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The future of Jewish schooling in the United Kingdom

A strategic assessment of a faith-based provision of primary and secondary school education

Oliver Valins Barry Kosmin Jacqueline Goldberg

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Note on authors

Oliver Valins is Research Fellow at the JPR. He holds a PhD in geography from the University of Glasgow, with his thesis concentrating on the identities and practices of strictly Orthodox Jews living in Manchester and Glasgow. He has published articles in academic and general journals on strictly Orthodox Judaism and on the geography of religion. He is also key researcher for the forthcoming JPR report examining services for older people in the UK Jewish voluntary sector.

Barry Kosmin is a sociologist, and Executive Director of the JPR. Previously he was Director of Research at the Board of Deputies of British Jews, founding director of the North American Jewish Data Bank at the City University of New York Graduate Centre and Research Director for the Council of Jewish Federations, where he directed the US 1990 National Jewish Population Survey. In the field of Jewish education, he directs the pioneering *Four Up* longitudinal cohort study of the B'nai Mitzvah Class of 1995/5755, a project of the Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

Jacqueline Goldberg is a psychologist, and Director of Research of the JPR. She is co-author of three reports based on the detailed analyses of the 1995 JPR Survey of British Jews, and in 1998 directed a national survey of South African Jews which JPR carried out in conjunction with the University of Cape Town. Dr Goldberg is currently leading JPR's four-year programme of research on Long-term Planning for British Jewry.

Preface

Today Jewish schools are flourishing. They have never been as popular with parents or the British educational establishment. While recent decades have seen a decline in the British Jewish population and a decrease in its level of attachment to Judaism, during that same period the number of children in full-time Jewish day school education has rapidly increased. This growth in the demand for Jewish faith-based schooling means that there is now full-time provision for over 22,000 Jewish children in nursery, primary, secondary and special educational needs (SEN) schools. This report explores the reasons for this unexpected success, and highlights the future challenges facing this sector. It also records and analyses key performance indicators using some newly available data, and provides a detailed and nuanced assessment of Jewish day school education in the United Kingdom.

The upward trend in Jewish day school enrolment is an indication of an increasing desire on the part of parents to educate their children in Jewish environments, be they Progressive, central Orthodox or strictly Orthodox. In general, schools in the United Kingdom straddle both the public and the voluntary sectors of the economy. What is interesting about all faith-based education, including the Jewish sector, is that many members of the community being served perceive both the fee-paying independent schools (voluntary sector) *and* the voluntary-aided state schools (public sector) as being 'their schools'. In the state schools, the Judaic element is paid for by voluntary contributions from parents; the income stream that funds this part of the curriculum is therefore the

only part that officially falls within the Jewish voluntary sector, aside from contributions towards the capital costs of running schools.

The Jewish day school movement is part of the larger context of faith-based schooling provision in Britain, including Catholic, Church of England and Muslim schools. There are currently 2,610 Catholic schools, only 6 per cent of which are independent, providing a service for 820,000 pupils. With nearly twice as many schools, a total of 4,774, the Church of England educates 904,000 pupils. More recently a Muslim school system has developed in Britain, and currently consists of 72 schools catering for 9,000 pupils, only 2 of which are state-sector voluntary-aided. This report is offered as a contribution to the wider UK discussion taking place in the political and educational arenas on the topic of faith-based education. It asks the crucial question of whether or not, from the perspective of both educators and parents, faith-based Jewish education in Britain is a success.

The establishment of the Jews' Free School (JFS) in 1732 was the beginning of Jewish day schooling in the United Kingdom. This has now evolved over several centuries into a complex matrix of educational provision that includes wide variations in school type, geographical location, religious affiliation and funding basis, as well as both state-sector voluntary-aided and independent, fee-paying schools. In looking at the historical sweep of Jewish education, the effects of changes in ideology and fashion are evident, as is the fluctuation of educational policy and its consequences. This helps us take a long-term perspective in which we can see the proportion of Jewish children attending full-time Jewish day school education changing over time.

This report does not deal with religious education *per se*. It is rather about education for an ethno-religious group. The

term 'Jewish education' in this sense is a misnomer. While the education that takes place in Jewish schools certainly includes faith-based Judaic subjects—instruction in Jewish texts, Judaism, Hebrew—most of it involves the general subjects covered by the National Curriculum.

The Future of Jewish Schooling in the United Kingdom focuses explicitly on full-time day school education at primary and secondary levels. It examines the rise of Jewish schooling in the context of changes that have taken place in education in the United Kingdom over the years. Rather than the interlocking system of education that the UK state school system is perceived to be, the system of UK Jewish education is shown to be one of diverse niche markets. As such, it is more accurately conceptualized as a series of interconnected Jewish day school systems that do not overlap in terms of provision—primarily because practical and religious barriers limit parental choice and available options regarding their children's schooling.

In addition to an assessment of the current provision of general and Judaic subjects in Jewish schools, the report highlights key strategic issues for the future, bringing together in-depth interviews with education professionals and parents. Overall strategic themes are identified and discussed: the provision of places, human resources, financing, and communication and information. The strategic issues facing the strictly Orthodox sector, which has particular needs and concerns, are also discussed, as well as the provision for children with special educational needs, so placing these issues firmly on the communal agenda.

This study is the fourth piece of research to be published as part of JPR's project, Long-term Planning for British Jewry. This four-year policy research programme aims to influence the development of policies and priorities for Jewish charities and other voluntary organizations in the twenty-first century.

The programme is made up of a number of projects that slot together to form a comprehensive picture of British Jewry's communal organizations and services. These projects build on one another, feeding into a strategic document that will assist the community in planning its future.

For social planning purposes it was necessary at the outset of the Long-term Planning project to map the parameters of the organized Jewish community. It emerged that the Jewish voluntary sector comprises nearly 2,000 financially independent organizations; thus, the income needed to maintain these organizations had to be substantial. The first piece of published research was commissioned in order to map systematically for the first time the income and expenditure of these organizations across all their funding streams. The report by Peter Halfpenny and Margaret Reid, *The Financial Resources of the Jewish Voluntary Sector*, estimated the income of the sector from all sources in 1997 at just over £500 million. This figure is several times the expected proportion of the UK national voluntary sector income.

For the purposes of the financial resources study, the education sector was taken to comprise all charitable and other non-profit-making organizations with an educational purpose, including, but not only, independent schools. State-maintained, voluntary-aided schools were beyond the remit of this study, with the exception of the income streams directly related to the Judaic content in the curricula of these schools. The financial resources report reinforced the central role that education, including day schools, plays in the Jewish voluntary sector, with an estimated expenditure of £95 million in the 1997–8 financial year. In a related report by Ernest Schlesinger, *Grant-making Trusts in the Jewish Sector*, which examines trusts with specifically Jewish remits, it emerged

that, in the 1997–8 financial year, over £10.5 million was granted to educational organizations.

The existence of these 2,000 voluntary organizations requires that several thousand members of the Jewish community fill unpaid leadership posts on boards of trustees, take on the burdens of financial office and accept legal and moral responsibility for the running of each organization. JPR commissioned and published a recent report by Margaret Harris and Colin Rochester, *Governance in the Jewish Voluntary Sector*. The objective of this qualitative study was to explore the issues and challenges faced by those who currently serve on the boards of Jewish voluntary agencies in Britain. Chairs of boards of governors of schools were among those interviewed, giving another perspective on the running of such institutions within the Jewish community. Some key challenges for all boards were identified, including the pressure of change in terms of increasing professionalization, and the problems of recruiting volunteers and leaders. Five specific challenges emerged for the Jewish voluntary sector: the need for co-operation, the challenge of internal divisions, the need for a sense of collective responsibility, the changing demography of the Jewish population and the problem of resources. These same issues are also recurrent themes throughout the following report.

1 Introduction

Aims of the report

Education in the British Jewish community has changed radically over the last fifty years. An increasing number of children are now being educated in full-time Jewish day schools, and there has been a rapid decline in the take-up of part-time, supplementary (after school or at weekends) *cheder* education. Over the last thirty years, communal leaders have called for Jewish education to become the number-one priority for British Jewry. Communal expenditure on Jewish education now amounts to tens of millions of pounds. Jewish day school education has also been affected by a range of government educational policies that have fundamentally changed the provision of day school education across the whole of the United Kingdom. Despite these major changes, and the importance of proposed government initiatives on the future directions of Jewish schooling, there is still little knowledge or understanding of the effectiveness of current Jewish educational provision, in particular the strengths and weaknesses of Jewish day schooling.

This report assesses the current provision of primary and secondary Jewish day school education in the United Kingdom. Its specific aims are:

- to assess the provision of education and performance of primary and secondary Jewish day school pupils in *general* subjects;
- to assess the provision of education and

performance of primary and secondary Jewish day school pupils in *Judaic* subjects;
- to assess the key strategic issues facing Jewish day schools in the short to medium term;
- to analyse the needs and wants of Jewish parents.

The broader aims of the report involve an analysis of the system (or systems) of Jewish day school education, including a discussion of Jewish day schools in relation to wider national concerns about the role of faith-based education. It considers the overall purpose and effectiveness of Jewish day schools, and whether they are the most effective and efficient way of 'Jewishly' educating children. It discusses whether Jewish schools are succeeding in what they set out to do, and if this is what they should be doing in the first place. It also considers who sets the agenda for how Jewish schools operate and whether that agenda reflects the needs and wants of parents.

In short, this report sets out to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of full-time Jewish day schooling from a policy perspective, and considers whether the different approaches to provision are effective and match 'market' wants and needs. It attempts to answer the key policy question of whether Jewish day schools—as an example of faith-based schooling—work, for the pupils, parents, sponsors, Jewish communities and wider society.

The growth of Jewish day schools

The estimated Jewish population in the United Kingdom has declined from over 400,000 in 1950 to less than 300,000 in 2001. This fall is due to factors such as emigration, low fertility rates and assimilation resulting from the marriage of Jews

Table 1.1 **Growth in attendance at Jewish day schools from 1950 to 1999**[1]

Year	*Number of pupils attending full-time Jewish day schools*
1950	4,000
1966	10,000
1975	12,800
1991	16,000
1999	22,640

to partners from outside the Jewish community. In sharp contrast, recent years have witnessed a rapid increase in the number of Jewish pupils attending Jewish day schools.

Table 1.1 shows the rapid increase in attendance at Jewish day schools since the 1950s, using figures based on institutional records and responses of individual schools. Analysis of the 1995 JPR survey, which examined the social and political attitudes of a representative sample of 2,194 adult British Jews, corroborates these figures (see Table 1.2).[2]

Table 1.2 shows that, among those born in the 1920s and early 1930s, the percentage of British Jews educated in Jewish day schools was less than 10 per cent. For those born in the late 1930s and after, the percentage attending Jewish day schools has doubled every generation. In 1999 more than 50 per cent of primary-age Jewish children attended Jewish day schools. Thus, in the half-century since 1950, during which the British Jewish population declined by over 25 per cent, the number of Jewish children in full-time Jewish education has increased by around 500 per cent.

As a corollary to the increasing take-up of full-time Jewish day school education, which combines a general and Judaic

Table 1.2 **Percentage of British Jews educated in full-time Jewish primary or secondary day schools according to age cohort**

Year of birth	*Percentage of Jews educated in full-time Jewish primary or secondary day school education*
Before 1925	9
1926–35	10
1936–45	14
1946–55	23
1956–65	30
1966–77	36

curriculum, there has been a concomitant decline in the take-up of part-time, supplementary *cheder* education, which is solely devoted to the teaching of Judaism from a religious perspective. In 1975 there was a ratio of just under 1.5 children in a supplementary school for each child in a Jewish day school; by 1996–7 the pattern had completely reversed, so that for each child in a supplementary school, there were 1.7 children in a Jewish day school.[3]

According to the most recent (1999) figures from the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, 22,640 pupils attended 135 UK Jewish day schools (including both independent and state schools at nursery, primary and secondary level). However, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) defines independent schools in a different way and, hence, there are 49 Jewish independent schools on the Independent Schools' Register, with 8,904 pupils.[4] The difference arises because schools sometimes create internal subdivisions, with separate head-

teachers for separate nursery, primary or secondary 'schools'; the Board of Deputies' number of 101 independent Jewish day schools includes many of these subdivisions as separate schools. Both approaches are valid but, for the purposes of comparing Jews with other religious or ethnic groups, the DfEE figures should be used. The Board of Deputies' figures are shown in Table 1.3 (with DfEE figures in parentheses).

Table 1.3 **Attendance at Jewish day schools, 1999**[5]

	Number of pupils	*Number of schools*
Type of school		
Nursery	1,830	43
Primary	11,610	46[6]
Secondary	9,090	42[7]
Special educational needs (SEN)	110	4
Geographical location		
Greater London	16,230	86
Rest of Britain	6,410	49
Religious affiliation		
Progressive	520	10
Central Orthodox	12,030	62
Strictly Orthodox	10,090	63
Funding basis		
Voluntary-aided (state)	11,760	34
Independent (private, fee-paying)	10,880	101 (49)
Total	**22,640**	**135 (83)**

A brief history of Jewish day school provision in the United Kingdom

Traditionally, education has been at the top of the Jewish communal agenda. As befits the 'people of the book', education has always been at the heart of Judaism, through the study of sacred texts and the teaching of traditional practices and beliefs. Nonetheless, the importance of Jewish day school provision to the Jewish community in the United Kingdom has waxed and waned, as has the balance between religious and general (or sometimes vocational) studies.

The starting point for Jewish day schooling in the United Kingdom was the establishment of the Jews' Free School (JFS, later known as the Jewish Free School), founded in 1732. At the turn of the twentieth century, JFS—located in Spitalfields in the East End of London—had become the largest elementary school in England with 4,300 pupils.[8] In 1871, when 2,600 pupils already attended the school, the Headmaster Moses Angel described it as an institution designed for the anglicization of immigrant children. Angel argued that such children

> were ignorant even of the elements of sound; until they had been Anglicized or humanized it was difficult to tell what was their moral condition, and many of them scarcely knew their own names . . . Their parents were the refuse population of the worst parts of Europe, whose first object in sending the children to school was to get them out of the way.[9]

In 1870 the government passed the Elementary Education Act, which established a national education system that provided official funds to voluntary schools that were mainly run by religious groups (see Chapter 2), but also set up local

school boards to build schools in areas where voluntary provision was inadequate. From 1880 increasing numbers of immigrant Jews arrived in the United Kingdom from Tsarist Russia. However, attendance at Jewish voluntary schools across the country increased much more slowly than at the newly established board schools: of the 6,929 Jewish children attending schools in 1882, 37 per cent were in board schools; by 1894 there were 15,964 Jewish pupils, 51 per cent of whom were in board schools.[10] Prior to the 1870 Education Act, children attending non-Jewish schools were exposed to Christian religious instruction, but from this date the 'religiously neutral' tax-supported state system could educate Jewish children 'just as the rest of the children of England'. The distinctions between voluntary Jewish and board schools gradually faded, with a number of the latter in areas where there was dense Jewish settlement being run on Jewish lines. These schools closed early on winter Friday afternoons and even taught classes on religious Jewish education.

> The existence of a special Jewish sub-system within the State school system was regarded with some justice as a sound solution to the problem of schooling immigrant children. No serious question was raised of the propriety of having State schools 'distinctly set aside for Jewish children'. Denominational education had been the historic foundation of English education, and Jewry was content with equality for its children within the framework of religious teaching given in State schools.[11]

Nevertheless, while Jewish parents seemed to display little discernible preference between Jewish schools and the state system, they still opted for traditional forms of Jewish religious education via the *cheder* system: 'Immigrant Jewry did

not greatly care who made Englishmen of their children, but they jealously guarded their right to make Jews of their children in their own way.'[12] The *cheder* system, which was reviled by the Anglo-Jewish establishment because of its shabby settings and its being a barrier to anglicization, continued to thrive.

During the Second World War, Jewish day school education suffered severe disruption. JFS was bombed, and of the seven Jewish elementary schools that had existed in London in 1929, only two remained by 1950.

In 1944, the so-called 'Butler' Education Act was passed, which set out to provide universal secondary education. The Act offered state support for voluntary full-time day schools under denominational auspices, in accordance with *parental wishes.*

> In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties concerned and imposed on them by this Act the Secretary of State and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.[13]

However, 'British Jewry failed magnificently to take early advantage of these opportunities', with the community much slower to take up the possibilities than Catholics.[14] In a post-war climate marked by an assimilationist ethos, the segregated nature of Jewish schools was associated with immigrant status. Moreover, there were also key communal divisions in the leadership of the Jewish community, which hampered efforts to construct new schools. The Chief Rabbi of the

United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Dr J. H. Hertz, vetoed formal co-operation with the Progressive community. The Jewish Secondary Schools Movement (JSSM), headed by Dr Solomon Schonfeld, would have no truck with the Zionist Federation that was embarking on an ambitious school-building programme. Such public disagreements prevented the ministry of education from allocating funds to Jewish voluntary schools, and it was only in 1954 that this was resolved, with Schonfeld agreeing to withdraw his objection to the rebuilding of the Jews' Free School.[15]

Parental attitudes began to change during the 1960s, when the Labour government started to abolish selective secondary (grammar) schools. School standards were deemed to have fallen with the introduction of comprehensive schools, and a negative reaction to the growing proportion of recent immigrant ethnic minority pupils may also have acted as a spur in some urban areas for the provision of Jewish primary and secondary schools. Many Jewish children were sent to elite private schools, but Jewish voluntary schools also became more attractive. The total number of Jewish schools (both state-sector voluntary-aided and independent) rose from 23 in 1954, 57 in 1975, 70 in 1989, to 135 in 1999.[16]

In interpreting the provisions of the 1944 Act, government policy allowed local authorities to reject applications for new schools if there were sufficient pupil places available to meet demand. The full implications of this policy emerged in 1974, with forecasts of falling school populations over the next eighteen years. The reality of these falling numbers prevented many newly established Jewish schools from obtaining state aid. In any case, many of these schools were associated with the strictly Orthodox community and might not have met Local Education Authority (LEA) standards. Much political lobbying was done in the late 1980s for the Conservative

government to be more amenable to Jewish requests. The government at that time was, however, apparently reluctant to create too many precedents that might encourage segregated ethnic minority religious schools, particularly Muslim ones.

During the 1997 UK general elections, New Labour swept to power under the mantra 'education, education, education', with initiatives such as the abolition of the 'assisted places' scheme that had provided moneys for parents on low incomes who wanted to send their children to independent grammar schools. In February 2001, the government released a Green Paper, *Building on Success*, which, in a drive to modernize (particularly secondary) schooling through a more 'tailored' approach to education, specifically welcomed the development of more faith-based schools.[17] The government proposes to reduce the amount of capital funding costs that faith, voluntary and other community groups need to provide for the construction of new school buildings. Currently, voluntary-aided schools provide 15 per cent of capital costs and the government provides the rest. The Green Paper proposes to reduce schools' contributions to 10 per cent, thus encouraging more such schools to be built. This would seem to match the desire of at least some communal leaders to increase the provision of places at Jewish day schools. JFS is currently in the process of a £35–40 million move from inner-city Camden to suburban Kenton (in the London borough of Brent), and an enlargement from an eight- to a ten-form entry school.

A 'crisis' of Jewish education

The growth in the number of Jewish day schools since 1950 was a response by communal leaders in the United Kingdom

to expressed concerns about a 'crisis' in Jewish education. While nineteenth-century educationalists such as Moses Angel principally worried about the *anglicization* of Jews, Jewish communal leaders in the second half of the twentieth century became more concerned with their *(re)judaization.*

> We might as well resign ourselves to the grim new fact of Jewish life: either we intelligently teach our youth what Judaism means, or else Anglo-Jewry is going to become one of the lost tribes of Israel. Either we will educate them to proclaim 'This is my God', or they will have no God at all.[18]

Dr Immanuel Jacobovits, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1967 to 1991, called for a massive re-alignment of communal priorities towards Jewish religious education. In 1971 he launched the Jewish Educational Development Trust (JEDT), arguing that British Jewry needed to invest heavily in Jewish education and, in particular, that it should double the capacity of Jewish schools.

> Every year our schools are turning away hundreds of applicants, for whom they have no places, simply because the community defaults on its duty to provide full-time Jewish education for all those who seek it. To ensure Anglo-Jewry's continuity and growth, we must double our present capacity in the next ten to fifteen years.[19]

In 1992 the JEDT published *Securing Our Future (The Worms Report)*, which argued that there was a lack of continuity in Jewish education beyond the early teens. It estimated

that by their teenage years 60 per cent of Jews no longer receive any formal Jewish education, and by age 17 only 10 per cent will have 'stayed the course'. The report also noted that the Jewish educational system was fragmented, with a lack of shared aims and co-ordinated action; it made a number of suggestions for improvement. In particular, it argued that there would soon be an *over*-provision of day school places at secondary level, so that the community should concentrate on developing 'people not buildings': 'The data that have been collected suggest that the community will soon be over-provided with day school places, but desperately short of qualified and dedicated Jewish teachers.'[20]

In 1993, the current Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Dr Jonathan Sacks, also launched a major educational initiative: a 'decade of Jewish renewal' that was to be headed by a new flagship organization, Jewish Continuity. Arguing on the basis of a 'crisis of continuity' associated with a fear that assimilation and intermarriage were threatening the survival of diaspora Jewry, he urged British Jewry to develop a coherent global educational strategy. Jewish Continuity as a distinctive organization collapsed under the weight of infighting between different religious groupings, but it merged with the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA) charity to become the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA). The UJIA is now the second largest UK Jewish charity, with an annual expenditure of around £13–14 million, about a third of which goes into formal and informal Jewish education in Britain.

The importance invested in education by communal leaders is also reflected in the overall spending pattern of the organized Jewish community. The first of the JPR Long-term Planning for British Jewry (LTP) reports, *The Financial*

Resources of the UK Jewish Voluntary Sector, calculated that of the 1,910 financially independent organizations, 337 are specifically educational in focus. Annual expenditure for this sector in 1997 was calculated to be £95 million—72 per cent of which goes on staff costs—accounting for around one-quarter of the total annual expenditure of the UK Jewish voluntary sector.[21] Nevertheless, these figures do not include government money going to state-sector Jewish schools: such funds are not classed as part of the voluntary sector, and thus were outside the remit of that report. If such moneys had been included, or if account is taken of the centuries of investment in Jewish educational institutions (such as the very high capital costs that have been invested in constructing Jewish day schools over the years), the huge financial investment in education by the Anglo-Jewish community would be even more evident.

Structure of the report

In Chapters 1–3, the importance of education, the system of primary and secondary school education in the United Kingdom, and the system (or systems) of Jewish day school education are discussed. In Chapters 4 and 5, a 'report card' is provided detailing performance indicators of the strengths and weaknesses of general and Judaic subjects within Jewish schools. Chapters 6–8 outline key strategic issues facing Jewish day schools, with a specific focus on the strictly Orthodox community, and the provision of services to children with special educational needs. Chapter 9 provides a discussion of market wants and needs, through an analysis of the factors used by parents to choose between different school options. Chapter 10 draws the analysis together with a discussion of

future issues in the provision of Jewish day school education, and the strengths and weaknesses of a faith-based approach to education. Also included are a bibliography and a glossary of educational and Judaic terms used in the text.

Notes

1 Figures based on Jacob Braude, 'Jewish education in Britain today', in Sonia L. Lipman and Vivian D. Lipman (eds), *Jewish Life in Britain 1962–1977* (New York: K. G. Saur 1981); Jewish Educational Development Trust (JEDT), *Securing Our Future (The Worms Report)* (London: JEDT 1992); and 1999 data supplied by the Board of Deputies of British Jews (note this will be the subject of a forthcoming report by Rona Hart and Marlena Schmool).

2 Stephen Miller, Marlena Schmool and Antony Lerman, *Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews: Some Key Findings of the JPR Survey* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 1996).

3 Marlena Schmool and Frances Cohen, *A Profile of British Jewry* (London: Board of Deputies of British Jews 1998).

4 Note that since the time of writing this report, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has become the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

5 Data supplied by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

6 Includes five schools that are both primary and nursery schools.

7 Includes twenty schools that are both primary and secondary schools.

8 Lloyd Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870–1914* (London: Simon Publications 1973).

9 Ibid., 223.

10 Ibid., 227–8. Note that the Jewish population in Britain increased from around 60,000 in 1880 to 300,000 in 1914: Henry Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England* (London: Associated

University Presses 1982).

11 Gartner, 229.

12 Ibid., 231.

13 Section 76 of the Education Act 1944: F. Jacobs and Vivien Prais, 'Development in the law on state-aided schools for religious minorities', in Lipman and Lipman (eds).

14 Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992), 368.

15 Ibid.

16 Although note the difference in methods of calculating the number of schools: the Board of Deputies recognizes 135 schools compared to the 83 schools recognized by the DfEE (see page 5).

17 Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), *Building on Success* (Norwich: HMSO 2001).

18 Immanuel Jakobovits, *The Timely and the Timeless* (London: Vallentine Mitchell 1977), 195.

19 Immanuel Jakobovits, Foreword to 'Let my people know—proposals for the development of Jewish education', in Jakobovits, 197; see also S. J. Prais, 'A sample survey of Jewish education in London, 1972–73', *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 16, 1974, 133–54.

20 JEDT, x.

21 Peter Halfpenny and Margaret Reid, *The Financial Resources of the UK Jewish Voluntary Sector* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2000).

2 Primary and secondary school education in the United Kingdom

The roots of the present British national school system reach back to the early nineteenth century when the British and Foreign School Society and the National Society—which from 1833 onwards received increasing contributions from the state—established a series of voluntary schools.[1] By the second half of the nineteenth century the voluntary system was clearly failing to reach children in many areas, and so the 1870 Education Act instituting compulsory primary education was passed. This provided for the establishment of state-run 'board schools' wherever voluntary provision was inadequate. In the 1944 Education Act, provision was made for voluntary schools to become either 'aided' or 'controlled', with the latter handing over much of their independence in return for greater state funding. For voluntary-aided schools, government grants of 50 per cent were available to schools for building repairs, improvements and extensions, a figure that was increased to 75 per cent in 1959, 80 per cent in 1967, 85 per cent in 1974, and which the present government is now proposing to increase to 90 per cent (see Chapter 1). The current state educational system reflects these historical traditions, together with the imprint of a number of more recent government initiatives to try and improve educational standards. In theory, there is a wide—although often confusing—range of potential options from which parents can choose. In order to make sense of the performance data and key strategic issues detailed in the following chapters, an understanding of this educational system is needed.

The UK system of school education

The system of schooling in the United Kingdom varies in the different 'home' countries of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. In particular, Scotland has always had a completely separate education system, dating back to before 1707 and the Act of Union with England. Since, moreover, virtually all Jewish day schools are in England—there is none in Wales and Northern Ireland and only one state primary school in Scotland—the educational system described here refers to England only.

Education is compulsory from ages 5 to 16, although parents are legally permitted to educate their children at home rather than in formal schools.[2] As Table 2.1 shows, under the age of 5, children may be educated in *nurseries* or kindergartens; from ages 5 to 11 they are usually taught in *primary* schools (often divided between infant and junior schools); and from ages 11 to 16 or 18 they are taught in *secondary* schools. Following formal school education, individuals may go on to tertiary education, including universities, further education colleges or, for many strictly Orthodox students, *yeshivot* or seminaries.[3] Children with particular special educational needs may be educated in separate 'special' schools, although the vast majority of children with SEN are integrated into mainstream schools (see Chapter 8).

As well as differences in *types* of schools, there are also major differences in *categories* of schools in terms of how they are funded. For the purposes of this report, the key distinctions are between *voluntary-aided* and *independent* schools (for an explanation of other categories of schools, see Table 2.2). Voluntary-aided schools are part of the state sector, but land and buildings are usually owned by a charitable foundation and the governing body employs the school's staff and has primary responsibility for admission arrangements.

Table 2.1 **Different types of schools**

Type of school	*Characteristics*
Nursery	Nursery schools and kindergartens provide education for children below compulsory school age (under 5).
Primary	For children aged 5 to 11, often consisting of infant schools (ages 5 to 7) and junior schools (ages 7 to 11).
Middle	For children of varying age-ranges from 8 to 14. For statistical purposes, pupils are classed as either primary or secondary depending on their age.
Secondary	For children aged 11 to 16, or 11 to 18.
Sixth-form colleges	For students over 16; not classed as schools by the DfEE, and thus not included in government statistics on schools. There are no state-sector Jewish sixth-form colleges, although there are a number of independent strictly Orthodox *yeshivot* and seminaries.
Special	For children with special educational needs, including both day and boarding schools. Schools may be: maintained, run by local education authorities who pay all the expenses of maintenance; non-maintained, run by voluntary bodies with current expenditure met primarily from fees charged to LEAs for pupils placed in the schools; general hospital, for children who are spending a period of time in hospital.

Independent schools, which are not covered by the same legislation as the state sector, can be divided between 'association' and 'non-association' schools. Association schools are those under the remit of the Independent Schools Council (ISC)—the body that oversees 1,300 elite private schools—and have regular inspections via the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Non-association schools, incorporating the

Table 2.2 **Main categories of schools**

Main category	*Sub-category*	*Characteristics*
Mainstream state	*Community*	The LEA employs the schools' staff, owns the schools' land and buildings and has the primary responsibility for deciding the arrangements for admitting pupils.
	Foundation	Governing body employs the schools' staff and has primary responsibility for admission arrangements. Land and buildings are owned by the governing body or by a charitable foundation.
	Voluntary-aided	Governing body employs the schools' staff and has primary responsibility for admission arrangements. Land and buildings are normally owned by a charitable foundation and the governing body contributes towards the capital costs of running the school.
	Voluntary-controlled	LEA employs the schools' staff and has primary responsibility for admissions arrangements. Land and buildings are normally owned by a charitable foundation.

Direct grant schools	Governing bodies are assisted by departmental grants. From October 1980, all but three of these schools were reclassified as independent.
Independent schools	These schools are independent of the state. Divisions are sometimes recognized between association schools, which fall under the remit of the ISC and, accordingly, are subject to regular independent inspections via the ISI, and non-association schools, which are inspected by HMI. However, ISC schools may also be inspected by HMI if they receive any public funding or if there are grounds for concern.
City Technology Colleges (CTC)	These take the form of a charitable company limited by guarantee. There is an educational trust that appoints representatives to the Board of Governors. CTCs are registered as independent and are included in independent school tables.
Non-maintained	Run by voluntary bodies and may receive grants from the state for capital work and equipment. Expenditure is primarily met by fees charged to the LEA for pupils placed in the schools.

vast majority of Jewish independent schools that are strictly Orthodox in outlook, are still subject to regular inspections from Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (see Chapter 7). Note that there is only one Jewish ISC school, Immanuel College, located in Hertfordshire, north of the Greater London boundary. However, Polack's House, which forms part of the independent Bristol 'public' school, Clifton College, also caters specifically for Jewish pupils.[4]

In addition to differences between the various types and categories of schools, it is also important to note differences in admission criteria. Overall problems relating to admission criteria are discussed in the following chapter; however, on a national level, the terminology most often used—particularly at secondary level—is *comprehensive*, *modern*, *selective* and *non-selective*:

- *Comprehensive*: takes all pupils, regardless of ability, aptitude and whether they have been selected for a place at a selective school.
- *Modern*: takes pupils, regardless of ability or aptitude, who have not been selected for a place at a selective school.
- *Non-selective*: independent school that takes pupils usually regardless of their ability or aptitude.
- *Selective*: takes pupils depending on their ability or aptitude, also known as grammar schools.

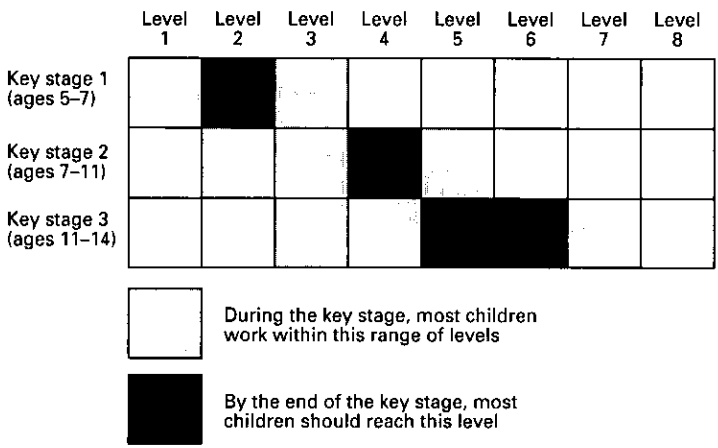
Following the 1988 Education Act, state-sector schools in England and Wales follow a National Curriculum, designed to standardize teaching. In particular, provision was made for a series of national tests known as 'key stages' or Standard Attainment Tests (SATs). At primary level, children are tested at age 7 (*key stage one*) in reading, writing and mathematics,

Table 2.3 **Key stage system**

Age	*Stage*	*Year*	*Tests*
3–4	Foundation		
4–5			
5–6	Key stage 1	Year 1	
6–7		Year 2	National tests and tasks in *reading, writing* and *maths.*
7–8	Key stage 2	Year 3	
8–9		Year 4	
9–10		Year 5	
10–11		Year 6	National tests in *English, maths* and *science.*
11–12	Key stage 3	Year 7	
12–13		Year 8	
13–14		Year 9	National tests in English, maths and science.
14–15	Key stage 4	Year 10	Some pupils take *GCSEs.*
15–16		Year 11	Most pupils take *GCSEs, GNVQs* or other national qualifications. End of compulsory education.
16–17		Year 12	Some pupils take *GCE AS levels.*
17–18		Year 13	Pupils take *GCE A* or *AS levels, AGNVQs* or other national qualifications.

and at age 11 (*key stage two*) in English, mathematics and science. At secondary level, they are tested at age 14 (*key stage three*), also in English, mathematics and science, and at age 16 (*key stage four*) when pupils take General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Pupils at key stage four may also take General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), which are more vocational than GCSEs.

Figure 2 **Key stage system and expected National Curriculum attainment levels**



Beyond the compulsory age of education at 16, pupils may choose to take General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations, which consist of GCE A (Advanced) levels and AS (Advanced Supplementary) levels. A level examinations are usually taken over two years, AS levels are completed in one year. Students may also choose to take Advanced GNVQs (AGNVQs). A and AS level passes are the normal requirements for entry into tertiary (particularly university) education.[5]

In terms of the key stage system, children are expected to achieve certain levels of attainment, and the results of each school are made public: children at age 7 are expected to achieve level two; at age 11 to achieve level four; and at age 14 to achieve level five or six. The key stage system and the expected levels of attainment are outlined in Table 2.3 and Figure 2.

Religion in UK schools

The provision of religious education and the overall system of schooling in the United Kingdom are, and have always been, inextricably interlinked. The stated aim of the British and Foreign School Society, which was one of the key foundations for the national educational system established in 1870, was to 'promote the education of the labouring and manufacturing classes of society of every religious persuasion'.[6] Religious instruction in these schools was confined to scripture and 'general Christian principles'. The other key founding body, the National Society, was designed to 'promote the education of the poor in the principles of the established church' (i.e. the Church of England); entrance to these schools was conditional on a willingness to receive denominational religious instruction and attend an Anglican church on Sundays.[7] After the 1870 Education Act, voluntary schools were permitted to continue denominational religious teaching, while board schools could choose whether or not to include religious teaching, although any such instruction was supposed to be non-denominational.

In the 1944 Education Act, the fact that the churches owned a high proportion of the country's secondary schools gave them immense influence as the government attempted to increase educational provision with universal secondary education. The Act made school worship and religious instruction obligatory in all 'county' schools (the old board schools), specifying that it had to be in accordance with a non-denominational 'agreed syllabus'. The syllabuses were, and continue to be, written by an Agreed Syllabus Conference, consisting of four components: the Church of England, other religious denominations, the local education authority (LEA) and teacher associations. LEAs could also choose to establish a

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to advise them on matters connected with religious instruction, methods of teaching, and provision of teachers and resources. Note, however, that the 1944 Act specifically gave entitlement for parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction and worship from *all* state schools if they wished.[8]

Religious instruction and worship were also made obligatory in voluntary and controlled schools. Voluntary-aided schools retained the right to provide denominational religious instruction and worship. Controlled schools were to give religious instruction according to the agreed syllabus, although parents could ask for denominational teaching 'during not more than two periods each week', and the daily act of worship could be denominational in character. Jewish and Catholic schools almost entirely rejected controlled status. Many Church of England schools, however, did opt for this status because of increased financial support from the state and a belief by some that the Christian presence in education was best preserved through non-denominational teaching in state schools.[9]

The provision of Judaic education and religious worship

In voluntary-aided Jewish schools, religious instruction is typically provided through Jewish studies classes. These are typically a part of the core curriculum, and parents pay a voluntary contribution towards the 'Jewish' aspects of the schooling: in JFS, for example, this currently amounts to £250 per term. Because state-sector schools have to follow the strict guidelines of the National Curriculum, the amount of time available for Jewish studies lessons is necessarily limited in some

Jewish schools to around four or five lessons a week (around two hours). Other schools have deliberate policies of trying to integrate Judaic and secular subjects throughout the syllabus so as to try and obtain a more 'global' Jewish environment. A number of more religious schools have, however, chosen to extend the school day by an hour or more so as to provide additional time for Judaic teaching. These schools may also have additional Jewish studies classes on Sunday mornings.

The content of Judaic subjects taught obviously varies according to whether schools are primary or secondary, as well as to their ethos and religious affiliation. For mainstream schools at primary level, children are typically taught to read (though not translate) biblical Hebrew so that they can follow religious services in the synagogue. They are also taught about laws and customs, Jewish history and the state of Israel; schools also teach and celebrate the various Jewish festivals throughout the year. Some schools, especially those with a Zionist ethos, also teach modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*) as a second language.

At secondary level, some schools include a Judaic education that is heavily based on reading and analysing the sacred foundational texts of religious Judaism. Other schools concentrate more on the morals and values of Judaism. Schools are also likely to include extracurricular informal Jewish activities, such as seminars, residential weekends (known as *shabatonim*) and visits to Israel or to Holocaust sites in Poland. Note also that in addition to the wearing of a school uniform, male pupils are expected to wear *kippot* (head coverings), and many also insist that boys wear *tzitsit* (literally 'fringes', a religious garment worn under the shirt). The normal British school uniform is deemed sufficiently 'modest' for girls.

At GCSE level, there are three specifically Judaic examinations: Religious Studies: Judaism; Biblical Hebrew; and

Modern Hebrew. At A level, there are examinations only in Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew. The number of entrants and the results of these examinations are detailed and discussed in Chapter 5.

Voluntary-aided Jewish state schools also have assemblies that include a Jewish dimension. JFS provides voluntary religious services including *shacharit* (morning prayers) and *minchah* (afternoon prayers), although many schools incorporate prayers as a key part of the school day, with special Sabbath assemblies on Fridays. These differences reflect the ethos of each school, as well as the backgrounds of the children who attend. Nonetheless, although the 1944 Education Act safeguards parents' rights to withdraw their children from religious instruction and worship, at least one school prospectus for a voluntary Jewish day school states that there are 'no arrangements for withdrawal'.

Finally, note that independent, private fee-paying schools are not subject to the restrictions of the National Curriculum. In a number of strictly Orthodox schools the balance between Judaic and general subjects is weighted heavily in favour of the former, with only a few hours a week of non-Judaic subjects taught. The teaching of children in strictly Orthodox schools is examined in Chapter 7.

Notes

1 Leslie J. Francis, *Religion in the Primary School: Partnership between Church and State?* (London: Collins 1987).

2 Note that schools by legal definition must have five or more full-time pupils, and must register with the DfEE under the terms of the 1996 Education Act (which follows the original wording of the 1944 Education Act).

3 *Yeshivot* are institutes of higher learning for males; seminaries are for females. An analysis of *yeshivot* and seminaries does not form part of this report.

4 Note that statistics for Clifton College are not included in the examination results detailed in Chapter 4.

5 Note that the post-GCSE examination system is currently undergoing major changes. The government has effectively split the old A level into two parts, the AS and the A2, obliging all students who spend the full two years in sixth form to take both exams. From 2002, a new Advanced Extension (AE) examination will also be introduced.

6 Francis, 12.

7 Ibid.

8 See Edwin Cox and Josephine Cairns, *Reforming Religious Education: The Religious Clauses of the 1988 Education Reform Act* (London: Kogan Page 1989); Ruth-Anne Lenga, Michael Totterdel and Vanessa Ogden, 'Religious education: soul-searching in an era of "supercomplexity"', in Ashley Kent (ed.), *School Subjects Teaching: Future and History of the Curriculum* (London: Kogan Page 2000); and David Rose, 'A survey of representative groups on SACRE', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1998, 383–93.

9 Francis.

3 The system(s) and the users of Jewish day school education

Profile of the UK Jewish population

As the recent Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community made clear, the United Kingdom is composed of a number of different religious, social and cultural Jewish groupings that sometimes have very different takes on Judaism.[1] Paradoxically, as the Jewish population has become smaller in recent decades, its institutional and individual diversity has grown.

Approximately 70 per cent of British Jews are formally linked to a synagogue through personal or family membership, with affiliations distributed as follows:

- 61 per cent belong to central Orthodox synagogues (Ashkenazi and Sephardi);
- 27 per cent belong to the Progressive sector of Reform and Liberal synagogues;
- 10 per cent belong to strictly Orthodox (Haredi) synagogues;
- 2 per cent belong to Masorti (Conservative) synagogues.[2]

Nevertheless, synagogue membership is not necessarily a precise indicator of religious observance. Overall, one in every three British Jews (31 per cent) thinks of him- or herself as a 'traditional Jew'. Another 26 per cent consider themselves to be 'secular', 18 per cent 'just Jewish', 15 per cent Progressive and 9 per cent 'strictly Orthodox'.[3]

While the UK Jewish population overall has declined over the past half-century, the strictly Orthodox community has shown the greatest growth: in 1998, more than 21 per cent of synagogue marriages were under strictly Orthodox auspices.[4] In 1992 there were 5,330 pupils attending strictly Orthodox schools and nurseries; in 1999 this figure was 10,090.[5]

Geographically, Jews live everywhere in the United Kingdom, from Aberdeen to Belfast, Cardiff to Margate. Nevertheless, they have tended historically to congregate in particular places, with around 210,000 Jews living in Greater London and the surrounding Home Counties (over 70 per cent of the total UK Jewish population) and 30,000 living in Greater Manchester (10 per cent). Other centres of Jewish population include Leeds (8,000), Glasgow (6,000), Brighton and Hove (8,000), Birmingham (3,000) and Liverpool (3,000). Of those Jews living in London, 50,000 live in the borough of Barnet, 18,000 in Hackney and 16,000 in Redbridge.[6]

In terms of socio-economic status, British Jews tend to be above average, with a high proportion of university graduates. In regard to occupational profile, 54 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women are in professional occupations, with only 6 per cent of men and 2 per cent of women in manual jobs.[7]

Profile of UK Jewish parents

The Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies has collected data showing that, of those children attending a Jewish day school or nursery in 1999, 2.3 per cent attended Progressive schools, 53.1 per cent central Orthodox schools and 44.6 per cent strictly Orthodox (Haredi) schools.[8] These figures characterize attendance at Jewish day schools from an institutional perspective. However, findings from the 1995 JPR

Table 3.1 **Percentage of parents with school-age children who sent their eldest child to a Jewish day school according to Jewish identity (n=464)**

Jewish identity category	*Percentage of category who sent their eldest child to a Jewish day school*
Secular	7
Just Jewish	22
Progressive	9
Traditional	49
Strictly Orthodox	96

social and political attitudes survey construct a profile of UK Jewish parents from the point of view of the users, including the attitudes and beliefs of those with children attending Jewish day schools.

The data from the 1995 survey show how religious practice is a key predictor of whether or not parents choose to send their children to Jewish day schools.[9] When the 464 respondents with children aged between 5 and 20 years were asked to define their religious practice, only 7 per cent of 'secular' Jews said they sent their eldest child to a Jewish day school, whereas 96 per cent of those who were 'strictly Orthodox' did so (see Table 3.1).

When parents of children attending (or who recently attended) Jewish day schools were asked to describe their feelings about being Jewish, over 90 per cent of respondents were strongly or extremely conscious of feeling Jewish (see Table 3.2).

The 1995 survey also shows that 91 per cent of Jewish day school parents fast on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), with

Table 3.2 **Jewish day school parents' feelings about being Jewish (n=179)**

Feelings about being Jewish	*Percentage of Jewish day school parents*
Although I was born Jewish, I do not think of myself as being Jewish in any way	0
I am aware of my Jewishness, but I do not think about it very often	5
I feel quite strongly Jewish, but I am equally conscious of other aspects of my life	32
I feel extremely conscious of being Jewish and it is very important to me	63
Total	**100**

the same percentage stating that they also prefer to stay home on Friday nights. Nevertheless, only 53 per cent stated that they refrain from driving on the Sabbath, and only 42 per cent of Jewish day school parents attend synagogue most Sabbaths (see Table 3.3).

When asked their views on the statement that 'belief in God is NOT central to being a good Jew', 31 per cent agreed, 10 per cent were unsure and 59 per cent disagreed.

Overall, these figures show how those who define themselves as 'traditional' or 'strictly Orthodox' are much more likely to choose to send their children to a Jewish day school than 'secular' Jews. This explains why strictly Orthodox Jews—who make up 10 per cent of British Jews—nevertheless account for 43 per cent of all those respondents who sent their eldest child to a Jewish day school. Moreover, the statistics show that, while around half of Jewish day school parents observe the Sabbath, the remaining half 'feel' strongly Jewish

Table 3.3 **Pattern of attendance at synagogue over the past year for Jewish day school parents (n=179)**

Attendance at synagogue over the past year	*Percentage of Jewish day school parents*
Not at all	5
Once or twice	6
On a few occasions (e.g. festivals, *Yahrzeit*)	30
About once a month	17
Most Sabbaths or more often	42
Total	**100**

but nevertheless are less likely to attend religious services or refrain from driving on that day. The large number of children from non-Sabbath-observant homes presents a challenge to the prevailing ethos of the mainly Orthodox Jewish day schools.

The control of Jewish day schools

Historically, Jewish day schools have developed through the actions and philosophies of key communal leaders, educational organizations and wealthy philanthropists. After the Second World War, key communal figures such as J. H. Hertz, Immanuel Jakobovits and Solomon Schonfeld helped develop a network of schools that were under Orthodox auspices, with Orthodox admissions criteria and religious ethos (see Chapter 1). The Zionist Federation Educational Trust (now the Scopus Jewish Educational Trust) helped to establish and support a network of fifteen schools with a Zionist focus.

Other key educational organizations provide ongoing financial and practical support for schools, including the Agency for Jewish Education (AJE), which is a United Synagogue, central Orthodox organization; the Centre for Jewish Education (CJE), which serves the Progressive communities; and the UJIA, which is cross-communal.

The organizations, foundations and individuals who provide the funds to establish and then maintain schools obviously have a huge impact on the institutional ethos and broad admissions criteria. As such, a voluntary-aided school like the Hasmonean High School (sponsored by JSSM), can write the following ethos statement in its prospectus:

> The ethos of the school is based unambiguously on the principles of Orthodox Judaism. At the core of those principles is a recognition that both the written and Oral Torah are Divine. The principles are enshrined in the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, and its commentaries, which delineate the laws, customs and values of an orthodox Jewish lifestyle. It is the school's aim to educate boys and girls to conduct themselves in strict adherence to the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle throughout their lives.[10]

The ethos and approach of voluntary-aided Jewish day schools are also determined—within the confines, of course, of government regulations—by headteachers, trustees and governing bodies. Again, to take Hasmonean as an example, the trustees of this school's movement are appointed by the rabbis of three local strictly Orthodox synagogues, who in turn appoint the foundation governors, who together with the headteacher, two LEA-appointed governors, three parent-elected governors, two teacher-elected governors and the

staff governor form the governing body. Even though the state pays for the running costs of such schools (and 85 per cent of capital costs), voluntary-aided status provides the governing body with prime responsibility for employing the school's staff and for admissions criteria.

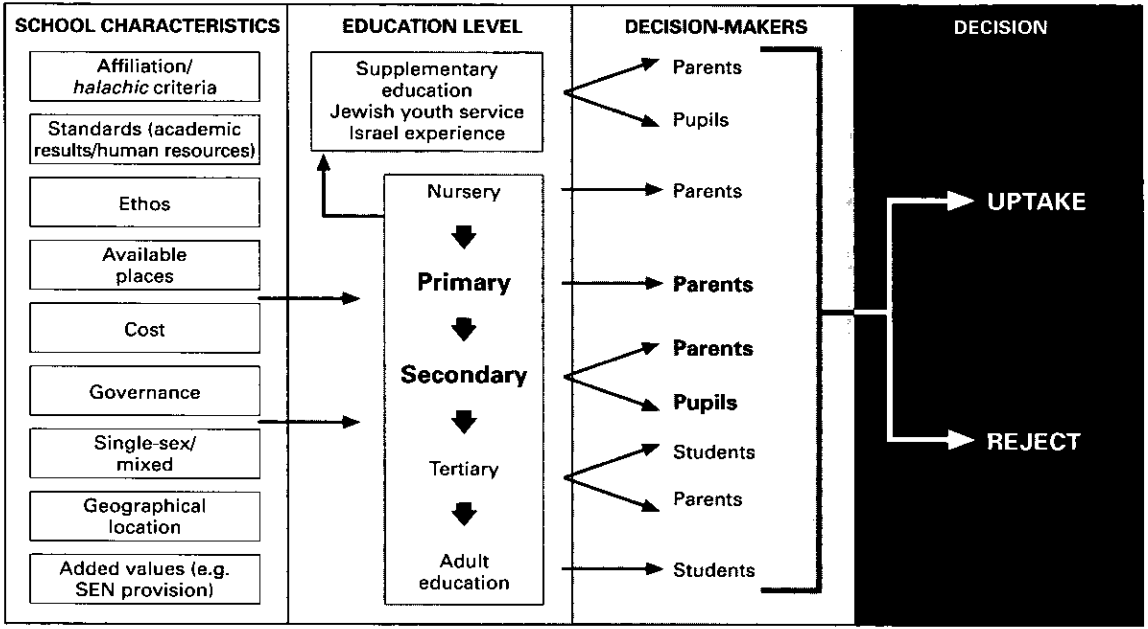
With the exception of parent-elected governors, the style, running and ethos of Jewish voluntary day schools—and even more so for independent schools—are determined by a 'top-down' approach. Parents, by and large, are expected to choose or reject schools on the basis of what communal leaders and key funders have determined for them. Such issues raise questions about the market and need for alternative models of providing Jewish day school education (see Chapter 10).

The system (or systems) of Jewish day school education

Figure 3.1 shows the place of primary and secondary Jewish day schools in an overall conceptualization of the UK 'system' of Jewish education. The left column of the model indicates some of the key characteristics of Jewish day schools, such as academic standards, ethos and geographical location. The rest of the model shows possible ways that people may make use of the services being provided. For example, parents can choose—often, of course, in conjunction with their children—to send their offspring to Jewish schools at nursery, primary or secondary level, possibly continuing on this educational pathway to take up Jewish courses at university or adult education centres, or else to leave the system at any particular point.

Alternatively, children may attend non-Jewish schools, in which there may be very few other Jews or large numbers of

Figure 3.1 **The place of primary and secondary Jewish day schools in the UK 'system' of Jewish education**



other Jews. Indeed, a number of non-Jewish schools in the United Kingdom offer planned Jewish activities for children through a scheme, sponsored by the UJIA and the Association of Jewish Sixth Formers (AJ6), called Jewish Activities in Mainstream Schools (JAMS).[11] The JAMS programme in the south-east of England operates in 29 secondary schools with an estimated 4,650 Jewish pupils. Three-quarters of these schools select their pupils on the basis of academic ability, the majority of which are fee-paying ISC institutions; this helps to explain the high achievements of pupils in these schools as reported in Chapter 4.

Another option is for children to attend part-time, supplementary Jewish schools (*chadarim*), Jewish youth clubs or organized activities such as the Israel Experience tours. Children or teenagers may attend such alternative forms of Jewish education as either an addition or an alternative to formal Jewish day school education. Overall, the model shows how parents, pupils or students are able to interact with the 'system' of Jewish education, choosing or rejecting the available options according to their particular beliefs, ideologies and evaluations of the quality of services being offered. Nonetheless, this model is complicated by a range of other factors that make up the matrix of possible parental choices.

The myth of choice

The presence of 135 Jewish day schools in the United Kingdom suggests a wide range of options for parents wanting to educate their children in a Jewish environment. The reality, however, is somewhat different.[12] While parents can choose to take up or reject different types of Jewish schooling, they also have to consider a variety of other factors. Some of these factors relate to general educational choices faced by parents, while others are uniquely Jewish,

Figure 3.2 **Possible day school choices for Jewish parents**

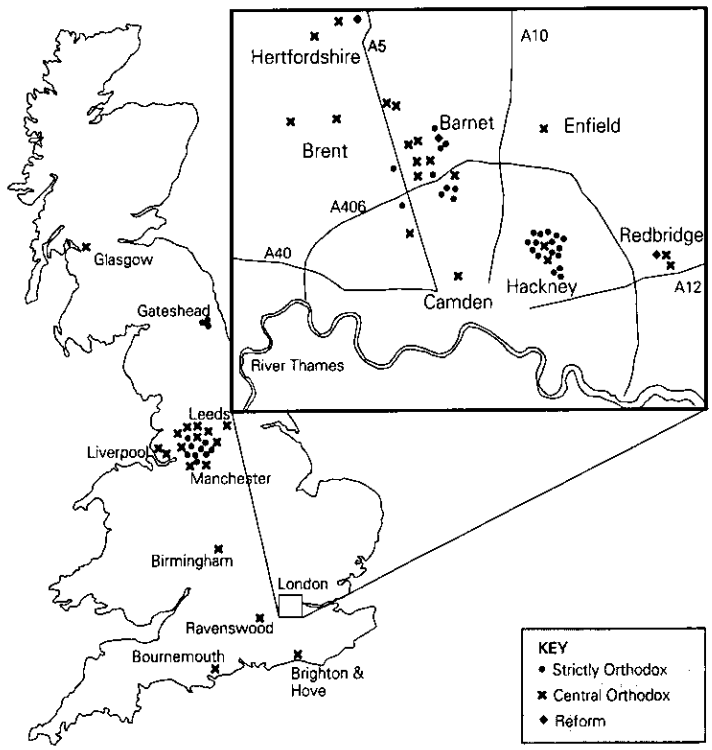
such as whether parents prefer school provision to be Progressive, central Orthodox or strictly Orthodox (see Figure 3.2).

General entrance barriers to Jewish day schools

Day school education is generally provided at the local level. If places are available to parents at Jewish secondary schools in Manchester, this is of little use to Jews living in, say, Glasgow or Birmingham unless they are willing to relocate. While parents may be willing for their children to travel relatively small distances to attend a good school, there are obviously limitations as to how far they are willing to send them (although a small number of Jewish parents from Sheffield and Leeds do send their children to schools in Manchester). Many of the small regional communities have no Jewish schools at all, and even a community such as Glasgow—which used to be the third largest Jewish community in the United Kingdom—has only one state-sector primary school. The relationship between the centres of Jewish population and the institutional provision of school education is thus extremely important (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 shows that the majority of Jewish primary and secondary schools are located in London and Manchester. In London, the highest concentration of schools is in the London borough of Hackney, which has a large strictly Orthodox population located in and around Stamford Hill. There are also a number of schools in north-west London, especially in Barnet, the London borough with the highest number of Jews. Schools are also to be found in Redbridge, Enfield, Brent, Camden (the current site of JFS) and Hertfordshire. Note that, despite some 30,000 Jews living in south London, there are currently no Jewish primary or secondary schools there. In Manchester, most of the schools are located in the strictly Orthodox area of Broughton Park, to the north of the city

Figure 3.3 **Primary and secondary Jewish day schools in Great Britain according to religious affiliation**[13]



centre. Outside London and Manchester, the only other cities with more than one school are Liverpool, which has the King David primary and secondary schools, and Gateshead, which has a thriving strictly Orthodox community and three Jewish day schools.

A second, but related, potential barrier is the provision of places. If schools are over-subscribed, then the presence of

suitable institutions that are geographically close to parents will be of little use to anyone who cannot gain entry. This parallels the situation in the wider UK state-school system in which property prices increase in areas where there are schools with good academic results, potentially pricing out less well-off parents. (Problems of provision of places are specifically addressed in Chapter 6.)

A third issue is cost. Selective independent schools—ones that choose pupils on the basis of academic ability—normally charge parents upwards of £6,000 a year, which is outside the price range of many. For families in which there is more than one child, the costs of private education—which, note, are not subject to tax concessions—will obviously be much more burdensome. Many schools offer scholarships to children from families who would not otherwise be able to afford places, but questions of cost are still important. Note that even Jewish state schools ask for moneys towards the 'Jewish' aspects of education (see Chapter 2), although these contributions are voluntary.

Finally, there are general selection criteria to consider. To take JFS as an example, in addition to religious criteria (see below), the school states that it ideally recruits pupils from across the range of academic abilities, with pupils classed as being in one of four grades. This system is designed to be in keeping with the school's comprehensive, co-educational ethos. However, if the school is over-subscribed, the following criteria are applied to decide which children from the four grades to admit:

i. Siblings are present at the school
ii. Applicants have attended Jewish primary schools
iii. Other siblings have been former students at JFS
iv. Ultimately, places will be allocated in proportion to

> the number of applicants still remaining unplaced from each Local Education Authority, with the final priority being given to those living closest to the school.[14]

In areas where schools are over-subscribed—a problem for popular schools across the UK educational system, not just in the 'Jewish sector'—parents may face major difficulties in gaining places for their children.

Jewish entrance barriers to Jewish day schools

Most UK Jewish schools are sponsored and controlled by Orthodox religious authorities that operate *halachic* (according to Jewish religious law) selection criteria, according to which only pupils they consider 'Jewish' are accepted. These schools will only accept children whose mothers were born Jewish or else who converted under the auspices of Orthodox authorities. This policy excludes the attendance of children whose mothers converted under the auspices of Progressive movements. Children who come from a converted maternal Progressive background and are actively practising Jews would, therefore, have their applications for places turned down by default, while non-practising Jews whose mothers are considered Jewish by Orthodox authorities would be considered acceptable. To gain a place at such schools, a copy of the parents' *ketubah* (Jewish marriage certificate) may be required.

> In order to be admitted to the School, a child must be Jewish according to the Halachah (Orthodox Jewish Law). In the event of any dispute as to whether a child is Jewish, the authority of the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth is final . . . Applications must be submitted on the

> prescribed form and accompanied by a copy of the parents' Ketuba (Orthodox Jewish marriage certificate) and the child's full birth certificate.[15]

In areas such as Birmingham, Glasgow and Liverpool where the schools are unable to fill their places entirely with Jewish children, issues of *halachah* do not apply. The admissions criteria of such schools will, however, give priority to Jewish children over those who are non-Jewish.

In addition to *halachic* criteria, many (strictly) Orthodox schools also have selection policies specifically based on the family's religious practice. Such schools will typically only admit children whose families are *shomer shabbat* (follow Orthodox religious laws of the Sabbath).

> Admission to the School will be strictly confined to children of parents who are able to demonstrate commitment to Orthodox Jewish traditions and practices. This will be assessed through the application form and interview, where the family's commitment to Orthodox Jewish traditions and practices must be demonstrated by reference to active Synagogue membership, adherence to Jewish religious dietary laws, involvement in Jewish communal life and participation in Jewish adult education.[16]

Many strictly Orthodox schools cater for particular religious 'niche' communities, such as Hasidic groupings of Lubavitch, Satmar or Belz. Hence, while there are a large number of strictly Orthodox schools, many of these will be unsuitable, or at least not ideal, for other sections of this community.

Overall, children from families who are 'legally' practising Orthodox Jews could—in theory at least—be accepted across

the full range of Jewish day schools. However, individuals further to the 'left' of the religious spectrum have more limited choices. Nevertheless, even voluntary Jewish schools that do not require pupils to be practising Jews may—as the example of the JFS selection criteria shows—choose to have prior attendance at a Jewish nursery or primary school as a basis for deciding between prospective pupils when the institution is over-subscribed.

Conclusions

There are a series of practical and religious barriers operating within the 'system' of Jewish day school education, in addition to parental decisions about whether individual schools are suitable in regard to the quality and suitability of general and Judaic teaching, ethos and added values (such as provision for children with SEN). Thus, given the often clear boundaries that separate the different types of Jewish day school, it may be more accurate to think in terms of a number of inter-connected Jewish day school systems, rather than a unified, single system.

Overall, it is useful to think of three principal school typologies:

Progressive

The ethos of these schools is in accord with the principles of the Reform, Liberal and Masorti sections of the Jewish community. Entrance criteria are not based on *halachah*, but pupils' families are expected to demonstrate that their beliefs are in tune with the ethos of the school. Priority for places may be given to those from local Progressive synagogues. Jewish practices, such as the wearing of *kippot*, are generally

encouraged but are not obligatory. Zionism and a 'love of Israel' are central to the ethos of these schools.

Central Orthodox

Children are taught according to a traditional Orthodox ethos, which varies according to the values and backgrounds of pupils' families. Most schools insist on *halachic* entrance criteria, and others require a demonstration of Orthodox religious practice. Schools may be mixed or single-sex and most are in the state sector. Male pupils are usually expected to wear *kippot* and *tzitsit*. Zionism and a 'love of Israel' are key aspects in many of these schools.

Strictly Orthodox

The majority of these schools are private, fee-paying institutions, taking in pupils who are *halachically* Jewish and who are fully Sabbath-observant. The particular Hasidic or other affiliation of the sponsoring community typically determines the schools' religious and practical ethos. Hence, there are a large number of schools representing particular Hasidic groupings. All have the development of a Torah-inspired way of life as their number one priority. Zionism is not generally an aspect in these schools. Many of these schools are also in financially deprived areas (see Chapter 7).

Notes

1 Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community, *A Community of Communities: Report of the Commission* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2000).
2 Miller, Schmool and Lerman.
3 Ibid.

4 Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community.
5 Data supplied by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.
6 Schmool and Cohen; Stephen W. Massil (ed.), *The Jewish Year Book 2001* (London: Vallentine Mitchell 2001).
7 Miller, Schmool and Lerman.
8 Data supplied by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.
9 See also Marlena Schmool and Steven Miller, 'Jewish education and identity among London synagogue members', in S. dellaPergola and J. Even (eds), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1997).
10 Prospectus for Hasmonean High School.
11 Note also the organization Schools' J-Link (SJL) that—similar to JAMS—runs Jewish school assemblies and classes in non-Jewish secondary schools. It also runs training programmes for non-Jewish teachers who are teaching Judaism.
12 Note that, according to the DfEE, there are 83 Jewish day schools (see Chapter 1).
13 Map drawn from data provided by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, 1999.
14 Prospectus for JFS.
15 Prospectus for the North West London Jewish Day School, 22.
16 Ibid.

4 Educational assessment of general subjects in Jewish day schools

In 1992 the government established the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) with a remit to 'improve standards of achievement and quality of education through regular independent inspections of all 24,000 schools in England that are wholly or mainly state-funded'.[1] Detailed inspections were to be carried out in individual state-sector schools, with inspectors assessing everything from examination results to the standards of individual subject teaching, ethos to sports facilities, multiculturalism to provision for children with special educational needs (SEN). This chapter provides a meta-analysis of OFSTED inspection reports for 16 Jewish primary schools (5,084 pupils) and 5 Jewish secondary schools (4,225 pupils) dating from 1996 to 2000.[2]

In addition to the OFSTED inspection reports, GCSE and GNVQ examinations (taken at the end of compulsory secondary education) and GCE examinations (taken during the 'sixth form': see Chapter 2) were also analysed. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) publishes 'league tables' of these examination results, including results for both state-sector and independent, fee-paying schools. The DfEE has examination data for 20 Jewish secondary schools (9,258 pupils), 5 of which are state-sector voluntary-aided comprehensives (4,604 pupils) and 15 independent (4,273 pupils). Note that this does not cover the full range of Jewish secondary day schools, because around 23 strictly Orthodox independent schools do not enter children for national public examinations.

To place the GCSE and GCE results for Jewish schools in context, data are also provided showing national (English) average results, as well as results from JAMS schools (non-Jewish schools with organized Jewish activities, which tend to have relatively high numbers of Jewish pupils: see Chapter 3) and those under the remit of the ISC. Analysing OFSTED and DfEE data provides a window into the strengths and weaknesses of Jewish schools. However, this data should be studied with a number of important provisos and caveats in mind.

- First, the OFSTED examination data on Jewish state schools relates to the period 1996–9, and there will inevitably be fluctuations in examination results and standards over this period.
- Second, because the sample size for the Jewish school categories is very small, compared to the many thousands of other state-sector and independent schools, the figures do not exactly compare like with like. There are approximately 3,500 state and independent secondary schools in England, 600 ISC schools, 29 JAMS schools, and DfEE examination data for 20 Jewish schools. Thus, individual Jewish schools that are especially strong or weak will skew the aggregate data.
- Third, statistical data from the DfEE and OFSTED are controversial, with many educationalists having strong reservations about their value. For example, critics argue that examination results may be more closely correlated to the relative prosperity of pupils' families than to the actual quality of education students receive. In other words, well-motivated children from middle-class backgrounds are more likely to achieve high examination results

than those from deprived backgrounds. Possible explanations for the performance of Jewish day school pupils are provided in the second half of this chapter.

Performance indicators

At key stage one, when pupils are tested in reading, writing and mathematics, the percentage of pupils at state-sector Jewish schools from 1996–9 achieving the expected National Curriculum results was between 11 and 15 percentage points higher than the national average. Key stage one tests are taken at age seven when pupils have had two years of primary education.

Table 4.1 **Percentage of key stage one pupils achieving expected National Curriculum level results in state-sector Jewish and national schools 1996–9**[3]

Age	*Key stage*	*Subject*	*Jewish state schools (mean average %)*	*National state schools (mean average %)*
7	1 (National Curriculum level 2)	Reading	95	80
		Writing	93	81
		Maths	95	84

At key stage two, which marks the end of primary school education, pupils in Jewish day schools appear to show rising levels of achievement in mathematics and English as compared to the national average. In these subjects, Jewish day school pupils achieve results that are now over 20 percentage points higher than the national average (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 **Percentage of key stage two pupils achieving expected National Curriculum level results in state-sector Jewish and national schools 1996–9**

Age	*Key stage*	*Subject*	*Jewish state schools (mean average %)*	*National state schools (mean average %)*
11	2 (National Curriculum level 4)	English	87	65
		Maths	82	61
		Science	81	69

At key stage three, Jewish day school pupils once again out-perform the national average, particularly at the more demanding standards required to achieve National Curriculum level 6. Indeed, in English at National Curriculum level 6, pupils at state-sector Jewish schools achieved scores that were more than double the national average.

Table 4.3 **Percentage of key stage three pupils achieving expected National Curriculum level results in state-sector Jewish and national schools 1996–9**

Age	*Key stage*	*Subject*	*Jewish state schools (mean average %)*	*National state schools (mean average %)*
14	3 (National Curriculum level 5)	English	88	61
		Maths	75	60
		Science	73	57
	3 (National Curriculum level 6)	English	68	28
		Maths	56	36
		Science	41	25

At key stage one (towards the start of primary education), Jewish day school pupils have higher than average attainment levels for the core assessed National Curriculum subjects. In mathematics and science, the gap between the attainment levels of Jewish day school pupils and the national average stays fairly constant throughout the educational system as a whole (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). This reflects the wider picture in the United Kingdom, in which individual pupil performance at key stages three and four is closely correlated to prior performance: pupils doing well in primary school are likely to be similarly successful at secondary school.[4]

In English, however, Jewish day school pupils show *increasing* attainment levels throughout the educational system compared to the national average (see Figure 4.3). Either these schools are particularly strong in English teaching or there are particular factors that mean that Jewish day

Figure 4.1 **Pupil performance in state-sector Jewish and national schools 1996–9, key stages 1–3: mathematics**
% of pupils achieving expected National Curriculum results

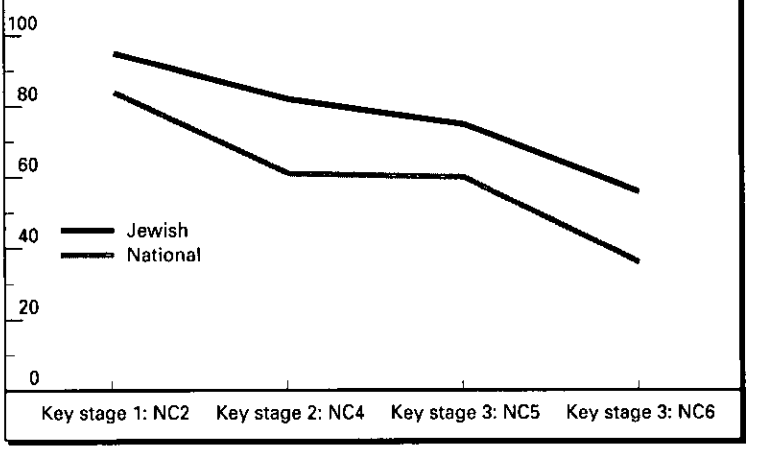


Figure 4.2 **Pupil performance in state-sector Jewish and national schools 1996–9, key stages 2–3: science**

% of pupils achieving expected National Curriculum results

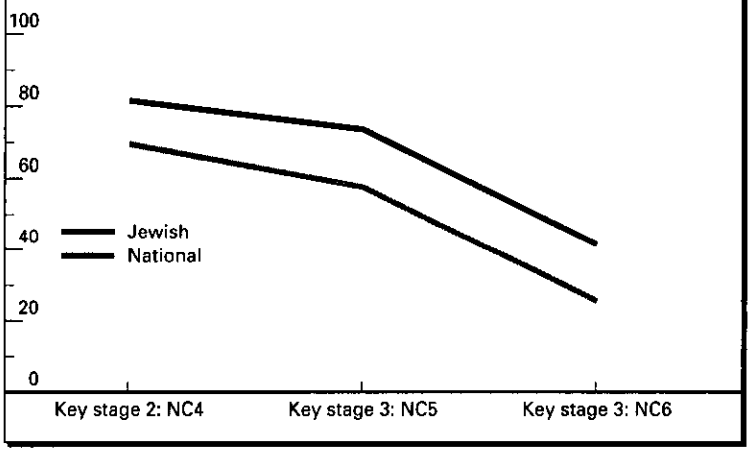
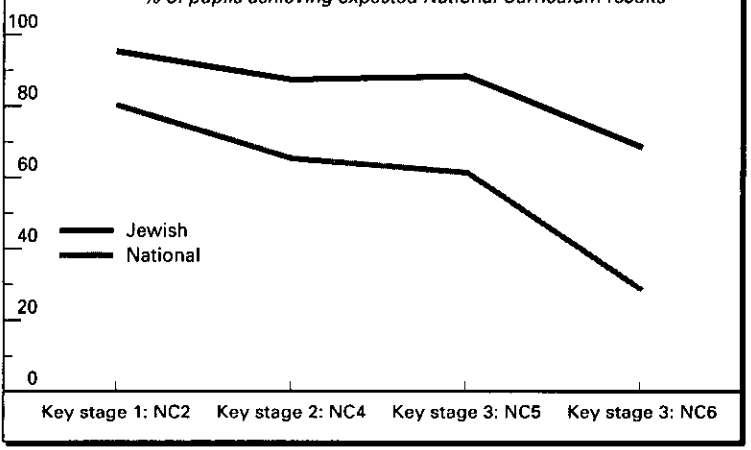


Figure 4.3 **Pupil performance in state-sector Jewish and national schools 1996–9, key stages 1–3: reading and English**

% of pupils achieving expected National Curriculum results



school pupils are especially strong in this subject area. These issues will be addressed in the second half of this chapter.

In order to further place the achievements of state-sector Jewish day school pupils in perspective, it is possible to compare certain key stage results with those of pupils in private, fee-paying ISC institutions. Independent schools are not legally required to teach the National Curriculum, follow the key stage approach or publish the results if they do. Nonetheless, 150 independent Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) did voluntarily undertake the key stage two tests. The 1999 figures for these schools at National Curriculum level four are: English, 95 per cent; mathematics 93 per cent; and science 94 per cent. These figures suggest that, while pupils in state-sector Jewish schools do well compared to the national state average, they do not perform up to the levels of the top private schools.

At key stage four, which marks the end of compulsory education by the taking of GCSE and GNVQ examinations, pupils in Jewish schools achieve results that are 1.5 times higher than the national average, but lower than those from JAMS and ISC schools (although, again, note the very different sample sizes of Jewish, JAMS, ISC and national schools; see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.5 shows the internal variations within the Jewish school sector. These results show how pupil results in Jewish day schools vary according to whether they are state sector, selective independent or non-selective independent. The chart shows how pupils in the three selective independent Jewish schools achieved the highest results (equivalent to those of the ISC), 15 percentage points higher than pupils in state-sector Jewish schools. Non-selective independents (11 strictly Orthodox schools) have on average 72 per cent of their pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C

Figure 4.4 **Pupils achieving five or more GCSE or GNVQ grades A*–C**

Academic year 1999–2000, %

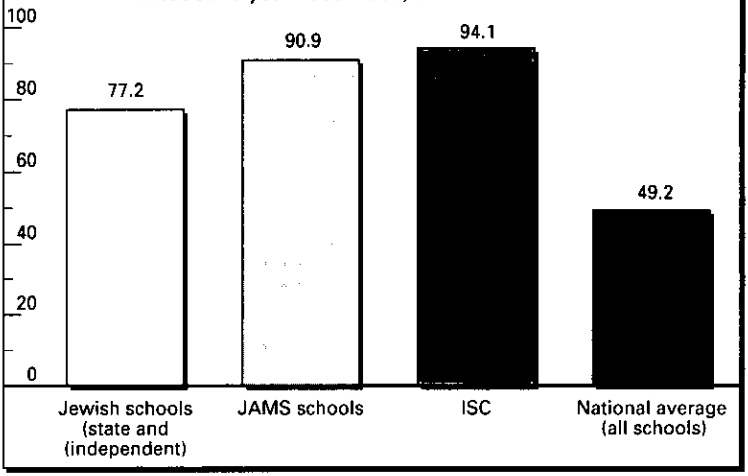
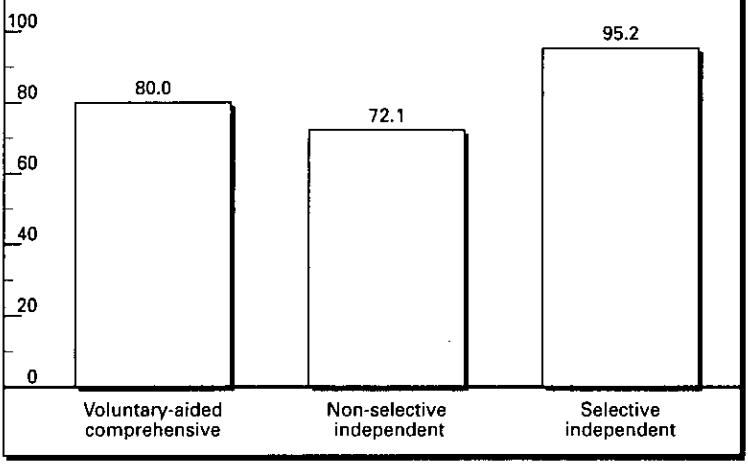


Figure 4.5 **Pupils in different types of Jewish schools achieving five or more GCSE or GNVQ grades A*–C**

Academic year 1999–2000, %



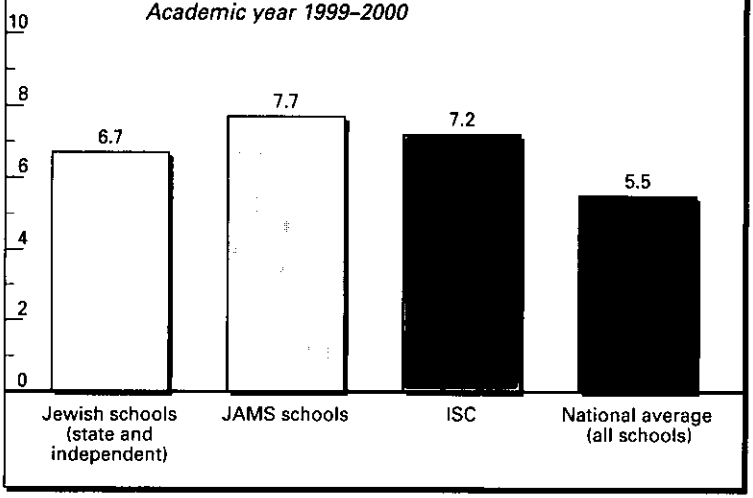
(results that are almost 1.5 times higher than the national average, although note that many strictly Orthodox schools do not enter pupils for any public examinations).

After completing compulsory education at the end of year 11, students in years 12 and 13 may—depending on their key stage four/GCSE results—choose to take GCE A or AS examinations, or sometimes AGNVQs. Students taking A levels usually take three or four subjects. Figure 4.6 shows the average score per subject for pupils taking two or more GCEs, with each entry awarded points as follows:

Grade	*GCE A level points*	*GCE AS level points*
A	10	5
B	8	4
C	6	3
D	4	2
E	2	1

Students who fail to achieve a pass are included but score no points. The points for each candidate are calculated and divided by the number of entries, with A levels counting as one entry, and AS levels as half an entry. As such, a candidate achieving A level grades of A, B and C would have 24 points in total, and thus 8 points per entry (24 points divided by 3 entries). As Figure 4.6 shows, pupils in Jewish schools show a similar pattern of achievements at GCE level as they do for GCSEs. The results of pupils at Jewish schools are higher than the national average, but lower than those of JAMS and ISC schools. Note, however, that only 7 Jewish schools (with 5,157 pupils) have pupils taking GCEs; this necessarily limits the value of the data.[5]

Figure 4.6 **Average GCE points per subject, for pupils taking two or more examinations**
Academic year 1999–2000



Explaining the academic performance of Jewish day school pupils

The relationship between educational inputs and outputs in contemporary Britain is obviously not a simple one-to-one ratio. The success in the formal examinations that pupils in Jewish schools achieve, compared to overall national average figures, is doubtless due to a combination of factors, such as socio-economic background, commitment and expectations of pupils and parents, school ethos, better teaching standards, smaller class sizes, single-sex education and financial support. This half of the chapter discusses these potential factors, using evidence from OFSTED and the DfEE as well as from thirty-six in-depth qualitative interviews carried out in the year 2000. Those interviewed were key professionals involved in

Jewish education—headteachers, teachers, educational psychologists, directors of services and community leaders—as well as parents of Jewish children. The interviews took place principally in London, Manchester, Glasgow and Cardiff. These cities differ enormously in terms of Jewish populations and institutional needs: two-thirds of British Jews live in Greater London, where there are dozens of Jewish schools, while there are only 1,200 Jews in Cardiff and the last Jewish kindergarten there closed down in 1999.

Socio-economic status

When analysing pupil performance, education professionals often assume an inverse correlation between examination results and the number of children coming from deprived socio-economic backgrounds. The usual, but by no means uncontroversial, indicator for measuring this is the number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Table 4.4 **Eligibility for free school meals, state-sector Jewish and national schools**

	State-sector Jewish schools average %	*State-sector national schools average %*
Primary level	7.1	18.9
Secondary level	6.7	16.9

As Table 4.4 shows, state-sector Jewish day schools have a headstart in terms of the number of pupils from higher than average socio-economic backgrounds. These figures support the contention that these Jewish schools do better than the national average, at least in part, because of the socio-economic backgrounds of children who enter these schools in the first place: 'middle-class children achieving

middle-class results'. Nevertheless, Figure 4.5 shows that some non-selective strictly Orthodox schools achieved GCSE pass rates that were significantly higher than the national average, even though many of these schools are located in some of the poorest parts of Britain, such as the London borough of Hackney and inner-city Salford (Greater Manchester).

The commitment, expectations and cultural/religious values of parents and pupils

A second factor that may explain Jewish day school pupils' achievements involves the expectations and commitment of both parents and pupils. This is not easily quantified although, from interviews with headteachers of Jewish day schools, Jewish parental involvement appears to be very high and is clearly linked to pupil success:

> [Parents] are demanding, they do expect a huge amount, and some of them can be very difficult of course, but I'd swap any day Jewish parents who push and nag and demand, than parents who have no interest at all in their children's education, which is what you find a lot in the wider community. Jewish parents are largely what makes Jewish schools so successful, because they're pushing schools all the time, they're never satisfied, and, if we're honest, schools benefit from that. (Headteacher of a secondary school)

Of importance here is the partnership between parents and school. The OFSTED inspection reports show that parents are generally more positive than negative about their interactions with schools. Nevertheless, analysis of these reports, together with interviews with Jewish parents, shows that there are

communication problems in certain Jewish day schools (see Chapter 6).

The source of Jewish families' positive expectations is to be found in particular traditional Jewish values and historical experiences, such as the respect for learning, community pride, minority status and a history of discrimination that has led individuals to struggle for financial success and independence.

> Traditional respect for learning [has been] re-directed toward secular education in a climate of tolerance which has allowed Jews to contribute more fully to the society in which they live. Jews have been especially quick to recognise that education and formal qualifications are the secret of occupational success and social mobility . . . With a background of respect for learning and desire for self-improvement, Jews have entered this new competition of 'worth not birth' on a better than equal footing with the English middle and working classes.[6]

Particular traditional Jewish practices, such as the 'rites of passage' that Jewish males aged 13 and females aged 12 go through during *bar mitzvah*, *bat mitzvah* or *bat chayil* ceremonies, may also contribute to the success of Jewish day school pupils, particularly in English. For these ceremonies, students typically spend a year learning a particular portion of a sacred text and performing it in front of the whole congregation in the synagogue. The skills necessarily developed for these events—translation, rote memory, presentation, comprehension—together with the confidence to stand up and express oneself in front of the congregation may be particularly transferable to the context

of English examinations. However, there are other factors that may also explain the particular success in English examinations, such as strong teaching standards or parental encouragement of children to read and write at an early age, providing key building blocks for them to develop later on in the educational system.

School ethos

A third potential factor is the ethos of schools, and the type of learning environment created. Schools that promote positive learning environments in which pupils are well behaved and keen to learn have higher pupil performance results. The OFSTED inspection reports show that most Jewish day schools have very low levels (often 0 per cent) of pupil exclusions and unauthorized absences. Moreover, inspectors almost universally praised the ethos of Jewish day schools, with comments such as 'very cohesive community', 'mutual respect and understanding' and 'sound moral guidance'. The ethos of schools is also one of the prime factors used by Jewish parents to choose between different institutions (see Chapter 9). The source of this largely positive ethos is clearly linked to the values and expectations of parents, many of whom also play key roles in schools as parent-governors. In this respect, key individuals can have a major impact on schools. For example, at the King David High School in Manchester, OFSTED inspectors praised the 'outstanding and inspirational leadership', noting how governors 'spearhead improvements' so that GCSE results have notably improved and student numbers almost doubled since the previous inspection (see also Chapter 6). Finally, school ethos is also often associated with particular geographical Jewish communities that take pride in local institutions, seeing them as 'their schools'.

Standards of teaching

A fourth factor that could explain the achievements of Jewish day school pupils is the quality of teaching. Table 4.5 shows how the vast majority of lessons in Jewish schools were deemed satisfactory or very good.

Table 4.5 **Standards of teaching for individual lessons in Jewish state-sector schools (OFSTED inspection reports 1996–2000)**

	Unsatisfactory (%)	*Satisfactory (%)*	*Very good (%)*
Jewish primary schools: London	14	57	29
Jewish primary schools: regions	6	81	13
Jewish primary schools (overall)	12	64	24
Jewish secondary schools	6	69	25

These figures are similar to the current national picture, in which 6 per cent of teaching was deemed unsatisfactory in 1999–2000 (compared to 1994–5, the year inspections were first carried out, when 20 per cent of national lessons were deemed unsatisfactory).[7]

The strength of teaching in state-sector Jewish day schools is not demonstrated right across the board, with OFSTED inspectors commending the teaching of some subjects as strong, but criticizing others as weak. Figures 4.7 and 4.8 are based on the number of times OFSTED reports praised as strong, or criticized as weak, individual subject teaching in Jewish state-sector schools. These graphs suggest that, while Jewish schools are often strong in core curriculum subjects, such as mathematics, English and science, there are sometimes weaknesses. OFSTED inspectors highlighted weaknesses in some primary schools in art, history, geography, and

Figure 4.7 **Quality of teaching in state-sector Jewish primary schools**
Number of references in individual OFSTED inspection reports to strong or weak teaching

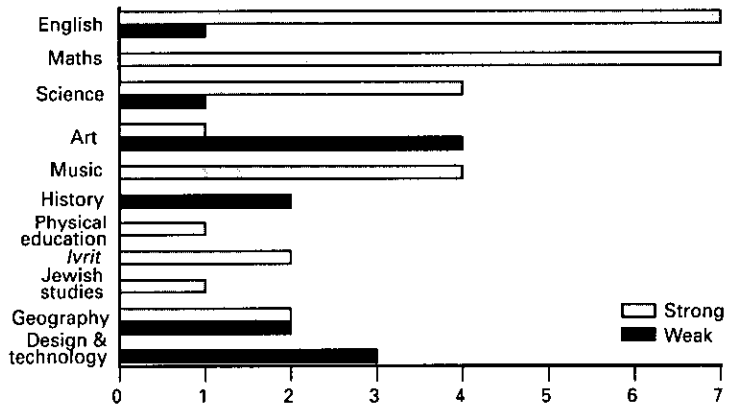
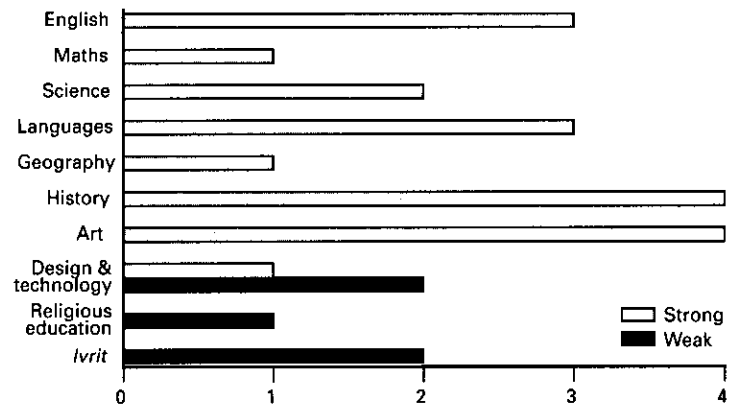


Figure 4.8 **Quality of teaching in state-sector Jewish secondary schools**
Number of references in individual OFSTED inspection reports to strong or weak teaching



design and technology, and in some secondary schools in design and technology, religious education and *Ivrit*.[8]

Class sizes

A fifth factor that has been associated with academic achievement is class size. This is a politically and educationally contested issue, with many challenging the assumption of a direct correlation between class size and pupil success. Table 4.6—based on DfEE data for 21 Jewish state-sector primary schools (6,149 pupils) and 5 Jewish state-sector secondary schools (4,426 pupils)—shows that state-sector Jewish schools have slightly smaller class sizes than the national average.

Table 4.6 **Average class sizes for state-sector Jewish and national schools, 1999**[9]

	State-sector Jewish schools (average %)	*State-sector national schools (average %)*
Primary level	26.5	27.1
Secondary level	19.0	22.0

Similarly, as Table 4.7 shows, when analysing pupil to full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher ratios, Jewish state-sector schools are slightly better placed than the national average.

Table 4.7 **Pupil to teacher ratios for state-sector Jewish and national schools, 1999**

	State-sector Jewish schools (average %)	*State-sector national schools (average %)*
Primary level	21.4	23.3
Secondary level	16.4	17.1

Single-sex education

A sixth possible factor relates to the single-sex nature of the majority of Jewish day schools. Sixteen of the 20 Jewish day schools for which the DfEE has GCSE, GNVQ and GCE examination data are single-sex or separate boys and girls during formal lessons. Even a co-educational school such as the King David High School in Manchester now has a segregated Yavneh stream for girls. Nevertheless, GCSE and GCE results from co-educational schools compare extremely favourably with single-sex schools (the majority of which are strictly Orthodox), and so this factor remains unproven.

Finances

A final possible factor relates to the finances and therefore the resources available to schools. According to the OFSTED reports, the mean average amount state-sector Jewish schools spend every year per pupil at primary level is £1,777 (the range being £1,524–£4,058), and at secondary level £2,935 (range of £1,877–£3,544). These figures for each school are only a snapshot for the year the OFSTED inspection was carried out, and may thus not be representative of typical expenditure for that institution. In other words, if a school had a particularly high or low expenditure pattern in the year the OFSTED report was carried out, this would skew the data. Nevertheless, as reported in Chapter 2, there are a series of educational organizations and wealthy philanthropists that have supported Jewish day schools, providing buildings and facilities for pupils. Such financial support is likely to be positively correlated with academic pupil performance.

Conclusions

Overall, pupils at Jewish day schools achieve examination scores that are considerably higher than the national average, although markedly less than the elite, fee-paying ISC schools or those that have JAMS programmes (which largely select pupils on the basis of academic ability). While many of the strictly Orthodox Jewish day schools do not enter pupils for public examination, the success of those Jewish day school pupils that *do* is doubtless due to a combination of factors, including socio-economic background, the commitment, expectations and values of parents and pupils, and school ethos. Other factors such as the financial backing of Jewish schools and relatively small class sizes may also be significant. Nevertheless, the attitudes of families to learning is probably the single most significant factor, more so than the usually given reason of socio-economic status. This is demonstrated by the fact that, while Jewish day schools have a higher socio-economic intake than the national average, many individual Jewish schools located in very deprived areas still have pupils achieving GCSE examination results that are much higher than the national average. Moreover, pupils in these mainly strictly Orthodox schools are often taught general subjects for relatively few hours per week (because of the emphasis on Judaic learning) and are also likely to have many students whose first language is not English. Parental attitudes to studying are especially strong in this section of the community, with education considered a lifelong commitment. Positive attitudes towards learning—as influenced by cultural or religious values and traditions—are thus probably the key to the overall comparative academic success of Jewish day school pupils.

Notes

1 Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate procedures and hence are not included in comparative figures in this report.
2 There were also reports for 25 Jewish kindergartens and nurseries, although these are not included in this analysis.
3 All examination results are weighted per pupil, rather than per school.
4 DfEE, *Statistics of Education: Pupil Progress in Schools in England: 2000* (London: The Stationery Office 2001).
5 This excludes one non-selective independent, in which, in 1999/2000, only a single candidate took a GCE.
6 Barry Kosmin, 'Exclusion and opportunity at work', in Sandra Wallman (ed.), *Ethnicity at Work* (London: Macmillan 1979), 56–7.
7 OFSTED, *1999–2000. Standards and Quality in Education. The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools* (London: The Stationery Office 2001).
8 An educational assessment of Judaic subjects is provided in the next chapter.
9 Figures for secondary schools include lessons taught in the sixth form, but exclude sixth-form colleges.

5 Educational assessment of Judaic subjects in Jewish day schools

The *raison d'être* of Jewish day schools is to provide a Judaic education so that pupils develop an attachment to Judaism. If pupils leave Jewish day schools with good general academic results but a poor appreciation, understanding or respect for Judaism, then the school will have failed according to its own institutionally defined criteria of success. While some parents clearly value general curriculum success above all (see Chapter 9), others—and especially the founders and sponsors of schools—consider Judaic content as being of primary importance. All Jewish day schools teach some form of Jewish studies, which may incorporate the study of festivals and history, or morals and values in Judaism, together with Hebrew, which will include biblical reading and translation, and sometimes also the learning of modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*). The nature of the Judaic content varies according to school typology and the population the school serves (see Chapter 3).

Problems in the teaching of Jewish studies and Hebrew in Jewish day schools—and arguably even more so in part-time, supplementary *chadarim*—have long been the focus of communal concern. In particular, there are problems in the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified Jewish studies and Hebrew teachers. These issues will be addressed in Chapter 6, while this chapter concentrates on the quantitative and qualitative evidence of pupil performance using examination board data on the Judaic subjects of Religious Studies: Judaism, Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew, together with information from the recent Pikuach report.[1]

Pikuach was established in 1996 by the Board of Deputies of British Jews to inspect the Judaic aspects of Jewish day schools. The inspection framework was modelled on OFSTED, and was designed to fulfil section 13 of the 1988 Education Reform Act (subsequently section 23 of the 1996 Education Act). This requires governors of maintained faith schools to assess denominational religious education and school worship (aspects that cannot be assessed by OFSTED). In particular, Pikuach established a framework for assessing standards in Jewish studies and Hebrew. Because of the wide variety in Jewish day schools, however, Pikuach assesses schools according to their *own individual aspirations* rather than any shared set of cross-communal standards. This means that comparisons between different schools are very difficult to make and, unlike OFSTED inspection reports, Pikuach reports have relatively little quantitative data by which institutions (or parents) can measure the strengths and weaknesses of Judaic education. Nonetheless, they represent the most detailed examination so far of Judaic education in Jewish day schools.

The Pikuach report

According to *Pikuach*, the attainment of pupils in Jewish studies and Hebrew closely matches the home practice of parents. In schools in which pupils have come from homes where religious practice has reinforced the school's curriculum, 'standards of practical skills such as Hebrew reading and writing were found to be high'. In such schools, pupils were able to translate texts such as the *chumash* (Pentateuch in book form). Inspectors also observed 'remarkable fluency' in schools where much of the Hebrew and Jewish studies curriculum was conducted in Hebrew. Nevertheless, concern

was expressed that fluency in Hebrew in some schools was acquired to the detriment of other aspects of Jewish studies, such as *dinim* (Jewish laws) and history.

In schools where there were comparatively few Sabbath-observant parents, Jewish studies skills were less developed, although 'pupils responded well to high expectations by the schools'. Moreover:

> Overwhelmingly, pupils are articulate in Jewish studies lessons and in assemblies and often willing to listen and to talk purposefully about the ethical and religious issues they study. They can engage in lively debate and learn to respect points of view different from their own.[2]

Nevertheless, inspectors also acknowledged that, in at least one secondary school, pupils needed to be stimulated properly and that there was an absence of sufficient written work: 'Listening skills in the majority of pupils are good. In lessons where pupils are uninspired and discipline is unsatisfactory, however, pupils do not listen to the teacher or their classmates.'[3] Inspectors also noted a lack of consistency across the different key stages:

> A common feature in over one half of the schools is that pupils' progress in Jewish Studies and Hebrew is not consistent across more than one key stage. For example, in several schools, where Hebrew reading and writing standards are found to be generally satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7), attainments decline during Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11), if too much time is spent on consolidation rather than on providing additional challenge. Sometimes the pupils' main experience of writing is limited to handwriting practice.[4]

Overall, *Pikuach* paints a generally positive picture of Judaic teaching in Jewish day schools. However, the report gives little comparative quantitative data and, in particular, gives no information on the achievements of pupils in GCSE and GCE examinations. These examinations are important for the long-term future of the Jewish day school movement, because these are key qualifications for the next generation of Judaic subject teachers. Without a supply of suitably trained teachers, the Judaic education of future generations is put at risk, hence the importance of examining longitudinal changes in cohort numbers and academic performance. Moreover, Jewish community organizations—such as the Association of Orthodox Jewish Headteachers—have lobbied hard, and also offered financial support, for the continuation of GCE Biblical Hebrew despite relatively low numbers of pupils taking this exam. Communal decisions about the future of Judaic examinations cannot be made without an understanding and knowledge of current rates of take-up and longitudinal trends. The following figures show data collected from the examination boards of Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR), Edexcel, and Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA).[5]

GCSE data

Pupils in UK Jewish day schools (in which pupils are entered for public examinations) typically choose eight or more GCSE subjects at the start of year 10; they study these over a two-year period and are then examined at the end of year 11 at age 16 (see Chapter 2). Alongside core subjects such as mathematics and English, pupils will also typically study foreign languages such as French or German. In a number of Jewish schools, pupils are also able to choose modern Hebrew as a

second- or third-choice foreign language; they are also able to study biblical Hebrew and, since 1996, can take a GCSE in Religious Studies: Judaism, which is now the most popular 'Jewish' examination. Note that in addition to pupils in Jewish day schools, Orthodox and Progressive supplementary, part-time synagogue movements—as well as many non-Jewish JAMS and SJL schools—also enter hundreds of pupils for Judaic examinations each year, the figures for which are included in the results detailed throughout this chapter.

GCSE Modern Hebrew

For GCSE Modern Hebrew, the number of male entrants has been fairly constant between 1988 and 1999, whereas the number of female entrants has steadily increased over the same period, with a sharp peak in 1997. By 1999 females contributed over 60 per cent of the total number of entrants. The overall examination results for GCSE Modern Hebrew show a

Figure 5.1 **GCSE Modern Hebrew entrants, 1988–99**

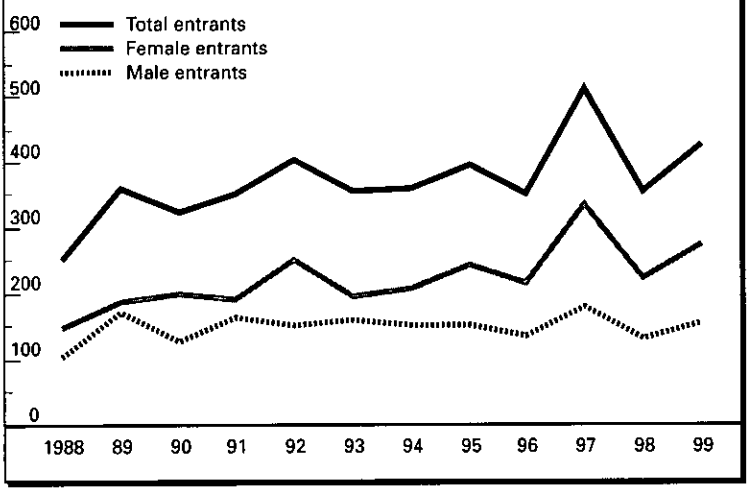
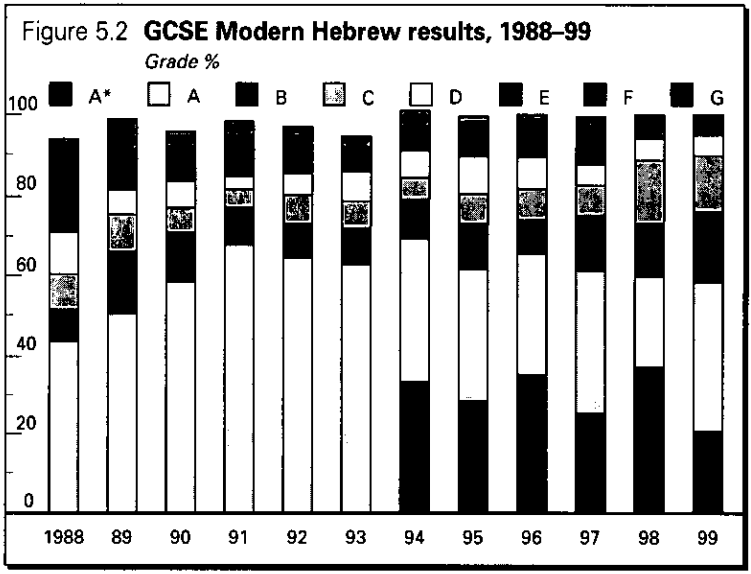


Figure 5.2 **GCSE Modern Hebrew results, 1988–99**



fairly steady improvement in the number of pupils achieving grades A* to C, although the percentages receiving A* or A grades has declined in recent years.[6] The examination results are consistently better for female than male entrants, typically by several percentage points for grades A* to C. Note also that there are now 36 examination centres in the United Kingdom (mostly in day schools, both Jewish and non-Jewish) offering Modern Hebrew GCSE, a fairly constant figure since 1989.

GCSE Biblical Hebrew

In the year 2000, there were 451 entrants for GCSE Biblical Hebrew, continuing a steady increase over the past ten years. Typically, there are more female than male entrants so that, as with GCSE Modern Hebrew, over 60 per cent of entrants were female in 2000. Results for GCSE Biblical Hebrew have shown a decline in the percentage of A* to C grades since the early

Figure 5.3 **GCSE Biblical Hebrew entrants, 1990–2000**

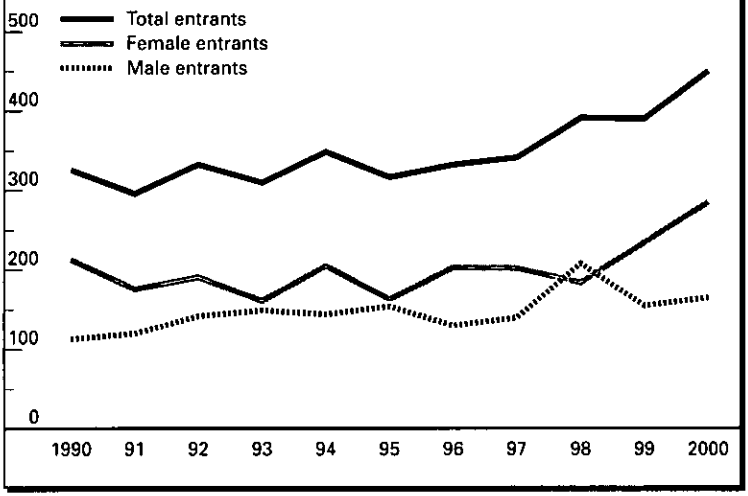
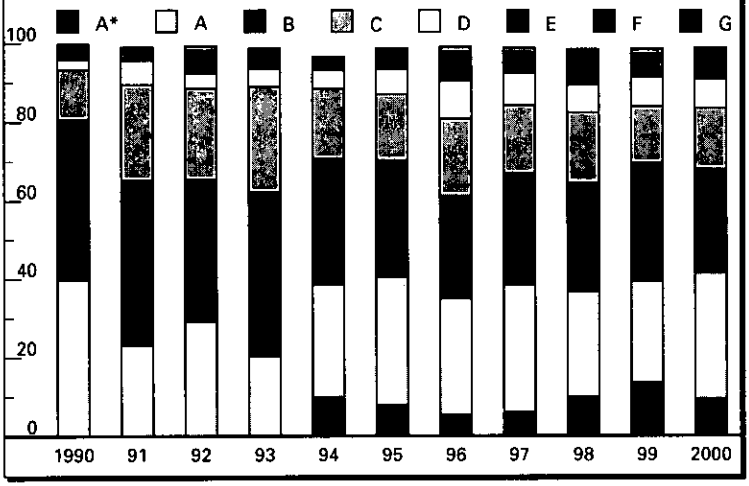


Figure 5.4 **GCSE Biblical Hebrew results, 1990–2000**

Grade %



1990s when as many as 94 per cent achieved these grades; in 2000 only 84 per cent did so. Female entrants also have typically achieved higher grades than males.

GCSE Religious Studies: Judaism

Religious Studies: Judaism has been running for a shorter period than the other examination subjects, and, unlike Modern and Biblical Hebrew, is not available as a GCE. Nonetheless, in its first three years the number of entrants rapidly increased, and by 1999 there were 812 pupils taking this exam, with slightly more female than male entrants.[7] The results of pupils have also improved over this period so that, in 1999, 94 per cent of entrants received grades A* to C compared to 83 per cent in 1996. In this subject, females once again have consistently out-performed males at the higher-grade levels.

GCE data

In years 12 or 13 many pupils take the specialist GCE A or AS level examinations. Those taking A levels typically take three or four subjects, with results key to gaining entrance to university. There are only two specifically 'Jewish' examinations at GCE level: Modern Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew. In Modern Hebrew, while over 400 pupils take this subject as a GCSE, only 25 pupils currently continue with the subject and take the A level examination. For Biblical Hebrew, there is a slightly lower fall-out rate, with 451 pupils currently taking the GCSE examination and 64 entering for the A level.

GCE Modern Hebrew

For GCE Modern Hebrew, the number of candidates is very small, with only 25 people sitting the examination in 2000,

Figure 5.5 **GCSE Religious Studies: Judaism entrants, 1996–9**

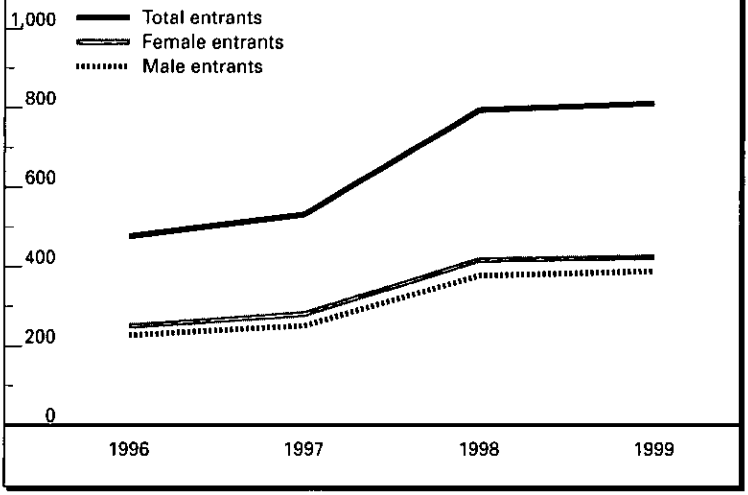


Figure 5.6 **GCSE Religious Studies: Judaism results, 1996–9**

Grade %

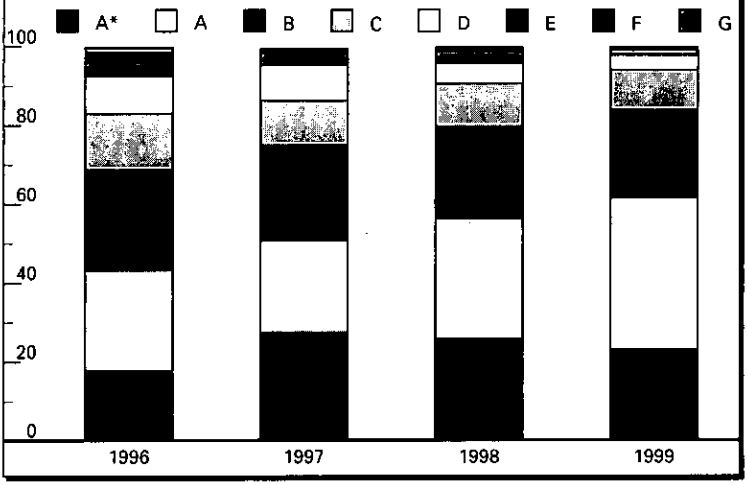


Figure 5.7 **GCE Modern Hebrew entrants, 1990–2000**

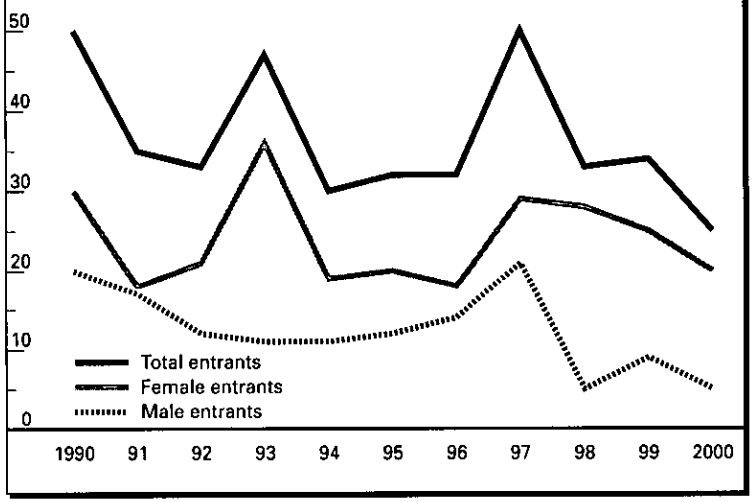
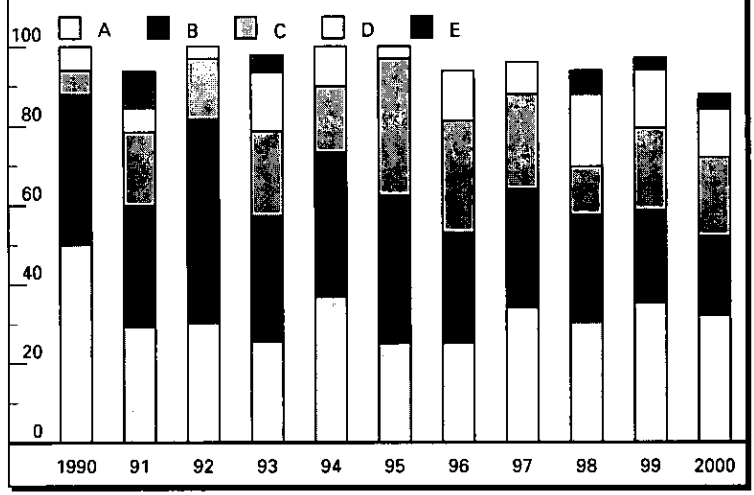


Figure 5.8 **GCE Modern Hebrew results, 1990–2000**

Grade %



only 5 of whom were male. There appears to be a reduction in the number of candidates taking this examination over the last few years, especially among males. Picking out meaningful trends in examination results is not possible because of the very small sample size. Nonetheless, the figures are included as a matter of record, providing baseline figures for future comparative purposes.

GCE Biblical Hebrew

For GCE Biblical Hebrew, there is a steady rise in the number of candidates taking this examination, from 30 in 1990 to 64 in 1999. Picking out meaningful trends in results is again not possible because of the small sample size.

Figure 5.9 **GCE Biblical Hebrew entrants, 1990–9**

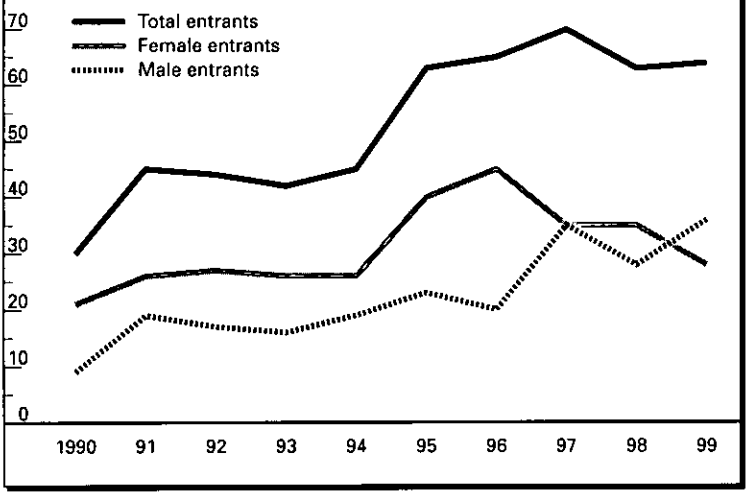
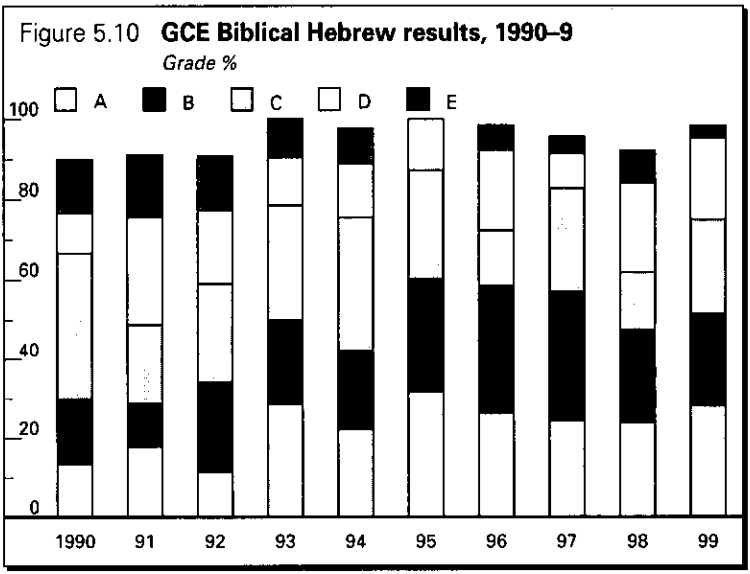


Figure 5.10 **GCE Biblical Hebrew results, 1990–9**



Conclusions

The data show how remarkably few pupils—and particularly boys—are choosing to study modern Hebrew at GCE Advanced level. It is at A level—the staging post for university entrance—that students achieve real fluency and engagement with the subject area. The shortage of candidates is of particular concern in terms of the future recruitment of home-grown *Ivrit* teachers. The education system acts as a 'feedback loop' so that a shortage of Hebrew teachers may mean fewer children learning Hebrew, producing fewer teachers in the future to educate the next generation of day school pupils.

For GCE Biblical Hebrew, the steady rise in candidates is more encouraging, though the relatively low numbers are still a cause for concern. An insufficient pool of potential university undergraduates threatens the future of Hebrew scholar-

ship at university level. Moreover, training colleges for the clergy—such as the Progressive Leo Baeck College and the central Orthodox London School of Jewish Studies (formerly Jews' College)—should also be uneasy. Some interviewees expressed concern that rabbis in central Orthodox synagogues are increasingly being drawn from the strictly Orthodox *yeshivah* world and not the communities that they represent. The United Kingdom may struggle to produce home-grown central Orthodox rabbis without an increase in the pool of suitably educated A level candidates.

On a more positive note, the recently established GCSE Religious Studies: Judaism course has proved extremely popular, with almost twice as many pupils taking this examination as Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew. This raises the question of whether a Religious Studies: Judaism GCE A or AS level could be established. Finally, it is also important to note the gender imbalance in Judaic examinations, with girls much more likely to take these subjects and to achieve better results when they do so. This has implications not only for the recruitment of central Orthodox clergy but for the nature of religious life in the Orthodox community generally.

Notes

1 *Pikuach: Inspecting Jewish Schools* (London: Board of Deputies of British Jews and UJIA 2000).
2 Ibid., 8.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., 9–10.
5 Figures 5.1 and 5.2 have been compiled from data supplied by AQA. Figures 5.3, 5.4 and 5.7–5.10 have been compiled from data

supplied by Edexcel. Figures 5.5 and 5.6 have been compiled from data supplied by OCR.

6 Note that the A* category was only introduced in 1994.

7 Note that there are also 'Judaism' papers as part of the AQA Religious Education GCSE. In 1999, 4,465 took the Judaism paper in the full-course Religious Education GCSE, and 2,455 in the short course. However, it is likely that many of these candidates come from non-Jewish schools.

6 Key strategic issues facing central Orthodox and Progressive Jewish day schools

While the number of Jewish day schools has grown rapidly over the past half-century, and pupils in these schools are largely achieving good academic examination results compared to the national average, a series of key strategic issues still face the overall Jewish schooling sector. On the basis of in-depth interviews with both education providers (head-teachers, teachers, educational psychologists and community professionals) and education users (parents), five strategic themes concerning Jewish day schools were identified: *provision of places*, *human resources*, *financing*, *communication and information* and *special educational needs*. This chapter discusses the first four of these themes, which are presented in a hierarchy of importance, beginning with the most pressing communal issues of provision of Jewish day school places and whether there are enough teachers, and going on to less immediate—though still important—concerns, such as how schools communicate with parents. The chapter concentrates on these themes for 'mainstream' Progressive and central Orthodox schools. Chapter 7 discusses strategic issues facing the strictly Orthodox sector, which has particular needs and concerns, and Chapter 8 analyses provision for children with special educational needs. SEN is an area that has largely been neglected in Jewish education reports, and requires particular communal attention.

Provision of places

Questions as to whether there is over- or under-provision of Jewish day school places continue to worry Jewish community leaders concerned with education. In some regional communities, concerns are expressed over whether the local Jewish day school can attract enough Jewish pupils to remain viable in the long term, whereas in parts of London there are questions as to whether or not the supply of places can keep up with demand.

At primary level, there is a range of Jewish day schools in the north London area, from Progressive schools, such as Clore Shalom and Akiva, to central Orthodox schools, such as Rosh Pinah and Hertsmere, to the strictly Orthodox schools like Pardes House and Yesodey Hatorah. Nonetheless, a number of north London interviewees spoke of the difficulties of obtaining places at their preferred primary school:

> At [our primary school] people were fighting to get in. (Governor of a London Jewish primary school)

> It can be a nightmare trying to get your child into the school of your choice ... I think a lot of people don't get into the schools they want. (Parent of a child attending a London Jewish primary school)

> We tried to find him a Jewish school in Hendon, but waiting lists were horrendous. (Parent of a child attending a London Jewish primary school)

For schools that are in demand—and thus have to 'ration' places—selection criteria are based on factors such as *halachic* status, prior attendance at a Jewish nursery, the presence of a

sibling in the school and geographical proximity (see Chapter 3). Parents who want to send their children to Jewish schools but do not meet the necessary criteria—because, for example, they may have just moved to the area—face the prospect of settling for their second- or third-choice school. In theory at least, they may even have to send their child to a non-Jewish school.

At secondary level there are no specifically Progressive schools and a small number of central Orthodox Jewish schools, although institutions tend to be larger than at primary level. Here again, fears of an over-subscription of places were often expressed. The Jewish Free School (JFS) is preparing to move site and expand, and Progressive and Orthodox steering groups have been established to discuss the possibility of constructing one, or possibly even two, new secondary schools north of Greater London in Hertfordshire. Nonetheless, several educational professionals argued that the number of places at Jewish day schools was probably 'about right' for current and short- to medium-term future needs.[1]

Several providers and users at both primary and secondary levels noted how most schools have particular constituencies and niche markets. This is partly determined by geographical location—both institutional selection criteria and the willingness of parents and children to travel beyond certain distances—but also by the type of ethos associated with the school. Accordingly, while there is a qualitative perception among certain education providers of a need to expand the provision of Jewish day school places in north London, some providers noted a more stable demand in terms of their particular religious constituency. At one school, for example, the headteacher argued that the 'market' for potential pupils was relatively steady, but noted pressures to move to the 'right' in terms of religious observance; while this might

potentially attract more pupils it would also entail, from this headteacher's perspective, an unacceptable alteration to the ethos of the school. Broad statements about an over- or under-provision of places are thus unhelpful, even in London. Moreover, calculating the extent of levels of over- or under-provision is difficult because parents can register an interest with several different schools, thus making the demand for places seem greater than is the case.

Outside London, the provision of Jewish day school places is patchier although, as in London, schools are often associated with particular religious, cultural or Zionist traditions. In Leeds, there are on-going discussions about a possible Jewish state secondary school, but in many regional communities questions are being raised—if sometimes only tacitly—about the long-term future of formal Jewish schooling. In Cardiff, there has been no Jewish school at any level since the kindergarten closed down in 1999 and in communities such as Liverpool and Glasgow Jewish schools take in non-Jewish pupils in order to make up the register. Here, questions of demography are all-important.

> Interviewer: Where do you think your school will be in ten years' time?
>
> Primary headteacher: I'd rather not look, I'm not looking at the moment! I would hope it would still be here, I would hope it would still have a Jewish ethos, but realistically I don't know . . . I'd like to think it could continue in the way that it is doing at the moment, but I doubt it.

In these communities, schools face major problems in trying to market themselves to their potential client-base so that they

can fill their places with as many Jews as possible. Such schools have to 'sell' themselves to local Jews, who may be deciding between the local Jewish state school and often an independent, non-Jewish school. Such schools thus seek to 'recruit' Jewish pupils.

For those not part of central Orthodox Jewry, the situation in declining regional Jewish communities is arguably even more difficult. For example, in Glasgow, parents in the small Progressive community can choose to send their children to the local Jewish primary school, although the education there is based on a central Orthodox ethos, which may not always sit comfortably with those from different affiliations. While minority Jewish populations in London have the option—places permitting—of educating their children in primary day schools specifically designed to meet their needs, in regional communities this is usually not possible.

Human resources

General subject teachers

Alongside the issue of whether or not there is adequate provision of Jewish day school places, the issue most often raised by interviewees—by providers and users—related to human resources. In general, most interviewees were extremely positive about the staff working in the Jewish schools, with parents mostly happy or very happy with the education their children were receiving (although some found it difficult to rate the quality of their school because of a lack of comparative information). It is important to stress these positive attitudes, while also identifying areas of concern, such as those relating to the difficulty of recruiting general teaching staff.

> Most of the Jewish schools are pretty full. We need more Jewish schools, but an even bigger problem is the staffing of Jewish schools when we get them. We advertised for two posts recently and were shocked by how few applicants there were . . . There are very few people around that are good Jewish teachers that we don't already know about, and that's very sad. (London primary school headteacher)

Teacher recruitment problems are common to many UK schools—especially in London and the South-east—the Jewish sector of which is obviously just one part. Data from the Department for Employment and Education show that Jewish schools have slightly smaller class sizes and lower pupil to teacher ratios than the national average (see Chapter 4). Hence, Jewish schools are arguably in a better position than most. Note that, according to the DfEE, there are 288 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state-sector Jewish primary schools and 270 FTE teachers in state-sector Jewish secondary schools. Nevertheless, a key sectoral problem for Jewish day schools is attracting *Jewish* members of staff. This is particularly so because many schools who are happy to employ non-Jewish staff will only accept Jewish teachers if they are religiously observant because of a desire that they be role models. This limits the potential pool of available staff.

For those primary schools in which teachers teach across the range of subjects, including Jewish studies, recruiting and retaining Jewish staff is particularly problematic. Having Jewish teachers here is almost a prerequisite. Even in schools in which the Judaic and general curricula are separated, a shortage of Jewish teachers is still a matter of concern. If the *raison d'être* of Jewish day schools is to immerse children in

a Jewish way of life, having few Jewish teachers in general curriculum classes gives pupils a different message:

> If [Jewish general curriculum staff] can be recruited, they have a major impact on the religious ethos and vibrancy of a Jewish secondary school. They demonstrate to pupils that religious commitment is not incompatible with secular excellence and that it is not determined by one's formal position in the school. In this sense a religious teacher of physics may provide as salient a role model as, say, the Head of Jewish Studies. Conversely, if sincere Jewish observance is restricted to the Jewish studies department, the message being sent to the pupils is clear.[2]

Judaic subject teachers

Alongside general recruitment difficulties, Jewish day schools also suffer particular human resource problems in relation to the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified Jewish studies and modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*) staff. With the relatively low numbers of students taking Hebrew GCEs shown in Chapter 5, this is a future as well as a present-day problem.

> Getting general staff was not a problem. Jewish schools tend to have high academic standards and people want to teach there. Apart from the Jewish studies side, half the staff were non-Jewish. We didn't go out of our way to recruit Jewish staff but if they applied it was a bonus because it sets a good role-model . . . But it was very, very difficult indeed to get Jewish studies staff. To get Jewish studies staff was a constant headache, not just for us, but for all the Jewish schools. Just so few people

> want to do it, we were always looking for proper teachers who could actually teach. (Headteacher at a London secondary school)

One Jewish studies teacher in a central Orthodox London secondary school spoke of how several of his departmental colleagues had left in the previous academic year, and that trying to replace them was proving difficult; while the school had received applications for the posts, none was considered suitable. He argued that the shortfall in Jewish studies teachers was due to low pay, societal perceptions of teaching and a lack of training:

> There are problems of financial incentives, a schoolteacher doesn't earn as much as if you wanted to go into law or accountancy. Part of it is perception, that you couldn't do anything else so you went into teaching; the esteem of teachers is not very good. It's also to do with the training within the community, the encouragement within the community for more people to involve themselves in Jewish education.

Historically, Judaic subjects have been staffed on a different basis to secular studies, with Jewish studies and Hebrew teachers being supernumerary, with salaries paid for out of parental contributions and grants from charitable foundations. These staff members have often had no professional teaching qualifications recognized by the government. Jewish studies staff have often been local rabbis or have come from *yeshivot* or seminaries, while Hebrew teachers have typically been Israeli teachers with no qualifications for teaching the subject as a foreign language.[3] While such staff may have had a strong commitment to teaching and a deep knowledge of the

subject area, without appropriate class-management and teaching skills, educational standards almost inevitably suffer.

Problems relating to the recruitment and retention of Jewish studies staff are well known among Jewish communal leaders, and a number of educational human resource strategies have now been designed to begin addressing the problems. For example, the United Synagogue's Agency for Jewish Education (AJE) and the UJIA have formed the Jewish Teacher Training Partnership (JTTP) to enable Jewish teachers to gain formal qualifications. The JTTP offers a Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) that leads to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP) that leads to a degree and QTS; and the School Centred Initial Teacher Training Programme (SCIT) designed for graduates wanting to complete a one-year Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course for primary level. Nonetheless, for the Jewish studies teacher cited above, even more needs to be done:

> To get more Jewish studies teachers, we should engage in a big recruitment and training programme, maybe take fifty key young people between the ages of 18 and 23 who are inspired to be in Jewish education . . . engage them in some training in Israel for a couple of years, then create the opportunities for them to be involved in different levels of Jewish education. Encourage people to start off in a career in Jewish education. We would have to entice them by saying there'd be certain scholarships or bursaries given to them in their first few years of employment. There's talented people out there who aren't getting involved.

Parents were also aware of the difficulties of recruiting suitably qualified Jewish studies staff. For example, one parent

complained that the only lesson his son gets into trouble in was Jewish studies, because the teacher could not control the class and so was constantly handing out after-school detentions. Another secondary school parent in a more religious school was worried about teachers emerging straight out of seminaries with inadequate skills and experience:

> I am concerned about the young, unqualified teachers, the Jewish studies teachers. My daughter has been inspired by some of her Jewish studies teachers, but there are teachers who come with very poor management skills, class-management skills that she homes in on immediately. I would like the teachers to have more mentoring and training. They shouldn't be given form tutor roles when they're fresh out of sem[inary] and are inexperienced. I would really aim for the professionalization of the Jewish studies teachers. I think we've got to start making demands, I think parents have to start making demands. Sem is not training for teachers.

Among general concerns about Jewish studies teaching there were, however, dissenting voices. One parent/governor at an Orthodox primary school argued that Jewish studies was taught to an extremely high standard, while another parent stated that the Jewish studies taught was 'Okay, just not very exciting'. The Pikuach report into standards of Judaic education assessed the teaching of Jewish studies in Jewish schools as mostly 'sound', and in half the cases as 'good'.[4] Nonetheless, the report acknowledged variations in teaching standards between schools, identified problems such as resource shortages and a need for 'many more training opportunities for teachers of Jewish studies at all levels and in all schools'.[5]

Moreover, the lack of a shared curriculum means that there is no comparative framework for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of Judaic teaching across the range of Jewish day schools.

Senior management and governance

Along with issues of general staff recruitment and Judaic subject teachers, interviewees also spoke of issues relating to senior management that parallel those in the UK education system more generally. Many identified strong leadership as a key factor in the success of their children's education, although others identified this as more of an area of concern. In particular, education providers often spoke of sectoral difficulties in acquiring senior members of staff:

> It's very difficult to get senior staff in [the regions], they're very difficult to replace . . . It's ten times harder than in London because people won't settle here. Very few people are familiar with both the religious and the secular sides. Historically, Jewish studies teachers didn't have qualifications so they don't go further, there was a glass ceiling. (Headteacher at a regional primary school)

Because education works as a series of systems (as discussed in Chapter 3), difficulties in attracting younger or less experienced teachers inevitably lead to problems in recruiting headteachers, senior managers and departmental heads in later years. Several Jewish schools have publicly suffered from such problems in recent years. Note also that a number of Jewish day schools have non-Jewish headteachers. The appointment of headteachers is particularly difficult because of underlying ideological religious and ethos issues of concern to parents and governors. Headteachers are key to

the tone, ethos and educational standards of schools, and governors have to make difficult decisions about how traditional or modern potential candidates are, as well as about their religious and educational commitments and capabilities. With a shortage of potential candidates this is especially problematic.

In terms of governance, the recent JPR report by Margaret Harris and Colin Rochester emphasized the high level of commitment shown by members of Jewish governing bodies. Nevertheless, it also raised problems concerning the general recruitment of volunteers for lay-leadership positions, religious differences intensifying competition for new recruits, a shortage of younger volunteers and difficulties related to the length of time that certain key individuals stay within their posts.[6] As Chapter 4 showed, key individuals in governance roles can have a major impact on academic success and the environment of schools. However, this also raises questions about the relative power of individuals and communal agencies as opposed to the parents and pupils who are the service users, and arguably the key stakeholders, of schools (see Chapter 10).

Financing

Issues of human resources, marketing in regional areas and indeed almost every aspect of running an educational establishment inevitably come down to questions of financing. Several headteachers identified budget deficits or lack of funding as the biggest problem they face. One headteacher of a state sector primary school argued that because the local authority did not have much money, the school had constant difficulties in trying to fund the activities and staff they wanted.

For schools that are also under-subscribed, competition for children—and hence issues of marketing—are of crucial importance to the financial survival of institutions. Pressures to alter a school's ethos, for example, the pressures to move to the 'right' mentioned earlier, can be difficult to resist. While no interviewees identified any immediate financial threat of closure or other difficulties faced by schools at the primary or secondary level, nursery schools in Brighton and Hove and in Cardiff have had to close due to a shortage of suitably aged children, making them no longer financially viable.

Many issues of financing are, of course, common right across the UK education sector, although it is also important to identify the help provided by specifically Jewish organizations. A number of headteachers praised organizations such as the UJIA, AJE and CJE for help in funding specific projects and for staff training schemes. Among the projects made possible by such financial support were organized school trips to Israel, the hiring of youth workers to establish links between schools and Jewish organizations, help for students moving to non-Jewish secondary schools, and the acquisition of Jewish studies computer programs. Nonetheless, because the primary added-value of Jewish day schools—the Judaic content—is largely paid for from voluntary contributions, improvements in this area will inevitably be linked to the financial resources available for recruiting, retaining and training these key workers.

Communication and information

As part of the OFSTED inspection reports, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire detailing their views of their children's education. Parents are asked to record to what extent

they agree or disagree with a series of short statements. These statements can be divided into two distinct themes: first, parental perceptions of their interactions with the school; second, how they perceive the standard of education their children are receiving. Regarding the first theme, parents are asked to respond to statements such as 'I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school' and 'The school handles complaints from parents well.' Regarding the second theme, parents are asked to respond to statements such as 'The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work' and 'The school achieves high standards of good behaviour.' Table 6 has been calculated by scoring the responses for these questions (out of a maximum of 5 points) so as to ascertain how parents perceive their children's schooling. The scores are based on a 5-point scale of parents' satisfaction: 5 points for 'strongly agree' that the school interacts well with parents or provides a good standard of education; 4 points for 'agree'; 3 points for 'neither'; 2 points for 'disagree'; 1 point for 'strongly disagree'. Note, however, that the percentage of parents who answered the questionnaires varied quite dramatically between Jewish schools, ranging from only 11 per cent to 49 per cent; the sample therefore is not necessarily fully representative.

Table 6 **Parental perceptions of their children's Jewish day school**

	Interaction with school		*Standard of education*	
	Mean average	*Range in school averages*	*Mean average*	*Range in school averages*
Primary	3.8	3.2–4.5	4.0	3.6–4.6
Secondary	3.6	3.3–3.8	3.9	3.6–4.1

Table 6 shows that those parents who answered the questionnaires generally agree that their children are getting a good standard of education. In terms of parental perceptions of how well they are able to interact with the school, there is a slightly lower mean average and a greater range of responses. Such differences suggest that, while some schools are perceived to be very good at communicating with parents, in others this appears to be more of an issue. This is also reflected in the qualitative data:

> The partnership with the school was good, we felt we could influence what was going on in the school by being able to talk to the staff. You could walk into the school and have a few words with the teacher at any time, the school had a policy that if you wanted to see your class teacher, you could do so in 24 hours, which is wonderful, it gives you a lot of comfort. It's very open, they weren't hiding, parents were encouraged to come and talk about things that were concerning them, and we all worked together. (Primary school parent)

For some of the parents interviewed, the sense of being in a partnership with their school was clearly evident. While there were no obvious geographic patterns to these views, parents did recognize that, at primary level, schools usually had more time for communicating with them than at secondary level. Several parents spoke of the warmth and family feel of the school, a close relationship in which 'parents' voices are heard', 'everyone knows everyone' and 'there is no real separation between parents and teachers, we're doing this together'. Nonetheless, other parents expressed more disquiet.

> There's very little feedback that they give or that they want from us. I don't know whether it's right to say that they want a 9 to 5 job and they don't want anything else. Although they're very good on the education side, they're not a very good listening school sometimes. (Primary school parent)

These particular parents felt that there was no real forum in which they could express their concerns, and that, while there was a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), this was basically set up to run charity events and conduct security arrangements: 'It's just four or five people who sit down and decide how they're going to raise money . . . They don't leave an open area for those that disagree with their viewpoints, there's no opening for you, their way is the right way.'

From an institutional perspective, headteachers and governors were often aware of such feelings, but argued that there were a range of forums available to parents. If parents had concerns, they could approach individual teachers, senior management, the boards of governors or they could express their views at annual meetings. According to one headteacher, however, parents were often unwilling to involve themselves in governing boards, PTAs, attend annual meetings or even read the literature produced. One school governor complained that, while parents had a mass of information sent and available to them, they were still 'not that well informed'. Moreover, such a lack of information did not stop 'playground gossip' or, in the words of one parent, 'the little social circles that discuss issues that get built up out of proportion; every minor thing is too open for discussion and criticism'. A number of providers also spoke of Jewish parents as being very demanding. 'Jewish parents are not backwards in coming forward. If they've got a problem they'll come and tell me . . .

in practice Jewish parents tell you exactly what they think every minute of every day' (headteacher of a primary school).

While the perception among many is that Jewish parents are 'pushy', other parents interviewed were clearly intimidated and reluctant to approach schools unless problems were particularly serious. One parent spoke of a reluctance to 'stir up trouble', particularly when she had spoken to her child's teacher and 'felt like I was talking to a brick wall'. A defensive attitude by teachers, perhaps in response to having to deal with more demanding parents, can be off-putting to those who may have legitimate fears or concerns, but are unable or unwilling to articulate them forcefully.

Part and parcel with issues concerning parent–school communication and partnerships is the information that is available to parents and guardians when they are making key educational choices. Several parents spoke of the difficulties of trying to choose the right school, particularly for their eldest child: 'For your first child you torture yourself with every decision you make.' Nonetheless, as is discussed in Chapter 9, parents often make such decisions based on 'word-of-mouth', friendship networks and 'hearsay'. A number of parents, though not all, believed that there was not enough easily accessible information available to help them make the best choices. As one parent argued, 'Information is so scrappy, it feels like there's no one out there to guide you.' For this parent, a school fair organized by the AJE proved one useful way to gather together the different institutions that could 'go out there and sell their wares'. Such informational problems would potentially be worse for parents who had recently moved to a new area, and whose informal network of advice-givers would be less developed. In a number of London Jewish schools, however, such people may have little chance of gaining entry for their children anyway, because

they would not have a sibling already attending. Being 'picky' about which schools to choose is a luxury that at least some parents believed they did not have: 'In the end the schools were over-subscribed; we were trying to sell ourselves to the schools, not the other way around.' Even so, individual school communication policies and more integrated communal information strategies are areas that should be addressed.

Conclusions

In addition to the various categories and typologies of Jewish day schools discussed in Chapter 3, it is also useful to conceptualize institutions as either 'rationing' pupils or 'recruiting' pupils. Schools that are over-subscribed can have narrower and more selective admissions criteria, adopting a school ethos specific to the vision and ideals of founders, funders, governors and senior management. Schools that are under-subscribed by Jewish pupils, however, generally require more open and inclusive selection criteria. In areas where a number of Jewish day schools are 'rationing' pupils, there are communal questions as to whether the provision of places is adequate or should be increased, questions that simply do not apply to 'recruiting' schools such as those in Glasgow, Birmingham and Liverpool. Questions of under- or over-provision of Jewish day school places require detailed *local* knowledge of demographics, as well as of parental needs and wants (as discussed in Chapter 9). Overall statements about whether there is an over- or under-provision of places are thus unhelpful: geography matters.

A second key area of concern relates to human resources and the recruitment, retention and training of suitably qualified teaching staff, especially Jewish studies teachers. Because

of the importance of Judaic education generally in the ethos and missions of schools, teacher shortages and a lack of qualifications in this area are of prime concern. Moreover, present-day teacher shortages will lead to problems in recruiting senior teachers and management in later years; indeed, this has already affected a number of Jewish day schools. Interlinked with these concerns are financial issues. All schools would obviously like more money to improve educational provision. Nevertheless, particularly relevant are the amounts spent on Judaic content and the financial resources available for recruiting, retaining and training Judaic teachers. Finally, issues of communication and information—both in individual schools and in the overall system (or systems) of Jewish day school education—also need to be addressed. Some schools may be able to improve parent–school partnerships by improved communication and accessibility; however, a more comprehensive umbrella education information service should also be considered.

Notes

1 For demographic data on school capacity and Jewish population size, see forthcoming report by Rona Hart and Marlena Schmool.
2 JEDT, 26.
3 Judith Keiner, 'Opening up Jewish education to inspection: the impact of the OFSTED inspection system in England', *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, vol. 4, no. 5, 1996; see also JEDT.
4 *Pikuach.*
5 Ibid., 14.
6 Margaret Harris and Colin Rochester, *Governance in the Jewish Voluntary Sector* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2001).

7 Key strategic issues facing strictly Orthodox schools

The key strategic issues faced by central Orthodox and Progressive institutions discussed in Chapter 6 also affect, to a greater or lesser extent, schools in the strictly Orthodox sector. Nevertheless, there are specific issues relating to these schools, due to the fact that most are independent, form part of the most rapidly growing component of Anglo-Jewry and consider a Judaic education to be more important than a general education. The strict gender segregation in these schools means that the community needs twice the number of facilities and teachers, as well as managers and administrators. The splitting up of strictly Orthodox schools into a large number of institutions—catering for different Hasidic sects and other groupings—creates similar infrastructural problems.

The strictly Orthodox sector is not homogeneous.[1] It is composed of independent selective schools achieving some of the best academic results of all Jewish day schools, a few state-sector schools and a large number of non-selective independent schools, some of which are accommodated in very poor conditions and have low general curriculum teaching standards. Education is central to strictly Orthodox life, in terms of socializing children in the religion and in the 'ways of righteousness'.[2] To ensure the protection of strictly Orthodox ways of life within schools, especially in those towards the 'right' of the religious spectrum, the content of all books and materials that enter the classroom are monitored and approved, and discussion of issues such as the theory of evolution or Zionism is avoided or controlled. The sociologist

Samuel Heilman explains the importance of this protective educational system in relation to strictly Orthodox schools in Israel:

> Among haredim [strictly Orthodox Jews], education was everything: the purpose of Jewish existence and at the same time a barrier against its decay. It was the essence of what they believed was demanded of them as Jews. To this end, they created a network of schools that embraced life from youth to old age and that, wherever possible, evaded the harmful influence of secular education—what was called by insiders 'alien wisdom' (*chochmos chitzonios*). In their schools the young were turned into haredim. They were taught to speak and write in a separate Haredi version of a Jewish language that kept outsiders at bay—Yiddish, encrusted with acronyms and insider expressions, even more than modern Hebrew. They were confirmed in their distinctive appearance and dress that made assimilation in the outside world impossible. They were introduced to their customs, folkways, values and versions of the life that made them conscious of their own traditions, which were also presented as the true Judaism. Anything short of that was 'putting darkness into light'.[3]

This chapter is based primarily on evidence from qualitative interviews with strictly Orthodox education providers and parents, and outlines the key issues facing this sector. In addition, evidence is taken from Her Majesty's Inspectors' (HMI) reports on four independent strictly Orthodox schools deemed to be 'failing'. These reports should not be seen as representative of the whole strictly Orthodox sector, but as a

further piece of evidence indicating some of the problems faced by some non-selective, independent Jewish schools.

Provision of places

While the strictly Orthodox community constitutes around 10 per cent of the total UK Jewish population, just under half of all Jewish day schools are strictly Orthodox, with the number of pupils attending these schools doubling over the past decade. One in five synagogue marriages is now under strictly Orthodox auspices, and couples are encouraged by religious authorities and an understanding of religious commandments to have very large families. It is very common for couples to have seven, eight or more children. This demographic growth creates major educational challenges.

According to one strictly Orthodox headteacher, the strictly Orthodox community in London is growing at the rate of a class of thirty children per year: 'schools are full to capacity, they can't cope.' In Greater Manchester, there is a large and vibrant strictly Orthodox population located in and around Broughton Park, with some sixteen schools of various sizes and religious affiliations servicing a Jewish community of 6,000–7,000.[4] As the population has enlarged over the last thirty years or so, new schools have been established to cater for the increasing demand: as one interviewee jested, 'These days, it is no longer a question of finding the right school for your child, but building the right school.'

While major strictly Orthodox centres such as Stamford Hill and Golders Green in London and Broughton Park in Manchester face the challenge of educating so many children, other parts of the country face very different problems. In Glasgow, for example, there is a small 'rolling' community of

strictly Orthodox Jews who typically stay in the city for a few years to study in the Giffnock-based *kollel* (college of advanced rabbinical studies). For such Jews, there can be major difficulties in educating their children. The *kollel* does have a small strictly Orthodox school, but the regular turnover of families means that it is often walking on a tightrope of institutional viability. If the school becomes untenable, the future of the strictly Orthodox community here is threatened.

Human resources

Recruiting staff

Because of the rapid increase in the number of strictly Orthodox schools, finding suitable teaching staff is problematic. Strictly Orthodox state-sector schools face similar problems to 'mainstream' institutions in terms of recruiting qualified general staff. For a number of independent strictly Orthodox schools, qualified staff are difficult to employ because of the costs involved. In girls' schools, there is a supply of young teachers from religious seminaries; but obtaining suitably qualified men to work in boys' schools is more problematic because of relatively low wages:

> There are problems of staff recruitment, big problems in recruiting male staff. The cost of living and the salaries offered make it very difficult to get male teachers to stay, especially in London . . . The community needs to change its priorities. (Principal of a strictly Orthodox London primary school)

For one headteacher of a strictly Orthodox state-sector school, difficulties in the recruitment of Jewish studies teach-

ers in particular were seasonal, with the market 'flooded' in September but under-supplied during the rest of the year. Teachers for this school mostly come from local *yeshivot* and seminaries, with few having formal qualifications such as PGCEs and/or QTS. This headteacher argued that, in an ideal world, all such teachers would have formal teaching qualifications, but thought that this was 'a long way from being mandatory'.

Strictly Orthodox schools also suffer problems in recruiting suitably qualified senior managers and headteachers. According to one headteacher, the growth in the number of new schools has led to competition for senior staff, with institutions 'poaching' from each other and often appointing individuals with relatively little experience. This can be extremely serious in terms of dealing with issues such as statutory legislation, HMI inspections, local government requirements and provision for children with special educational needs (SEN: see Chapter 8). According to an HMI report, in one school 'poor quality of management contributes significantly to the serious weaknesses that have been identified in this inspection. In particular, the school has no individual who has overall responsibility for the education, safety and welfare of the children.'[5]

Standards of teaching

The academic achievements of pupils in a number of strictly Orthodox schools are detailed in Chapter 4, with a number of institutions achieving GCSE scores that are much higher than the national average. Nevertheless, many strictly Orthodox schools—particularly those that are very small, sometimes known as 'front-room' schools—do not enter any pupils for public examinations. Indeed, there appears to be a growing trend among Hasidic boys' schools not to enter pupils for

GCSEs or GCEs; hence, females in these schools are often receiving a better secular education than males. The National Curriculum does not apply in most of these schools, and it is not possible to meta-analyse the quality of teaching in, say, talmudic studies. Evidence from the HMI reports suggests, however, that while Judaic teaching is usually strong, general curriculum teaching is sometimes given a low priority:

> Standards in Hebrew studies are very good overall. Standards in secular studies are unsatisfactory and show considerable variation between classes.[6]

> Although there are occasional lapses into poor behaviour in some year groups, overall standards of behaviour are good and the school is an orderly community characterised by mutual respect. Pupils are well motivated in Hebrew studies, but that motivation is less evident in secular subjects.[7]

Other comments by inspectors referred to teaching being 'poorly planned', or pointed out that there was 'no differentiation of activity according to different ages' and that 'bright children are not stretched'. Nonetheless, in two of these schools in which parents were asked for views on their children's education, the responses were extremely positive, more so, in fact, than for state-sector Jewish schools as a whole. Using the scoring method outlined in Chapter 6, parents' satisfaction with the interaction they have with their school achieved an average mark of 4.6, and their satisfaction with the quality of the education reached 4.5 (out of a possible total of 5). Nevertheless, for the four schools assessed, HMI rated 25 to 50 per cent of the lessons as unsatisfactory.

The lack of quality in general curriculum teaching feeds into the fears of some interviewees that a rapidly growing number of individuals may struggle to find employment because they lack the necessary practical and academic skills. There are also concerns about the lack of educational provision for strictly Orthodox boys at secondary level. Currently, many boys stay in the school system only until age 12 or 13, after which they apparently move to *yeshivot* (institutes of higher learning) and hence outside the formal UK educational system.

Other concerns relate to the degree to which independent, non-selective strictly Orthodox schools meet their legal requirements, in regard, for example, to checking the status of teachers. All teachers and those 'working with children or young persons' are required by law to be checked on 'list 99', a national database of those with criminal records involving children. Schools are often not aware of their legal requirements, or are remiss in complying with them. This raises important concerns in this community about child protection.

Financing and accommodation

Funding questions are all-important to strictly Orthodox schools because the majority of them are independently financed with moneys coming largely from parental contributions and charitable donations. With many of these schools located in economically deprived areas, and with families often having to support large numbers of children, these issues are particularly relevant. For example, one headteacher recognized that because 60 per cent of its pupils are unable to pay full fees, the school struggles to fund top-class staff, as

well as to provide adequate financial support in other areas, especially for students with SEN. Moreover, the inability to attract and pay staff with formal qualifications affects the chances of schools moving into the state sector: obtaining voluntary-aided status is very difficult without a supply of suitably qualified teaching staff. Nonetheless, one head-teacher argued that, while a number of strictly Orthodox girls' schools are considering moving to the state sector, for boys' schools there is less demand, because this would involve accepting National Curriculum requirements for the amount of time spent teaching secular subjects. Many independent strictly Orthodox schools spend only a handful of hours per week (ranging between four and twelve hours) learning general curriculum subjects.

A shortage of finances also means that many strictly Orthodox schools have inadequate—and occasionally dangerous—buildings and accommodation:

> There is an adequate number of classrooms and administrative rooms for the present size of the school, but the state of decor of most rooms is poor. Although some of the larger holes in the plaster have recently been patched up, many rooms are marred by peeling paint or ceiling papers . . . The state of many of the switches and plugs throughout the building require attention and some electric wiring and sockets are exposed . . . Many of the rooms in the upper part of the building are in a very poor state of repair with bird droppings, sagging ceilings and unprotected sash windows. Although this area is normally out of bounds to pupils, they do have access in order to exchange library books.[8]

Conclusions

The strictly Orthodox education system is anything but homogeneous and includes a range of schools: state-sector and independent, high general academic achievers and schools in which little or no time is spent on general curriculum subjects and which are on the very edge of the national UK education system. While the Secretary of State for Education can serve a notice of complaint and then close down schools whose teaching or standards are not deemed 'suitable' or 'efficient', HMI generally tries to work with schools to maintain and improve standards. Nevertheless, there are serious policy questions for the strictly Orthodox community in terms of finding funds for the growth in the pupil population, and ensuring that teachers are suitably qualified and that students leave these institutions able to gain paid employment and so financially support their families and their communities.

Notes

1 See Oliver Valins, 'Identity, Space and Boundaries: Ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Contemporary Britain', Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999; Oliver Valins, '"Us" and "them"?: stereotyping ultra-Orthodoxy', *Judaism Today*, vol. 12, 1999, 4–7.

2 See Oliver Valins, 'Institutionalised religion: sacred texts and Jewish spatial practice', *Geoforum*, vol. 31, 2000, 575–86.

3 Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith* (London: Arnold 1992).

4 Valins, 'Identity, Space and Boundaries'. Note that the overall Jewish population in Manchester is estimated to be 30,000.

5 Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, *Talmud Torah (Beis Schlomo)* (London: OFSTED 1997).

6 Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, *Jewish Senior*

Boys' School (Keser Torah) (London: OFSTED 1998).

7 Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, *Talmud Torah.*

8 Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, *Mechinoh Boys' School (Mechinoh L'Yeshivah)* (London: OFSTED 1998).

8 Jewish day school provision for children with special educational needs (SEN)

More than one in five children in state-sector Jewish primary schools is identified as having some form of special educational needs. At secondary level, the figure is around one in ten. Approximately 1 per cent of Jewish day school pupils have a SEN Statement, a legal document that sets out what a child's special needs are, how these will be met and by whom. Thus, there are likely to be around 3,500 children identified as having some form of SEN in 'mainstream' Jewish day schools, with some 220 children having (or requiring) SEN Statements. There are also about 110 children in Jewish special needs schools, although not all these pupils have SEN Statements and not all are Jewish. Special educational needs represent a major aspect of the provision of Jewish day school education—particularly given the Jewish ethos of schools—but are often neglected in reports into Jewish education and require much communal attention.

Children identified as having special educational needs are currently assessed as being at one of five stages.[1] The system is complex, but to summarize: stages one and two apply when the identification of SEN and provision for them is school-based; stage three commonly involves specialist support, consultative work or assessment by an external agency; stage four is the transition stage during which formal assessment takes place; and stage five applies when a Statement of SEN is provided for the child. However, note that the SEN Code of Practice gives only guidelines for SEN categories, with interpretation being rather subjective, particularly in

terms of stages one to three. Thus, Table 8 may reflect an 'over-identification' of children in Jewish primary schools with special needs at the early SEN stages.

Table 8 **Percentage of children with special educational needs in state-sector Jewish and national schools (OFSTED reports 1996–2000)**

	State-sector primary schools (%)		*State-sector secondary schools (%)*	
	Jewish schools	*National average*	*Jewish schools*	*National average*
Identified as special needs	21.6	19.3	11.9	16.5
With SEN Statement	0.9	1.6	1.3	2.5

State-sector schools receive general funds from local authorities for children with SEN, although there is no common method whereby authorities determine the amounts given. Some LEAs calculate the figures in relation to the number of children requiring free school meals, which is presumed to correlate with a level of special needs. Other LEAs base their funding on formulae that include, for example, the number of SEN Statements in the school, the number of children in the school or a detailed audit of children with SEN based on LEA criteria. Note that government policy is to allocate the majority of money for SEN to schools as part of their total funding, rather than as separate payments. In the experience of one SEN professional, schools sometimes overlook this money and identify only direct SEN payments by the LEA as being 'SEN funding'. Independent schools receive statutory funding only for children with a SEN Statement; at earlier stages, schools must provide their own assistance or buy in outside help.

According to the 1994 Code of Practice, SEN Statements are issued to meet the needs of children who have a 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age' or 'have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority'.[2] For children with SEN Statements, schools are dependent on funding packages provided by local authorities, which, according to one SEN professional, 'vary quite dramatically' between different geographical areas. The relative financial health and the priorities of local authorities, rather than the needs of individual children, often determine packages of funding: the 'lottery of where pupils are located'. The vagaries of local authority provision are not unique to Jewish schools, however, and are experienced right across the UK education sector. As such, this chapter concentrates on SEN issues that are specific to the Jewish community, and provides an outline of key areas of concern as a basis for communal debate and future research.

SEN in the Jewish community

According to a recent directory, there are eighteen Jewish special needs organizations for children and young adults in the Greater London region, and nine in the regions.[3] Included are four Jewish special needs schools, and Jewish organizations specializing in the provision of 'culturally appropriate' services to parents and children with SEN, such as the Norwood-Ravenswood-operated Binoh service. Binoh accepts referrals from schools, LEAs and parents, offering educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, Jewish studies consultants and a range of specialist

teachers as support for children, parents and teachers, principally within the school setting (in both Jewish and non-Jewish schools). Binoh provides services to Jews from across the religious spectrum, doing so sometimes in specifically Jewish ways, for example by using culturally targeted educational materials such as books, games and activities. This is an 'inclusive' response to Jewish special educational needs that can help integrate Jewish children into the 'mainstream' school setting, and has proved attractive because of perceived inadequacies of state provision, the fact that it is subsidized by the Jewish community and that it is a 'Jewish' service for Jewish parents. The development of Binoh in recent years reflects changing overall trends in special needs provision, away from an earlier model of segregation, to one in which inclusion into mainstream schools wherever possible is the aim. These wider UK trends set the context for many of the key debates over present and future Jewish SEN provision.

From interviews with headteachers, SEN professionals and parents, it is clear that most Jewish day schools try and adopt an inclusive policy towards children with physical disabilities or mild learning difficulties, especially at primary level. All of the mainstream headteachers interviewed spoke of having educated pupils with special needs in their schools, including, for example, children in wheelchairs, with hearing impairments or mild forms of autism. Education professionals also spoke of improvements in the identification of SEN, and in standards of provision, over the last decade, but also noted four areas of concern that particularly affect the Jewish community: first, a lack of provision for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) in mainstream Jewish schools, especially at secondary level; second, problems in the independent strictly Orthodox sector relating to specialist staff training and resources; third, issues relating to Jewish special

needs schools; and fourth, communication, information and parent–professional partnership issues.

Moderate learning difficulties

> There's a huge gap; it is a gap in the community. The major problem for the community about special needs is how we support those people, children who are not bad enough to be in a special school, but [would have difficulties in a] mainstream secondary. The Jewish secondary provision at the moment is highly academic, and there's a large pool of people who are going to have difficulties, and are going to miss out somewhere. The demand is growing because there's a greater demand for Jewish education, but unless the children come with very good Statements—dowries if you like—the school cannot provide. (SEN professional)

One parent with a child who fits into this category spoke of how she desperately would have liked to send him to a Jewish school but, although she believed they tried hard to accommodate him, none considered themselves able to meet his needs. The child now attends a non-Jewish school that is not able to provide the cultural environment this parent would have preferred: 'I'm really not looking forward to Christmas.' Moreover, with a seemingly increasing demand on schools to perform academically, there are questions as to whether developing the communal provision for Jewish children with special needs is given enough attention.

> It's the ripple effect, because the schools are becoming highly academic, so they're looking for teachers who can teach at an academic level. The schools themselves

> are suffering financially, they're getting less money, they can't even pay for the increases that the government has agreed for staff salaries, so staff are being cut, so they can't provide the staff that are needed for special needs. (SEN professional)

According to the SEN professional quoted above, there is a range of special needs that the community is currently ill-equipped to provide for in the Jewish day school sector. Children with conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome, behavioural difficulties, global delays or language difficulties may currently find it hard to obtain a place at a mainstream Jewish day school, especially at secondary level. For this professional, the solution lies in small MLD units attached to Jewish schools. In this way, MLD children could intermix with other 'mainstream' pupils for part of the day, but could still receive specialist help for the rest of the curriculum. In this schema, different Jewish schools would each be encouraged to develop separate units to cater for the various types of MLD. Such a plan could probably be considered only in those areas with a suitably large Jewish population, most obviously London.

SEN provision in independent strictly Orthodox schools

As Chapter 7 made clear, there is a range of strictly Orthodox schools—state-sector, selective independent and non-selective independent—with different standards of teaching and quality of accommodation. Because most strictly Orthodox schools are independent of the state, however, this sector faces particular problems in financing and providing for children with SEN.

In some independent strictly Orthodox schools, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), similar to their

state-sector counterparts, are employed to co-ordinate learning programmes for children with SEN, to advise and support colleagues and to manage the staged approach to assessment. For one headteacher, however, knowing the right strategies did not mean that schools had the money and the space to implement them, hence the difficulties of making SEN a high priority: 'Special needs is a luxury. If your roof is falling in, that comes before providing for special needs' (strictly Orthodox headteacher).

This headteacher had SEN experience, but believed that, in other, 'less professional' schools, the situation was 'far worse'. While there is government money available for children with SEN Statements, the system for obtaining these funds is extremely complex. In new schools whose staff are inexperienced and do not know the process required to work the SEN system, getting a Statement 'can take years'. Moreover, without experienced staff, children with special needs can remain unidentified and therefore not receive the assistance they require. This headteacher believed the overall situation had improved in recent years, but described cases in some schools in which children with special needs, as long as they are not causing discipline problems, can still be left sitting at the back of classrooms. The headteacher argued that such problems were due to a basic lack of money. However, strictly Orthodox schools are more likely to integrate MLD children—regardless of the support facilities available—than central Orthodox and Progressive schools. Moreover, many strictly Orthodox schools do make use of the services of Binoh, whose staff are given specialist training about particular traditions and customs in the strictly Orthodox community, dress according to codes of 'modesty' and try to employ staff who can speak Hebrew and Yiddish. Staff are also encouraged to work with strictly Orthodox ways of teaching that, in

some schools at least, tend to employ the traditional 'chalk and talk' approach. This method is not always the most effective in helping children with special needs, but staff are encouraged to work within, rather than challenge, the system, and to assist teachers who may not have the same formal qualifications as those in the state sector. Despite such assistance, the independent strictly Orthodox sector faces serious problems in providing for children with special needs. While many schools may provide 'lots of love' and 'self-support', clearly a great deal more is required in terms of providing professional assistance for children with special needs.

Special needs schools

There are currently four specialist Jewish schools for children with special educational needs.

- The Side-by-Side nursery, located in the London borough of Hackney, provides early-years education to children mainly from the strictly Orthodox community. The school integrates children both with and without special educational needs.
- Kisharon is located in the London borough of Barnet, and caters for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties from ages 4 or 5 to 16. It has a strictly Orthodox ethos, although it takes in pupils from a range of different Jewish backgrounds. Kisharon also has a 'senior centre' for pupils who are too old to attend the school.
- Delamere Forest School is located in Cheshire in north-west England and caters for children with a wide range of moderate special needs at both primary and secondary level. Delamere is a 39-week-per-year term-time residential school,

although it also takes day pupils. The school has a central Orthodox background, but has pupils from a range of Jewish backgrounds, including some non-Jewish day pupils. Jewish provision for children beyond age 16 is available at Langdon College in Salford, Manchester.

- The Annie Lawson School is currently located in the Ravenswood village in Berkshire (south-west of London). The school is a 52-week-per-year residential school for children with severe or profound learning difficulties. The school is central Orthodox in ethos, but takes pupils from a range of Jewish backgrounds, and currently around half the twenty or so pupils are non-Jewish. The school is currently planning a £10 million move to north-west London.

The four schools provide very different services, with children coming from a range of religious and geographical backgrounds and with differing levels of special needs. It is difficult to generalize across the sector, but for the Annie Lawson School—which takes children with the most severe and profound learning difficulties—there is a series of issues that resonates with how the Jewish community as a whole caters for children with moderate or severe special needs. As a residential school, annual costs are high, running into tens of thousands of pounds per pupil. One parent referred to a struggle to persuade the local authority to fund a place for her child; the local authority had to be convinced that this residential school was the most suitable, educationally speaking, the issue of cultural appropriateness seemingly being fairly low down on its list of priorities. This of course recalls the theme of parental choice that is at the heart of the

UK educational system (see Chapters 1 and 3). Moreover, it raises difficult ethical, philosophical and financial questions regarding the extent to which the Jewish community should be investing in very expensive specialist services, rather than leaving those provisions to the state or to other educational organizations. Key to this debate is the quality of Jewish services compared with alternative provision, and the 'added values' of providing education to children in a specifically Jewish environment. Certainly, for one parent at the Annie Lawson School, this latter aspect was crucial:

> I wanted him to be brought up in a Jewish environment, to eat kosher food, but also on the weekends that he's not home, I know he'll be going to synagogue . . . The most important thing, and what we always had in mind, is we wanted him to celebrate his *bar mitzvah*, it was very, very important to us. Our eldest son celebrated his *bar mitzvah*, so why shouldn't he? Why should he be different? We managed to organize it with the staff, and it was the best day of our lives, it meant something to him as well. We could never in a million years have done that in a non-Jewish school. (Parent of a child with severe learning difficulties)

This parent spoke of how the school helps her child to remember his roots, by celebrating the festivals, holding Friday night services and the general ethos of the place. Nonetheless, the school faces staff recruitment problems, partly because wages available to care workers are relatively low, but also because it is geographically isolated from Jewish population areas. The planned move to north-west London is designed in part to ease these problems, as well as to enable

more Jewish parents to make use of facilities that can be developed to the highest standards.

Communication, information and parent–professional partnerships

According to a recent study by Susanna Pinkus on 'Parent Partnership Schemes'—DfEE-funded schemes to promote and facilitate partnerships between professionals and parents who have children with SEN—many Jewish parents feel very confused and unsure about how to find help when going through the SEN assessment process.[4] Around 80 per cent of the sample of parents did not know where to seek advice. The study examined two parent partnership schemes in a London borough with a high Jewish population, one run by the LEA and the other by a Jewish charity. Interestingly, a high percentage of parents using the LEA service were strictly Orthodox Jews, who were hesitant about using Jewish communal services due to fears of confidentiality, and an apparent social stigma surrounding children identified as having special needs. There are concerns (similar to those surrounding general mental health issues) that identifying children with SEN may affect their chances of future *shidduchim* ('arranged' marriages) by reducing a family's *yichus* (status in the community). This raises issues about the stigma of special needs, the assurance of confidentiality and appropriate communication and information strategies.

Conclusions

The issues raised in this chapter—provision for children with MLD in mainstream schools, problems in independent strictly Orthodox schools, Jewish special needs schools and issues of

communication and information—closely mirror those of an earlier report by Michael Jimack into 'special education' in the Jewish community.[5] Jimack's report noted parental concerns about a lack of provision for special needs in Jewish secondary schools, as well as difficulties in providing SEN facilities in a community with very different religious strands. The report also noted pressures on schools to achieve academic results—pressures that have doubtless increased since the formation of OFSTED in 1992—and the difficulties this creates for SEN provision. The community—both education providers and parents—needs to ask difficult questions about how to define the success of schools. What is the appropriate balance between academic achievement and providing services to children requiring particular (and sometimes expensive) specialist education? Should the community be seeking to develop specialist units attached (in particular) to Jewish secondary schools, in line with government recommendations about the inclusion of children with SEN into mainstream education where possible? For some, attending to special educational needs is the 'hallmark of a caring community'. Nonetheless, developing and maintaining SEN provision require an increased commitment in regard to training and financing.

According to education providers and parents of children with SEN, it is clear that there is an urgent need for a communal debate on how to develop further Jewish SEN provision. In particular, more research is needed to determine the precise numbers and categories of Jewish children with SEN; the current lack of data is hampering the ability to make clear strategic decisions. Research is also needed into the human resources currently engaged in this area, as well as a more detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of SEN provision. While the UK Jewish community as a whole is declin-

ing, the number of children wanting to attend Jewish day schools has rapidly increased, and thus the need for specialist provision has arguably never been greater. This chapter has raised key issues of concern, but much more detailed and specialist research is required, especially because up to one in five children in state-sector Jewish primary schools is identified as having some form of SEN.

Notes

1 Note that this may be adjusted in the light of government consultations on a new SEN code of practice.
2 DfEE, *The Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (London: DfEE 1994).
3 Board of Deputies of British Jews, *Special Needs: A Guide for Parents and Carers of Jewish Children with Special Educational Needs* (London: Board of Deputies of British Jews 2001).
4 Susanna Pinkus, 'Parent Partnership Schemes: An Evaluation of Provision in One LEA', M.Phil. thesis, Cambridge University, 2000.
5 Michael Jimack, *Special Education: The Nature and Extent of Need for Jewish Provision* (London: Jewish Care 1990).

9 The educational marketplace: how Jewish parents choose between different schools

In Chapters 6 to 8, some of the key issues facing Jewish day school education were outlined, largely, although not exclusively, from an institutional perspective. This chapter explores day school education principally from a user's perspective, examining how and why Jewish parents make the decision to choose one school over another. This is set within the context of a doubling of attendance figures at Jewish day schools over the past twenty years (see Chapter 1), which means that, while some 25 per cent of the parental generation were themselves pupils at Jewish day schools, around 50 per cent of current Jewish children attend such schools. Half of all parents who send their children to Jewish day schools thus have no first-hand experience of these institutions.

As outlined in Chapter 3, there is a complex matrix of possible choices for Jewish parents seeking day schools for their children. Parents have to decide—often in conjunction with their children—whether they prefer Jewish schools, non-Jewish schools in which there are many other Jews and that may have a JAMS or Schools' J-Link programme, or non-Jewish schools in which there are few or no other Jewish pupils. They must also decide between state and private options, selective and non-selective, as well as between particular types of school ethos. For those preferring Jewish day schools, there are choices about the particular religious, cultural or Zionist affiliations of institutions, with schools ranging

from Progressive to central Orthodox to strictly Orthodox. Nonetheless, although the presence of 135 (or 83, according to the DfEE: see Chapter 1) Jewish day schools suggests a great deal of choice for parents, the reality is that many of these schools are unavailable to parents because of a variety of factors such as *halachic* or religious practice criteria, geographical distance, a lack of places or cost. Even so, planning for future day school needs requires a detailed understanding of the complex ways in which parents choose between different schooling options. On the basis of in-depth qualitative interviews, four themes emerged as central for parents: *academic standards*, *ethos*, *geographical location* and other *added values*. These are presented in the order of importance they were assigned by interviewees, although it is important to note that there is no simple hierarchy of parental wants and requirements. Parents have differing requirements depending on factors such as their religious observance, whether their child has particular special needs or their geographical distance from a preferred school.

Academic standards

> They wouldn't come here if the academic standards weren't high, but they automatically expect Jewish schools to offer high academic standards, so they take that for granted. (Headteacher of a Jewish primary school)

> We chose this school because it has a good standard and because it's a Jewish school. But, we wouldn't have sent him to a Jewish school if the exam results weren't good enough. (Parent of a secondary school child)

Most of the parents and education providers interviewed described secular academic standards as very important when choosing their children's schooling. For many, although other aspects of the school were important, the 'bottom line' was that children had to be able to 'get by in the world', and this requires good academic standards. This was undoubtedly the case in Progressive and central Orthodox schools, but was also reflected in a number of strictly Orthodox institutions. Here, several education providers spoke with pride of the secular academic standards their pupils achieved.

While most interviewees accepted the need for the high academic standards, several parents also pointed out how this varies with age, so that, for younger children, being happy was more important than whether or not they were receiving A grades. Nevertheless, one parent spoke of how the pressures to succeed academically seem to start at a very early age:

> The secular, exam side starts getting important by about age nine. The peer pressure gets enormous, which exams to sit, if your child hasn't been to the best primary school, will they get into the right secondary school? (Parent of children in non-Jewish primary and secondary schools)

One headteacher believed that the rapid growth in Jewish day schools, at least for mainstream schools, is due in part to recent publicity about high academic standards; parents can send their child to an institution with very good exam results without having to pay the costs of private education: 'It was a bit like sending your child to a private school that is a state school' (parent at a Jewish secondary school). The introduction of league tables and OFSTED inspection reports is central to this trend, with parents now able to compare performance

data for different schools. This 'market-orientated' approach to education was central to Conservative educational policies of the 1980s and 1990s and has been continued by the present Labour government.

Despite the growth in Jewish day schools, some parents spoke of how they believed that certain private, selective schools were still 'the best', so that 'if you could afford it, that would probably be your choice'. One regional education professional spoke of a 'tradition' associated with the top independent schools; if parents had been pupils there when they were young, they believed their children should also attend. Others feared that, if they did not place their child in the independent sector at primary level, they would not be able to obtain a place at secondary level. Several parents argued that private schools have smaller class sizes and better facilities, and are thus able to give children more individual time and attention. Such beliefs may also apply to the small number of selective, independent Jewish day schools, although other parents, because they feared that time spent on Jewish studies detracts from the general curriculum, chose an independent, non-Jewish option.

Ethos

Alongside perceived academic achievement, the principal selling-point for schools was their institutional ethos. In OFSTED reports from 1996 to 2000, inspectors almost universally praised the ethos of Jewish day schools (see Chapter 4). All schools have their own reputations and traditions, but Jewish schools have, of course, the unique attraction of their particular cultural, Zionist and/or religious associations. Overall, three aspects of school ethos emerged from the interviews as being of particular importance to parents: *social and*

cultural factors, religious factors and issues of *isolationism/multiculturalism.*

Social and cultural factors

For some parents, it was the social and cultural, rather than the specifically religious, side of Jewish schools that was of most importance. It was their sense that their children would be educated and grow up 'Jewishly', even if their idea of this was often poorly defined. Accordingly, one headteacher argued that, while academic results were a major draw at her Jewish school, the other principal attraction was that children would be educated within a Jewish social environment: 'The second reason is the social side, children will make nice friends, turn out well and, by implication, they'll end up marrying someone Jewish: for Jewish parents this was a huge, huge issue—in many cases well beyond the academic.' Or as the parent of a child attending a Jewish primary school argued:

> The cultural aspect was probably more important than the religious side. I like him learning about the festivals, but if he were in a non-Jewish school he wouldn't take most of them off. We want him to have a large circle of Jewish friends, and all the other schools he looked at would have had a large Jewish element.

Another parent described Jewish day school education as giving her child 'a strong sense of identity': 'Being surrounded by Jewish children gives him a comfort level that is just part of your being.' Other parents variously described Jewish schooling as providing 'a continuity with home', as an environment in which the school calendar is geared to a Jewish way of life and thinking, and as a place in which a lifelong network of friends and contacts would be created. One

couple also spoke of how the Jewish education of their children feeds back into their own, largely secular lives:

> The good thing about our school is that it incorporates the Jewish education for the children at a very early age, which helps us as parents when they're growing up . . . They [the children] keep us in line. For me, I find they remind me of my upbringing . . . It gives them the real building blocks of Judaism, and it incorporates it into their everyday schooling. It's not something different, it's just something natural that they're learning. (Parent at a Jewish primary school)

Other parents described other aspects of the school ethos as important, such as the 'sense of warmth', the 'family feel' to the place or the sense of being 'part of a community', factors not necessarily unique to Jewish schools. Interestingly, relatively few interviewees mentioned Zionism as an important factor in their decision-making process. One parent described deliberately choosing a school because of its Zionist affiliations, while another expressed the wish that her children would eventually emigrate to Israel. However, such views tended to be the exception rather the rule among those interviewed.

Religious factors

Alongside the largely social and cultural Jewish factors discussed above, a number of interviewees argued that it was specifically the religious component of the school ethos that attracted them to that particular institution. Such interviewees unsurprisingly tended to be more observant, and often wanted their offspring to be both fully equipped in religious ways and to socialize principally, or even exclusively, with other religious children:

> For me it was important that I felt my children would feel comfortable in many Jewish contexts, that's what sending your children to a Jewish school does—so they'll always be able to *daven* [pray], they'll always be able to follow a service, so that however far they stray, if they choose to stray, they've got that foundation. (Strictly Orthodox parent)

This parent was critical of the central Orthodox school that her eldest child had first attended because of its lack of religious vigour: 'They'd never actually held a *gemarrah* [talmudic religious text] in their hands.' She argued that, 'in the Orthodox world, the study of texts is the currency, to be able to pick up a text and study it', and that the school had failed in this respect. Another parent also described how she had originally sent her young son to a central Orthodox Jewish school, but found it extremely awkward when it came to socializing with other children: 'I didn't want my child to feel different at parties, at homes where the kids weren't kosher, parties at McDonald's. At one school where he went for a time, there was only one other *shomer shobbes* [strictly observant] person' (strictly Orthodox parent).

Isolationism/multiculturalism

While a number of parents spoke positively about the attractions of formal Jewish education, others raised concerns that their children could become too insular and isolated from the 'real world' if they did not mix with those from other religious and cultural backgrounds.[1] Such fears are partially reflected in concerns raised by OFSTED about some, though certainly not all, Jewish day schools. Inspectors criticized some schools for not teaching an understanding of different cultural backgrounds: there is a 'restricted range of cultural development'

and 'insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of other cultures'. Two parents, whose eldest child had attended a Jewish primary school but was now a pupil at a non-Jewish secondary, believed that it was at this transitional stage in the educational cycle that children had to move away from the 'safety' and 'protection' of a Jewish environment:

> I think at that stage, that's where he's got to learn that there's a lot more than just Judaism out there, to mix with non-Jewish people is not a bad thing . . . The world in which we're living in isn't strictly Jewish and it's not good to have them blinkered. They need to be a bit streetwise and a bit worldly.

Similarly, another parent spoke of fears that her son might have 'less tools to cope with the outside world' if he went to a Jewish school, and that there might be future concerns relating to tolerance and acceptance of others. This sense of isolation was reflected in the experience of one parent who spoke about the primary school she had attended as a child, when she had been convinced that everyone was Jewish: 'I thought everyone was Jewish, I lived in a Jewish ghetto, everyone I knew was Jewish.'

Interestingly, several interviewees had experience of the Jewish schools in Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow that have non-Jewish children on their rolls, most of them speaking very positively about these institutions. At these schools, children are able to receive a Jewish education, but they also mix on a day-to-day basis with children from a range of different backgrounds. Similarly, parents whose children attend non-Jewish schools in which there are also large numbers of other Jews spoke of how they were pleased that their children could, at least in some ways, 'get the best of both worlds'. In

non-Jewish JAMS or Schools' J-Link institutions (see Chapter 3), children are, assuming they choose to attend the various cultural and religious activities, able to maintain some formal links with Judaism in their school day, but in an arguably more multicultural environment than many Jewish day schools offer. Nonetheless, other interviewees were very pleased that their children were away from non-Jewish influences:

> I had no fears about isolation from the wider world; it's one of the reasons we sent them to Jewish schools! Maybe we are isolationist, but we're not isolated from the wider world; they read newspapers. I don't particularly want them to have friends that are non-Jewish because then we have to go through the whole problem of eating, wanting to go out on Fridays and Saturdays. We were actually choosing to put barriers round our children, we have deeply held beliefs we were promoting. (Strictly Orthodox parent)

Similarly, another parent spoke of how she had attended a non-Jewish primary school as a child and had felt isolated and different, and only when she became a pupil at a Jewish secondary school did she feel happier: 'I felt the kids were more similar to me.' When she had her own children she was determined that they would not be as isolated as she had been. Another parent also hinted at a similar thought-process, arguing that the antisemitism he had experienced as a child would not be a part of the education of his offspring. In this way, the educational background of parents did seem to be an important influencing factor in how schools were chosen. Indeed, a common theme in many interviews was the negative experiences of parents who had been through the part-time, supplementary (*cheder*) system when they were

young, and wanted their children to receive a better Jewish education.

Geographical location

As discussed in Chapter 3, institutional selection criteria often have strong geographical components. However, distance from schools—or, more precisely, *the time it takes to travel that distance*—also plays a key role in parental decision-making.

The vast majority of British Jews live in and around twelve urban areas, especially the cities of London and Manchester (which account for over 80 per cent of the total UK Jewish population). Nevertheless, there are around seventy other towns and cities in which there are identifiable Jewish populations and that have no Jewish day schools or nurseries. For example, Cardiff has a population of around 1,200 Jews and, while it has a Jewish residential and nursing home for older people, the last kindergarten closed down in 1999. Judaic education for children is thus available only in supplementary synagogue classes: one Reform and the other Orthodox. In a city such as Glasgow, full-time Jewish schooling is available but only up to the end of primary level: there is a small number of Jewish nursery schools, one state-sector Jewish primary school, but no Jewish secondary schools. This necessarily limits parental options although, at secondary level, parents can choose to send their children to schools with a tradition of accepting Jewish pupils, including some that have JAMS programmes run by UJIA Scotland.

In Manchester and (especially) London, parents can—subject to the barriers and limitations discussed in Chapter 3—choose *between* different Jewish day schools, and local geographical issues thereby become much more relevant.

Even if parents consider that a particular school has the appropriate academic standards and ethos, the length of time it will take their children to travel there is important. Several interviewees spoke of how certain schools were 'just too far away', and hence were removed from the decision-making equation. This is particularly relevant in parts of London where travel time via bus or car is a major issue. Indeed, the decision to relocate JFS from Camden to Kenton in outer north-west London was based partly on an assumption that parents and children may find the school more accessible.

Interviewees did not reveal any sense of just how far away a school had to be before it was no longer considered, although several parents made clear that distances mattered more at primary than at secondary level: parents were more uncomfortable in having their children travel long distances when they were younger. Even so, several parents described how they would ideally prefer their school to be as close as possible. One parent argued that having a school close by was important in terms of extracurricular activities; otherwise these became difficult to organize and made the school day very long. Other parents were concerned that if their children did not live in the immediate geographical vicinity of schools, their children would find it difficult to socialize with school friends at the end of the day; being geographically remote might mean their children being separated from after-school friendship networks. Nevertheless, while most parents spoke of this ideal, all seemed willing to travel at least some distance for the right school, as one primary level parent explained in relation to her first child's school: 'It was wonderful she could walk there, but I would travel for a good school.' Alternatively, the success of some schools—such as the King Solomon High School in the Redbridge area of London—is in part due to its convenient location and ability to 'tap' the local

market, so that Redbridge parents want to send their children to the local school.

Added values

Along with the principal decision-making factors outlined above, it is also worth noting some of the 'added value' issues raised by parents. Factors such as sporting and IT facilities, music teaching and extracurricular activities, which were often not considered a high priority in the overall parental decision-making process, were still thought to be important for their children's education. One parent argued for the importance of extracurricular activities and, in particular, their being geared to special needs issues:

> The school has a wonderful music department where all my kids learned to play instruments. It gave them a lot of confidence in ways that weren't necessarily academic; it gave the kids a rich, happy educational experience . . . At primary level I would be looking for the added value that the SATs [Standard Attainment Tests] don't express, like the music, the relationship between staff and pupils . . . special needs, how those children were educated. (Parent of secondary school-age children)

Other parents described the sporting facilities of their children's schools, which were often not thought of favourably: 'outside activities aren't that good'; 'they have poor facilities, they have one gym that is tiny and no grass . . . in the years of [our children] there was nothing, really nothing'; 'sport and PE [physical education] are given a low priority and are

neglected'. OFSTED reports at both primary and secondary levels assess some Jewish day schools as providing good or adequate facilities, with inspection comments such as 'effective, safe teaching and participation' or 'good teaching and enthusiastic participation'. The sporting facilities at other schools were, however, not so well received, with comments such as 'poor standards caused by poor teaching' or 'decent, but low fitness levels'. For those children with sporting aspirations, a lack of sporting facilities may encourage them to attend well-established private schools that typically have very large grounds and high-quality amenities. Moreover, increasing health consciousness, in response to fears of a nation of 'couch potatoes', has led to government and parental pressures to improve sporting and exercise provision in schools. This is a trend that will inevitably affect Jewish day schools in the future.

In regard to information technology, OFSTED inspectors highlighted more problems, with the standard of facilities only considered satisfactory in three out of the fifteen Jewish primary school reports that discuss this issue. Comments included 'pupils enthusiastic, but lack of resources' and 'limited facilities, not all teachers confident'. Similar problems were noted at secondary level, with inspectors noting 'insufficient use' and 'limited access' to IT facilities, and 'poor curriculum provision'. This is also a potential area of concern for parents wanting their children to develop the necessary IT skills to thrive in the workplaces of the future.

Conclusions

Parents choose between different schools by considering their individual needs and wants, and assessing which institutions

are most likely to satisfy their requirements. These needs and wants vary according to a range of individual and religious affiliation criteria, but factors such as academic standards and school ethos were considered most important among interviewees. Nevertheless, the possibility of an ideal option for parents is often mitigated by a range of factors, including the realities of local school provision, availability of places, *halachic* selection criteria and the costs involved. Also worth noting are the comments of one primary school parent who argued that, in the final analysis, educational quality is determined by children's individual teachers, not the ethos or standards of the school as a whole: 'My attitude now is that it's nothing to do with the school; it's nothing to do with the facilities they've got. The school that your child goes to is only as good as the teacher your child gets in that year.'

Finally, a number of parents admitted that they made their decisions primarily based on the advice of their friendship circles and by 'word of mouth', particularly at primary level. Indeed, several interviewees spoke of prevailing 'fashions' in terms of which schools were considered the best: 'there's an element of faddiness in how people choose their school' (primary school parent). Such decision-making factors perhaps reflect the communication and information issues discussed in Chapter 6, but also highlight the difficulties of predicting medium- and long-term future educational trends.

Note

1 A forthcoming JPR report by Dr Geoffrey Short will specifically examine multicultural education in UK Jewish day schools.

10 Towards the future of Jewish day schooling

Jewish day school education in the United Kingdom has never been more popular than it is today. Since 1950, while the UK Jewish population has declined by over 25 per cent, the number of children in full-time Jewish day school education has increased by around 500 per cent, with over 50 per cent of primary age Jewish children now enrolling in such schools. For communal leaders and the sponsors and supporters of Jewish day schools this is a tremendous success story, especially considering the many fears expressed over the past thirty years of a threat to the very survival of British Jewry. However, despite the growth in the take-up of full-time Jewish education and the tens of millions of pounds that have been, and continue to be, invested in Jewish schools, there has been little attempt until now to assess the strengths and weaknesses of current provision. This report has set out to do just that: assess the provision of education and performance of primary and secondary Jewish day school pupils in *general* and *Judaic* subjects, assess key strategic issues facing Jewish day schools, and analyse the 'market' needs and wants of parents. Along the way, it has also explained how Jewish day school education operates, placing it within wider concerns about the role and effectiveness of faith-based education in the United Kingdom. This chapter draws this material together: first, by answering the key policy question of whether Jewish schools—as an example of faith-based education—work; second, by summarizing the key strategic issues facing Jewish day schools; third, by raising key

questions about future developments in full-time Jewish day school education in the United Kingdom; and, finally, by considering future research needs and long-term planning for Jewish schooling.

The effectiveness of a faith-based provision of day school education

As this report has shown, Jewish day schools are extremely diverse, ranging from well-established and well-run voluntary-aided state schools to a number of non-selective, independent strictly Orthodox schools that operate on the very edge of the UK education system. Thus, as Chapter 3 explained, Jewish day schools cannot be judged as a whole, but rather as a series of interconnected systems. Moreover, judging the effectiveness of Jewish day school education depends on what the different stakeholders—*government*, *sponsors*, *communal leaders*, *parents* and *pupils*—really want from schools.

Government policy is currently to increase the number of faith-based schools because they are seen as producing greater 'educational returns', compared to the national average, in terms of high academic standards and positive school ethos. Schools with these attributes will, in theory at least, produce a highly educated, skilled and socially responsible future workforce. According to David Blunkett when he was Secretary of State for Education, these attributes should be promoted by an education service that provides 'a common understanding of the knowledge base on which our society rests, promotes appreciation of the values which hold our communities together and generates the aspiration to learn from the past in order to contribute to the future'.[1]

According to government criteria, Jewish schools—as an example of faith-based education—can be judged successful only if they achieve both good academic results and pupils leave the institutions well adjusted, tolerant and able to contribute 'positively' to British society.

For the sponsors of Jewish schools, however, the principal aim of these educational institutions is that pupils should leave with a knowledge, understanding, appreciation and 'love' of Judaism. This is often articulated in measurable outputs, such as young people having higher rates of synagogue attendance, observing kosher food laws and having the ability to converse in Hebrew with Israelis. While many sponsors will obviously highly value other aspects of schools, such as general academic standards, their principal reason for financially supporting Jewish schools is, almost without exception, the promotion or defence of Judaism (however defined or understood). What matters for most sponsors are *Jewish schools* rather than *schools for Jews*. In this respect, there is little current debate about the legitimacy of taxpayer support for faith-based state-sector schools, which necessarily have a particularist religious agenda.

Parents typically value two aspects of Jewish day schools above all: first, academic standards (which for some parents were considered 'the bottom line') and, second, the socialization of children in the ways of Judaism. How parents want their children to be 'Jewishly' educated varies principally according to their own levels of religious observance, which in turn reflect differing emphases on the importance of social, cultural and religious aspects of Judaism. Parents may also appreciate other 'added values' of schools, such as sport, music, IT facilities and provisions for children with special educational needs. These factors are typically seen as the additional qualities of good schools, rather than their defining

features. However, these issues are increasingly being recognized by governmental policy-makers who are concerned with, for example, how current lifestyles of children will affect the health of the population in later years. Moreover, such 'added values' will become increasingly important for schools wanting to demonstrate their commitment to pupils' well-rounded education.

Thus, there are four overall principal criteria for judging the effectiveness of Jewish day school education—*academic standards, Judaic education, added values* and *social, cultural and moral development*—with the various stakeholders valuing these aspects in differing ways.

Academic standards

As an overall average, pupils in Jewish day schools achieve academic examination results that are consistently higher than the national average. In all tests and examinations from key stage one at age 7 through to A levels at age 18, Jewish day school pupils out-perform pupils in national state-sector schools (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, pupils in Jewish day schools do not achieve scores that are as high as those from Independent Schools Council (ISC) and JAMS schools, which largely select their pupils on the basis of academic ability. Moreover, a number of strictly Orthodox schools do not enter their pupils for public examinations because of a heavy prioritization of Judaic teaching over secular, general curriculum studies. Indeed, the language of instruction in a number of these schools is Yiddish.

Details of examination results are of little value without an understanding of the reasons why Jewish day school pupils achieve these results. Typically, educationalists assume a strong relationship between academic results and socio-economic status, so that middle-class children are traditionally

expected to achieve higher scores on average than those from deprived backgrounds. State-sector Jewish day schools have on average a far lower proportion of children coming from deprived socio-economic backgrounds—as measured by the percentage of children eligible for free school meals—which would seem to support this link. Nevertheless, pupils in a number of Jewish day schools located in deprived areas still achieve academic results that are much higher than the national average, suggesting that other factors are at work. In particular, the commitment, expectations and cultural/religious values of parents and pupils—as reflected in a traditional respect for the value of learning—seem to give Jewish pupils a clear academic advantage compared to the national average. These educational expectations help create the ethos of schools, which OFSTED inspectors almost universally praise and which are often seen as being integral parts of the community, especially in the strictly Orthodox sector. Together with a range of other factors, such as slightly smaller class sizes and financial sponsorship, these values help pupils achieve high academic standards. Nevertheless, the overall message for the government is clear: the real key to achieving academic success is the socialization of children and (crucially) families in the value of education at the earliest age possible.

Judaic education

Paradoxically, the weakest link in some Jewish day schools is Judaic education. Despite the *raison d'être* of most Jewish day schools being to 'Jewishly' educate their pupils, this aspect of education receives most criticism from parents, rabbis and communal figures, with OFSTED inspectors labelling the teaching of modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*) as weak in two of the five state-sector Jewish secondary schools. Moreover, the percentage of pupils continuing with formal Judaic education to

A level is worryingly low, especially in *Ivrit*. The community has failed to produce fluent Hebrew-speaking graduates or a large body of Judaic specialist scholars outside of the strictly Orthodox sector. Together with human resource problems, this is potentially worrying in terms of the future quality of Judaic education. Nevertheless, the recent Pikuach report into Judaic education in Jewish day schools (see Chapter 5) suggests that teaching standards mostly meet the expectations of individual institutions. However, there is no shared basis for comparing teaching and standards at different schools, which means that parents and teachers are limited in terms of being able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of Judaic teaching across the range of different institutions. While a unified curriculum among Jewish day schools may be impractical given the very different religious affiliations and backgrounds of parents and pupils, this does not rule out the possibility of groups of similar-ethos schools combining to create and then assess shared curricula. Beyond the direct improvement of standards in Judaic education, this would have the additional advantage of developing links between, and networks of, different institutions and teaching professionals, and allow for the sharing of experiences of best practice.

Added values

While pupils at Jewish day schools often do well academically, facilities for sport and IT in these institutions are sometimes inadequate, and have been criticized by OFSTED inspectors and parents. Problems in sporting provision have implications for the future health and well-being of children and adults, while a lack of IT facilities threatens the development of transferable skills needed for future employment.

There are also key challenges for the provision of special educational needs, as detailed in Chapter 8, including concerns in certain independent strictly Orthodox schools relating to staff training and resources, and the integration of children with moderate learning difficulties into mainstream secondary Jewish education. This latter issue in particular raises difficult questions concerning the relative value assigned to different aspects of Jewish day school education. The Jewish community needs to consider the balance between achieving academic standards and providing services to children with special educational needs.

Social, cultural and moral development

OFSTED inspectors typically praise the ethos of state-sector Jewish day schools, in terms of community spirit, mutual respect and sound moral guidance. Interviews with parents support these views, and even the four HMI inspections of the independent strictly Orthodox schools deemed to be 'failing' (see Chapter 7) praised school ethos. There are, however, important questions that need to be answered about the impact the current growth in Jewish day school education will have on the social, cultural and moral values of future generations of Jews. Will today's Jewish day school pupils be more or less securely and consciously Jewish than their parents? What type of Jews will they become? Will current levels of 'inter-marriage' decline or increase? Will Jews become insular and less tolerant of other communities and traditions?

The growth in the percentage of Jewish children being educated in Jewish day schools, rather than in supplementary, part-time education, will have major social, cultural and religious implications for the future of British Jewry, which will require careful and detailed study and assessment. In particular, longitudinal research questioning groups of present-day

pupils—in both Jewish and non-Jewish schools—over time would begin to answer these questions. A longitudinal attitudinal and lifestyle questionnaire would help to demonstrate the social, cultural and moral effects of Jewish day school education. What impact do Jewish (or non-Jewish) day schools have on pupils five, ten or fifteen years after they have left the full-time educational system? Do the values and morals taught to Jewish children in day schools exert a long- or only a short-term influence over their future behaviour and lifestyle? Only by answering such questions can the effectiveness of Jewish day schools truly be judged.

Key strategic issues facing Jewish day schools

Beyond questions of the effectiveness of Jewish day schools, there is also a series of much more immediate concerns that individual institutions, communal leaders and educational agencies need to address. On the basis of in-depth qualitative interviews with education providers (headteachers, teachers, educational psychologists, directors of services and communal leaders) and with parents, five overall strategic concerns emerged: *provision of places, human resources, financing, communication and information* and *provision for children with special educational needs.* Nevertheless, it is important to note that these issues affect the various types of Jewish day schools in different ways, with, in particular, strictly Orthodox communities facing specific problems relating to the financing of schools in the face of rapid growth in their pupil numbers.

Provision of places

Beyond the classification of schools according to factors such as religious affiliation and sources of funding, another key

characteristic of Jewish day schools is whether they are over- or under-subscribed. In 'recruiting' schools—typically located in declining regional Jewish communities like Glasgow, Birmingham and Liverpool—the key policy questions are how to maintain a particular Jewish ethos given the presence of pupils of different religious and cultural backgrounds, and how to attract Jewish pupils who may otherwise be going to private, non-Jewish institutions. In 'rationing' schools—mostly located in north-west London—the questions are whether present levels of place numbers can cater for future demand. The move and enlargement of the JFS school and plans for the construction of one or two new schools in Hertfordshire to the north of Greater London show that some Jewish communal leaders and parents believe that provision must continue to expand.

The key message of this report is that local geography matters much more than broad statements about an over- or under-provision of places. Education is provided at the local level, especially at primary level. Making decisions on the future construction of schools requires detailed market analyses of parental wants and needs to ensure that precious communal finances are used to best effect. As Chapter 6 showed, even some schools located in densely Jewish areas have relatively stable demands for places because their ethos resonates only with particular sections of the community. Moreover, as Chapter 9 outlined, parents sometimes make educational choices according to 'fashions', trends and the advice of friends and contemporaries, rather than on a 'perfect' analysis of the available options. This makes long-term planning for Jewish day schools especially difficult. Nevertheless, information is needed as to likely future trends in the numbers of Jewish children, according to variables such as age, cohort, gender, geographical location and religious affiliation. What proportion of children, according to each of

these variables, is likely to require places at Jewish day schools?

Human resources

Problems of recruiting and retaining teaching staff have been widely reported across the British educational system, of which Jewish schools are, of course, just one small part. Nevertheless, there are specifically Jewish issues that emerge from the research. With the rapid development in the Jewish day school movement, finding suitable teachers is a problem. As the 1992 Worms Report made clear, it is of little use having new Jewish schools if there are not enough high-quality teachers to work in them.[2] There are shortages of Jewish general curriculum teachers, which necessarily has an impact on the environment schools are trying to develop. If the only Jewish staff in schools are Judaic subject teachers, the message for children is arguably that a commitment to Judaism is separate from the 'real' business of general academic success. Of more immediate concern are shortages in the numbers of suitably qualified Judaic studies teachers, especially given increasing demands by government and parents for such staff to have formal qualifications, such as the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and/or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). As Chapter 5 revealed, the numbers of students choosing to take Judaic subjects at A level is worryingly small, especially Modern Hebrew. In the system(s) of Jewish day school education, present-day shortages of Judaic examination candidates threaten the future teaching of these subjects.

There are also problems relating to the recruitment and retention of senior managers in schools. Having strong leadership is key to the success of children's education, but recruiting such individuals is difficult, especially given the increased

number of Jewish schools, all of which require headteachers and senior staff. With recruitment problems throughout the school system as a whole, recruiting and retaining staff at the senior level may become even more difficult. Without a large enough base of middle and junior staff, there will not be experienced individuals to take on senior management posts later in their careers. There are also issues regarding the governance of Jewish day schools to consider, such as those raised in the recent JPR report by Margaret Harris and Colin Rochester.[3] Governance is a key factor in the provision of education in Jewish day schools, with individuals able to have a major impact on standards and the environment of particular institutions, as the example of the King David High School in Manchester shows (see Chapters 4 and 6).

Overall, it is of prime importance for communal planners to have long-term planning trajectories and a detailed statistical breakdown of staff working in Jewish schools according to variables such as age, gender, qualifications and religious affiliation, so that future problems can be minimized.

Financing

Alongside questions of human resources, another problem for Jewish day schools is financing. Almost every aspect of running an educational establishment inevitably comes down to questions of money, with several headteachers identifying lack of funds as the biggest problem they face. In the state sector, a shortage of money for schools—despite recent government initiatives—has been a long-running national problem, whether it is for purchasing new books, carrying out school repairs or employing enough suitably qualified teachers and assistants. There are questions about how the community will cope with the costs of providing high-quality educational services. Will individual parents pay—and if so,

how much—for a level and a type of Jewish education that is beyond what is currently available?

In the independent sector—which includes the majority of Jewish schools, and virtually all the strictly Orthodox schools—income is principally dependent on school fees and charitable donations. As identified by HMI, at least four schools in the strictly Orthodox community have serious problems relating to substandard, dangerous accommodation, with the shortage of money needed for building and repair work clearly of major importance. If the number of strictly Orthodox pupils continues to grow as quickly as it has been, this part of the Jewish community will need to ascertain how it can ensure educational standards within suitable and safe accommodation. Indeed, a key policy question for strictly Orthodox schools is whether or not to seek voluntary-aided status and move into the state sector. This would provide state funding for educational resources and improvements in standards and facilities, although it would also entail acceptance of the National Curriculum, and hence a vast extension in the teaching of general curriculum subjects. Many strictly Orthodox schools, and especially those catering for boys, currently view this as an unacceptable alteration to their ethos.

Communication and information

Another area of concern, particularly for parents, relates to issues of communication and information, both parent–school partnerships and the availability of information needed for making educational choices. The analysis of OFSTED inspection reports on state-sector Jewish schools suggests that parents are often happier with the academic standards of education their children are receiving than with schools' communication policies. While many parents are impressed with schools' openness and willingness to involve them in the

education of their children, others consider that there is not enough feedback or partnership. These criticisms could reflect an over-demanding attitude on the part of some parents, or perhaps the difficulties of teachers and members of staff finding time within the enormous bureaucratic pressures of running and working in a modern school. However, the qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that there are issues here that schools need to examine further.

Some Jewish parents also noted difficulties in obtaining the information needed for making educational choices for their children. When choosing the 'right' school, parents—depending on the age of their child—use a variety of informational sources, such as brochures, OFSTED reports and open days, as well as the advice of friends and contemporaries. Several parents spoke of the difficulty of obtaining, from one central location, information about the various available options that could be used for comparative purposes.

Provision for children with special educational needs

The final issue concerns SEN provision in Jewish day schools. This is an area that has often been overlooked in communal reports into Jewish education, despite one in five pupils in state-sector Jewish primary schools being identified as having some form of special need, and one in ten at secondary level. From interviews with headteachers, SEN professionals and parents of children with special needs, four specifically Jewish areas of concern emerged.

First, there are concerns relating to a gap in the provision of education to children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) in mainstream Jewish state-sector schools, particularly at secondary level. While such schools are usually able to include children with physical disabilities or mild learning difficulties, there is an apparent lack of willingness on the part

of mainstream state-sector secondary schools to include children with MLD.

Second, there are problems in the strictly Orthodox sector due to a lack of finances and experienced teaching staff, associated with the rapid growth in pupil numbers. Staffing the increasing number of strictly Orthodox schools with teachers and senior managers with the experience to identify children with special needs, and then dealing with the vagaries and complexities of local authority funding, are problematic. Moreover, with the shortage of finances associated with the majority of these schools being independent of the state, and the relatively high levels of economic deprivation in certain strictly Orthodox areas, paying for good-quality special needs provision is difficult. Again, there are policy debates to be had within this sector about the relative advantages of entering the state sector—which guarantees moneys for children with SEN—as opposed to staying independent and thus having more control over how lessons are taught and the amount of time that is spent teaching general and Judaic subjects.

Third, there are issues relating to the specialist Jewish SEN schools. These schools are able to provide 'culturally appropriate' services to Jewish children, who might otherwise be denied the chance to practise Judaism (see Chapter 8). Residential specialist schools are necessarily very expensive to run because of the need for high-quality specialist staff and facilities, raising questions as to which aspects of provision are best provided by the Jewish community and which by other organizations or the state. Key to this debate are the standards that Jewish organizations can provide, and their ability to provide 'culturally appropriate' services in ways beyond what is provided by non-Jewish agencies.

Fourth, there are concerns about parents' awareness of, and access to, information relating to special needs and the

procedures for obtaining SEN Statements. The Jewish community has specialist services for assisting parents that provide facilities in tune with individuals' cultural and religious requirements. However, evidence suggests that at least some parents are unaware of the services, and others, particularly in the strictly Orthodox community, are reluctant to use them due to fears about confidentiality and social stigma. This suggests the need to develop further communication strategies for informing Jewish parents of the communal options available, and explaining how issues of confidentiality are handled.

Overall, the Jewish community needs to ask difficult questions about how to define the success of Jewish day schools, and what priority should be given to the provision of services for children who may not add to league table standings and academic 'success'.

The future of Jewish day schooling

The different criteria by which stakeholders judge the strengths and weaknesses of Jewish day schools point to a somewhat uneasy relationship between 'providers' and 'users' of educational services. Parents of Jewish children face a series of complex decisions about what kind of compromises to make regarding their children's education in the face of the various school options available. Despite parental wishes being theoretically central to the UK education system since the 1944 Education Act, the reality is somewhat different. For those wanting to send their child to a Jewish day school, there are a series of general and Judaic barriers—such as geographical, *halachic* and religious practice selection criteria, as well as problems relating to the provision of places—resulting

in parental choice being often more myth than reality. The ethos of Jewish day schools, which are predominantly Orthodox in character, does not match the aims and wishes of a large percentage of parents. As Chapter 3 showed, only 7 per cent of 'secular' parents send their children to Jewish day schools, and indeed half of all Jewish day school pupils are from non-Sabbath-observant homes. This raises the question whether there are alternative models of Jewish day schools that could be promoted in order to satisfy the wishes of those who currently reject Jewish day school education or who use current facilities because of a lack of choice.

One possible future model is the development of non-denominational 'community' Jewish day schools, similar to those in Argentina, Canada and Israel. Such schools emphasize language, culture and traditions rather than a particular religious approach (in contrast to all primary and secondary UK Jewish day schools). Such schools would potentially be much more appealing to 'secular' Jews, whose children could receive a Jewish education but without an enforced denominational religious element. With the government set to decrease the amount of money that groups need to start a voluntary-aided school (see Chapter 1), the development of such schools need not necessarily be under the auspices of existing synagogues or communal organizations but might be through the actions of groups of like-minded parents. This model is already applied in part in the strictly Orthodox community, where parents have established niche independent schools to cater for similar groups of children, typically from specific Hasidic sects. Such an approach potentially allows parents a much greater say and involvement in the running of their schools than current models in which parental say is often limited to Parent-Teacher Associations or small groups of governors.[4]

Jewish day schools are also likely to become much more communal in the future in terms of the services they offer. As key infrastructural elements, schools are able to provide services to the community twenty-four hours a day, thus maximizing the benefit of communal capital expenditure. As 'organizations of learning', schools can potentially offer services to both children and adults, so that education can be carried on throughout individuals' lifetimes.[5]

Finally, education in Jewish day schools is still primarily delivered in a classical manner, in particular places at particular times. As methods of 'Jewishly' educating children, day schools are necessarily an expensive option, requiring the teaching of not just Judaic studies but secular subjects as well. For state-sector schools most of this cost is met by the state, and for those interested in socializing children in the ways of Judaism, the global environment of a Jewish day school (at least during school hours, if not always at home) is clearly advantageous. Nevertheless, with the changing demography of the UK Jewish population, other models of 'Jewishly' educating children may also usefully be considered. In particular, developing the role of the Internet to reach out to pupils in very small or declining Jewish populations—as well as to those in more densely populated Jewish areas—may allow networks of pupils to receive a high-quality Judaic education and to develop links with other children across the country. New technology can help to overcome teaching and material shortages and problems in Jewish education.

There are also possibilities of developing the Internet to create a 'one-stop' educational website. Such a site could provide much of the information parents need to make educational choices, such as lists of the different schools, with links to their brochures, to OFSTED reports and to

parent groups who can offer advice and information. This site could also be a gateway to finding out about special educational needs services and informal education opportunities. The planning of such Internet services—by means, for example, of a feasibility study—should be initiated as early as possible, given the potential and relatively cost-efficient benefits.

The research agenda for long-term planning for Jewish schooling

For Jewish day school education to meet future needs, wants and requirements of government, sponsors, community leaders, parents and pupils, a constant awareness of current and potential challenges, informed by suitable research, is required. Some of the key policy questions raised in this report will be tackled by the JPR research programme, Long-term Planning for British Jewry (LTP), which, when complete, will provide an overall strategic assessment of the UK Jewish voluntary sector. Central to the LTP programme is the 'national market survey', a postal questionnaire of the Jewish public that will provide information on the attitudes to communal services and the perceived needs of the Jewish community: that is, the potential market for services such as schools, sheltered housing and care homes for older people. Overall, LTP will provide information on key variables ranging from finances to service delivery, governance, and likely future market needs and demands. It will help the community to make difficult decisions on how to distribute scarce resources among those in the voluntary sector making competing demands, whether involved in education or welfare for older people. However, while LTP will provide

much needed information, further specialist educational research is also required.

There is a need for longitudinal research into the long-term effects of Jewish day school education, and how this will change the nature of future UK Jewish communities. There is also a need for research into areas such as human resources, including a comprehensive breakdown of the teachers, assistants, managers and other members of staff who work in Jewish day schools, in order to identify present and future gaps. Specialist research is also urgently required into the future development of SEN provision in the community, into areas such as the mental and physical health of children (and adults) and in the role of IT.

Overall, this assessment of Jewish day school education shows many positive aspects, especially considering the fears of community leaders even only a decade ago. Pupil numbers are increasing across the religious spectrum (most dramatically in the strictly Orthodox sector) and examination results are generally good or very good for those schools that enter pupils. Nevertheless, the sector faces key strategic choices and questions as to how it should best develop in the future. The purpose of this report has been to raise these issues as a basis for communal debate on the future directions of Jewish day schooling. This debate should involve not only those already immersed in Jewish education, but also those specialists in the educational, policy and academic worlds with the expertise to help plan for the future. There is a need to harness the talents and expertise of people who have until now not been part of the discussion, principally because they have never been asked. For those with an interest in the future of Jewish day schools, there is already an excellent foundation, but there are also many areas that should be improved, developed or rethought.

Notes

1 David Blunkett, 'Foreword', in DfEE, *Building on Success*, 3.
2 JEDT.
3 Harris and Rochester.
4 See Tom Bentley, 'It's democracy, stupid: an agenda for self-government', *New Statesman*, 12 March 2001.
5 Michael Zeldin, 'Day schools as organizations of Jewish learning', *Sh'ma*, October 2000.

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Educational and Judaic glossary

AGNVQ Advanced General National Vocational Qualification
AJE Agency for Jewish Education
AJ6 Association of Jewish Sixth Formers
AQA Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
bar mitzvah religious ceremony for males age 13
bat mitzvah/bat chayil religious ceremony for females age 12
Binoh Norwood-Ravenswood SEN referral agency
cheder part-time, supplementary religious Jewish education
chumash Pentateuch in book form
CJE Centre for Jewish Education
daven to pray
DfEE/DfES Department for Education and Employment, now known as the Department for Education and Skills
dinim Jewish laws
FTE full-time equivalent teachers
GCE A General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level
GCE AS General Certificate of Education, Advanced Supplementary
GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education
gemarrah talmudic religious text
GNVQ General National Vocational Qualification
GTP Graduate Teacher Programme
halachah Jewish law
HMI Her Majesty's Inspectorate
IAPS Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
ISC Independent Schools Council
ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

IT/ICT Information Technology/Information Communication Technology
Ivrit modern Hebrew
JAMS Jewish Activities in Mainstream Schools
JSSM Jewish Secondary Schools Movement
JTTP Jewish Teacher Training Partnership
ketubah Jewish marriage certificate
Key stages: 1 ages 5–7, National Curriculum years 1 and 2
2 ages 7–11, National Curriculum years 3 to 6
3 ages 11–14, National Curriculum years 7 to 9
4 ages 14–16, National Curriculum years 10 and 11
kippot head coverings for Jewish males
kollel college of advanced rabbinical studies
LEA Local Education Authority
minchah afternoon prayers
MLD Moderate Learning Difficulty
National Curriculum required subject teaching in state schools
OCR Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations
OFSTED Office for Standards in Education
PE Physical Education
PGCE Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PTA Parent-Teacher Association
QTS Qualified Teacher Status
RTP Registered Teacher Programme
SACRE Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
SATs Standard Attainment Tests
SCIT School Centred Initial Teacher Training Programme
SEN special educational needs
SENCO Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
shacharit morning prayers
shidduchim 'arranged' marriages

shomer shabbat/shobbes observant of the religious laws of the Sabbath

tzitsit literally 'fringes', religious garment worn under the shirt of males

UJIA United Jewish Israel Appeal

yahrzeit commemoration of the anniversary of the death of a parent, sibling or child

y*eshivot* institutes of higher learning for males

yichus status in the strictly Orthodox community

Yom Kippur Day of Atonement

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Planning for Jewish communities

The future of Jewish schooling in the United Kingdom

Jewish day schools are flourishing. While the UK Jewish population has shrunk by over 25 per cent since the 1950s, the number of children attending Jewish day schools has grown by 500 per cent. However, at the same time, Jewish day schooling is at a crossroads. It faces new challenges in adapting to the fast-changing social, political and educational environment of the twenty-first century.

This report examines key performance data, including national examination results and OFSTED inspection reports. It also includes data from in-depth interviews with education providers and parents throughout Britain.

The future of Jewish schooling in the United Kingdom analyses the strengths and weaknesses of full-time Jewish day schooling from a policy perspective. It attempts to answer key policy questions. Do Jewish day schools—as an example of faith-based schooling—work? To what extent do they meet the needs of pupils, parents, sponsors, Jewish communities and the wider society?

Institute for Jewish Policy Research
79 Wimpole Street
London W1G 9RY
Tel: 020 7935 9482
Fax: 020 7935 3252
Email: jpr@jpr.org.uk
Web site: www.jpr.org.uk

£10.00

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Gillian Klein
Barry Kosmin
Jacqueline Goldberg