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We are fully committed to providing an inclusive educational provision for all children. We are a mainstream school but will always consider whether we can meet the needs of pupils with specific needs and disabilities.

There are times when children face a number of difficulties in accessing and taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered at school, both within the classroom and playground.

We offer a rigorous tracking and screening process to identify children who may be falling behind or have specific needs. Identification of needs is followed by assessment and interventions to address the problems. This often involves additional support from adults in school. Once a need has been identified and determined as requiring specialist advice or provision then support from outside agencies is sought.

Often, learning difficulties are relatively minor and can be overcome by providing tailored support for children in the classroom. Pupils with minor needs will be set Personal Learning Goals (PLGs); these are short, meaningful targets which are achievable between 6-8 weeks. Targets are reviewed and re-set if required.

Where a child has a greater need and/or a child needs specialist or additional support then additional action is required. In some cases this triggers a statutory assessment of a child's needs with a view to putting together an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). We always liaise with families where outside support is needed and invite them to work with us through the process.

Hackney Council has a local offer of provision for children with needs and the school is part of the local authority. Our website and the local authority website offer more information.





School Trips

School trips enrich children's learning and experience. London is a diverse and vibrant city which offers bountiful learning opportunities. We are fortunate to be located close to the city centre. Class teachers are encouraged to plan regular trips which will enhance learning and complement classroom work.

We believe children learn best through first-hand experience. Our trips are carefully planned and supervised and where there is an opportunity, we invite parents to come along and join us on our trips.

Unfortunately we do not always have the funds to pay for or subsidise school trips. We rely heavily on parental contributions for these events to go ahead. On some occasions trips may need to be cancelled if sufficient funds are not raised.

Working with Parents

We encourage parents to be as involved in the school. We look for opportunities to invite parents in. We hold special days for different family members to join us in school – maths and literacy lessons are an example – and have a go at the work children do in class.

Our assemblies are always a great way to bring parents together and to showcase some of our more creative skills.

Where there are opportunities for parents to work together in school we invite them in, for example we run family sewing classes and even ask parents in to volunteer with any school based projects where we need additional support.

It is really important for children to see us working in collaboration.





Further Information

At the start of a new academic year we always invite our parents in to 'meet the teacher' meetings. This allows parents to find out about what their child will be learning over the half term. First curriculum newsletters are given out and parents have the opportunity to ask questions about anything they are unsure about. Thereafter our curriculum coverage and contents are updated through curriculum newsletters which are published on our website. We want our parents to be aware of topics and themes that are being covered so they are also prepared and can do some work with their children in preparation.

We have regular newsletter updates published on our website and displayed on our noticeboards.

Parents have a right to see our policies and these are updated and on our school website.

And finally...

school with a special atmosphere. We further information or would like to visit

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