



SAROJ LAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL
MORNINGSIDE



MORNINGSIDE'S NEW SCHOOL NEEDS A NAME

Let's name it after a pioneering Morningside teacher who fought for equality, diversity and fairness for all.

A trailblazer in Scottish education, women's rights and race relations.

A woman ahead of her time.

An inspiration for generations to come.

SUPPORT OUR CAMPAIGN

We hope you have been inspired by Saroj's amazing story.

- A brand-new primary school is currently under construction on Canaan Lane in Edinburgh's Morningside, due to open in August 2022.
- The choice of name for the school will be made in August 2021 (via a Council survey) by pupils, parents and families from the four existing primary schools in the area: South Morningside, Bruntsfield, James Gillespie's and St Peter's RC.
- The option of naming it **SAROJ LAL PRIMARY SCHOOL** will be one of the options to choose from.

But **YOU** can support the campaign right now, in the following ways:

- **Share** Saroj's story among your family and friends, especially those with connections to any of the four schools. Download the full proposal at: www.sarojlal.com
- **Sign and share** the supporting petition: www.change.org/SarojLalPrimarySchool
- **Email** your message of support (with 'Saroj Lal Primary School' in the subject line) to the Convenor of the Council's Education Committee: ian.perry@edinburgh.gov.uk



SAROJ LAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL
MORNINGSIDE

COMMUNITY • DIVERSITY • EQUALITY

PROUD TO BE US

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE NEW SCHOOL
ON CANAAN LANE, MORNINGSIDE

FIND OUT MORE

www.sarojlal.com info@sarojlal.com M: 07774 112970

 www.facebook.com/SarojLalPrimarySchool

Designed by www.storieandstorie.co.uk

www.sarojlal.com

A LOCAL MORNINGSIDE STORY AN EDINBURGH ICON A SCOTTISH ROLE MODEL

Saroj Lal was a remarkable woman. One of a kind. She was a leading figure in Edinburgh and Scotland during the 1970s, 80s and 90s, fighting racism, injustice and discrimination.

She defended the rights of black, Asian and other minority groups, and fought for equality for women, refugees, asylum seekers and the elderly. She battled hard for things to change and improve, and made life better for so many children and their families. Right here, in our city.

SOUTH MORNINGSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Saroj was born and brought up in India, and came to Edinburgh in the late 1960s. She studied to be a teacher at Moray House College of Education and began teaching at South Morningside Primary in August 1970. She was a pioneer in those early days, one of very few black or Asian primary school teachers.

Pupils adored being in her class. They said what a lovely and kind teacher she was. She was proud of her culture and heritage, and always wore beautiful saris. Saroj left a lasting impression on everyone she taught.

'It is so rewarding to know that my time on *Blue Peter* was such an inspiration to Saroj Lal who passed on the values of the programme to her pupils at South Morningside Primary School. Clearly these values were very close to her own. She especially found our film *Blue Peter Royal Safari*, shot in Kenya, a great inspiration and it led to her later work in race relations.

Saroj was a very special and exceptional teacher, and without doubt she has created a future generation of adults who will be hugely concerned for the welfare of less fortunate children in the world.'



Valerie Singleton
Former *Blue Peter*
presenter

Photo © Les Wilson

LOCAL COMMUNITIES & WOMEN'S RIGHTS

After teaching at South Morningside, Saroj went to work for the YWCA so she could spend more time helping local communities.

She had decided to work with minority communities, particularly women who were originally from other countries but who had made their home in Edinburgh. She wanted to make life fairer for everyone, no matter what their gender, race or religion.

EQUALITY & RACE RELATIONS

Eventually, Saroj's work with local communities led her to become Director of Lothian Racial Equality Council. In her most important role, she was able to bring together her experience from being a teacher, from working with women and from fighting for a fair society.

She wasn't afraid to challenge the system – including the police, politicians and government ministers. She ensured that racial attacks were treated seriously, along with racist bullying in schools. She was determined to make sure that everyone was treated equally. In 1986 she became the first Asian woman in Scotland to be appointed as a Justice of the Peace. Saroj sadly passed away on 12 March 2020, aged 82.

A MORNINGSIDE LEGACY

Thursday 20 August 2020 marked exactly 50 years since Saroj arrived at South Morningside Primary School.

To commemorate this special occasion, pupils and teachers arranged an event in her memory. It was a moving and beautiful celebration of her life.



Saroj Lal
(1937-2020)

left an incredible legacy for the

people of Edinburgh. She cared about everyone having equal opportunities, no matter what the colour of their skin or what they believed in. She did things no one had ever done before.

Here are just some of the ways she has been described:

- A pioneering Asian teacher in Morningside
- An activist for anti-racist education, diversity and inclusion
- A campaigner for equality, justice and Edinburgh's minority communities
- A feminist who cared about women and women's rights
- A trailblazer for race relations in Scotland
- A woman ahead of her time, long before #MeToo and Black Lives Matter
- An inspiration for young people now and generations yet to come

Let's give our new school a name with a story.

A name for our future.
A name that says who we are.

Let's be bold. Let's make history happen. Let's be proud to be us.