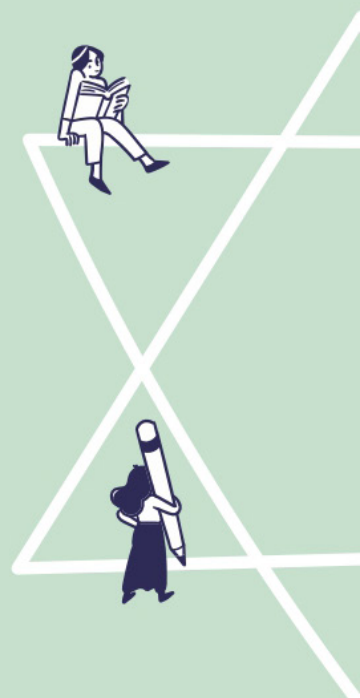




# The **CHIEF RABBI'S** Schools Review





# FOREWORD

No precept of the Torah could be more fundamental to the enduring vitality of the Jewish people than the education of our children. “And you (plural) must teach your children...when you (singular) are sitting at home, when you are on your way, when you lie down and when you wake up.”

Every day we utter these famous verses of the Shema, in which the Torah describes the essential ingredient of Jewish continuity. Yet, we often overlook the fact that the commandment is given to us in both the singular and the plural form.

Our Sages explain that our obligation to educate applies to us individually and also collectively as a community. Just as a person must take responsibility for ensuring that their own children receive the best possible Jewish education, a community must do the same by building and maintaining outstanding Jewish schools.

This responsibility is not one that our schools and the wider Jewish community takes lightly, which has been reflected impressively by the manner in which Jewish schools have engaged with the first phase of the Chief Rabbi’s School Review. I would like to place on record my thanks to all of them for their unrelenting commitment to achieving the very best outcomes for our children.

This document is the product of numerous in-depth and inspiring conversations with many gifted people who are deeply passionate about Jewish education. Our Sages teach “Ein sicha ela tefilla” – “conversation” equates to “prayer”. Our Review has started important and sacred conversations that will hopefully shape the future of Jewish education for generations to come. I would like to thank Dr Alex Pomson and the team at Rosov Consulting for facilitating these conversations and reporting their precious fruits back to us in such a clear, well-structured and empowering manner.

There is much to celebrate. The sense of pride, belonging and identity that our students gain from attending Jewish schools is both formative and essential. Our schools excel academically and their holistic impact on students’ Jewish lives remains a beacon of hope. At the same time, as this initial report makes clear, Jewish schools are standing at a crossroads. Our community is grappling with demographic shifts, financial pressures and the ever-evolving needs of our students and families. Our schools are navigating many similar obstacles, from limited resources



## FOREWORD CONTINUED...

and teacher shortages to the challenge of aligning with diverse family expectations. Many are concerned by what these common challenges mean for the future provision of Jewish education. As am I.

This report highlights that our schools face very similar challenges which are interconnected and point to deeper systemic issues. Our schools understand that together they are stronger than the sum of their parts, and it is clear to them, as it is now to me, that only together can we overcome the challenges identified in this report.

The temptation with a report like this one, is to diagnose the problem and hope that others will devise the solution, or perhaps to try to prescribe a solution and hope that schools will buy into it. We cannot afford to make either of these mistakes. Nobody is more qualified to formulate the solutions than our educational leaders. We must be led by their experience and insight, bolstered where appropriate by specialist expertise. But we also cannot expect them to deliver change alone. Jewish education cuts across many facets of our community, including our shuls and our youth movements, and needs to be addressed holistically.

For that reason, this report — the product of much listening and many conversations — will herald the beginning of a process of deeper and broader conversations. Our schools and our wider educational system will explore together, how we can meet the systemic challenges that are holding us back from our ultimate goal of improving Jewish outcomes for our children. The next stage of this process will therefore see the formation of working groups to focus on the challenges and tasks that are laid out in this report. These crucial conversations and our ability to develop cross-system solutions together will make for effective and enduring change.

This is a moment to reimagine our collective potential. To envision what an integrated ecosystem that supports Jewish education at every level could look like. Our collective aspiration must surely be aligned in every respect, with the aim of making our children the very best versions of themselves; excelling in both secular and Jewish studies, proud, Jewishly literate and engaged, and inspired to contribute to our community and to wider society.

I am excited for the work ahead in addressing the findings of this report. It is a sacred task, the responsibility of which falls to each of us individually and to all of us collectively as a Jewish community.

Chief Rabbi  
**Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE**

# A PERSONAL PREFACE

In the second chapter of Shmot, Moshe stumbles on a burning bush in the heart of the desert. This mundane site serves as the gateway to an experience of the transcendent. The encounter serves as a turning point to Jewish emancipation.

This episode serves as a useful metaphor for Jewish schools. There's a mundane quality to their day-to-day functioning: school leaders must manage, for example, end-of-day dismissal arrangements, exam timetables, and the last-minute search for substitute teachers. And yet, in the midst of these mundane, albeit necessary, activities there's potential for transcendence, for helping young people become better versions of themselves. Jewish schools can indeed be gateways to emancipation.

For these reasons, Jewish schools matter. And in the UK, where a higher proportion of young Jews attend Jewish schools than in most other diaspora Jewish communities, Jewish schools really matter.

It has been a privilege for the Rosov Consulting team to assist in launching the Chief Rabbi's Schools Review, an initiative intended to enable United Synagogue and Office of the Chief Rabbi schools to become better versions of themselves. For me, this work (leading the wonderful team that has conducted this study) is personal. I attended Jewish primary school in London, was hired to my first full-time job as a teacher in a Jewish secondary school, and helped found another of London's Jewish secondary schools. I can attest to the formative capacities of these institutions for students, families and teachers.

The work of school leadership has become substantially more challenging in the decades since those formative personal experiences. In recent years, schools have had to take on many of the identity-shaping tasks that were once the responsibility of families. And yet, as the interviews at the heart of this work also affirm, professionals and volunteers continue to lead schools with passion and dedication. While it has become harder to unleash the transformative potential of schools, it is also all the more important to do so at an unsettling time for Jews around the world. The Chief Rabbi's Schools Review seeks to provide the Jewish community with a stable platform of knowledge on which to find balance and build for the future. Our team hopes that this is indeed the case. This report is just the start of the hard work.



**Alex Pomson**

*Principal and Managing Director, Rosov Consulting*

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## RATIONALE FOR THE REVIEW

<sup>1</sup> Syaetsky, D. and Boyd, J. (2016). *The Rise and Rise of Jewish Schools in the United Kingdom: Numbers, Trends and Policy Issues*. JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

<sup>2</sup> Miller, H. (2001). Meeting the Challenge: The Jewish School Phenomenon in the UK. *Oxford Review of Education* 27 (4), 501–13.

<sup>3</sup> It might also place acute pressure on private Jewish schools. Mendelsson, D. (2011). Anglo-Jewish Education: Day Schools, State Funding and Religious Education in State Schools. In H. Miller, L. Grant & A. Pomson (eds) *International Handbook of Jewish Education* (pp. 1105–1123). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

<sup>4</sup> Lessof, C. (2024). *Antisemitism in Schools: How Prevalent Is It, And How Might It Affect Parents' Decisions About Where to Educate Their Children Post-October 7?* JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research. September 2024.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A for a listing of schools.

Jewish day school education in the United Kingdom represents a remarkable and enduring legacy. For nearly three centuries, Jewish schools have maintained a continuous presence, longer than in any other contemporary Jewish community. Today, a higher proportion of Jewish youth attend these schools than almost anywhere else in world.<sup>1</sup> And thanks to legislation passed in 1851, the State sometimes covers up to 85 percent of the running costs of schools, a source of envy among Jewish day school advocates in other parts of the world.<sup>2</sup>

And yet, today, Jewish schools in the United Kingdom are at an inflection point. Following three decades of unprecedented growth, many schools are grappling with demographic and financial challenges. Enrolment rates have plateaued, hours dedicated to Jewish studies have been reduced, and the quality of Jewish outcomes are seen by some as mediocre, especially when compared to similar institutions in other countries.

Despite these challenges, there are also significant opportunities at this moment. The potential introduction of VAT on private school fees could lead to a surge in enrolments in state-funded Jewish schools, much like the closure of grammar schools did in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> The growing insecurity felt by many Jewish families in non-Jewish settings, particularly since October 7, 2023, may also prompt parents to turn to Jewish schools as safer educational environments for their children;<sup>4</sup> at this challenging time, many more Jewish families are seeking community. Finally, despite Israel's ongoing conflict, Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combatting Antisemitism is currently investing more resources in global Jewish day school education than at any time since Israel's founding through UnitEd, an organisation founded by the Ministry in partnership with foundations and communities to strengthen Jewish Day Schools.

These circumstances have prompted leadership at The Office of the Chief Rabbi (OCR) and The United Synagogue (US) to recognize that now is the time to take stock of the opportunities and challenges faced by the 33 schools they support.<sup>5</sup> Inspired by Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis, the OCR and US have partnered with PaJeS, the leading provider of ongoing professional support to Jewish schools in the UK, and UnitEd, to initiate this diagnostic report: The Chief Rabbi's School Review. As a first step in partnering with schools to respond to this moment, the Review seeks to construct a comprehensive, data-driven portrait of the Jewish educational landscape in the UK.

The initiative's partners engaged Rosov Consulting, a global leader in research, evaluation, and insights for Jewish organisations and communities, to construct this portrait. This report synthesizes data collected by the research team from school leaders and third-party organisations operating in the education sector. It provides a platform for the work to come.

# METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The research team conducted two cycles of data collection and analysis, the findings from which are synthesised below.

## Ground-level data.

First, data were collected directly from the schools. Between May and July 2024, all 33 schools completed an online questionnaire regarding the size and make-up of student enrolment, their finances and the extent of voluntary contributions received, the various components of Jewish life in schools—their Jewish studies offerings and staffing, their Jewish educational and communal partnerships, and their offerings to and relationships with parents (see Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire, and Appendix D for selected data collected by means of the questionnaire).

Following the questionnaire, the head of school, chair of governors, and head of Jewish studies (or the school's most senior Jewish educator) participated in follow-up interviews with members of the research team. These interviews explored each school's educational philosophy, their self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses, the challenges they face, and the resources and supports available to them. While providing a snapshot of each school's day-to-day realities and their recent trajectory, these conversations gave school leaders an opportunity to step back and reflect on their sector's wider challenges and opportunities (see Appendix E for the interview guide).

## Balcony-level data.

In addition, the research team conducted a review of publicly available materials, including Pikuach reports, promotional materials distributed by the schools, and content from school websites. This was further supplemented by secondary analysis of survey data previously collected by the US and OCR from parents and teachers at a sample of schools.

The research team synthesised these various data sources and shared preliminary findings in a three-hour, in-person "meaning-making meeting." This session involved a group of key stakeholders, including school heads and leaders of partner organisations, and was instrumental in identifying emerging themes and refining the focus for the second cycle of data collection.

The second phase of data collection aimed to gather broader, high-level perspectives on the state of OCR- and US-affiliated schools. This phase involved interviews with leaders of organisations that work with multiple schools, offering a "balcony-level" view of the issues on the ground. These interviewees came from organisations such as LSJS, Pikuach, and Etgar, which work across all schools, as well as from organisations that serve specific subsets of schools, such as Seed, Ignite, and Yehudi. Representatives from the partners in the Chief Rabbi's Review (the Office of the Chief Rabbi, the United Synagogue, and PaJeS) were also included. See Appendix B for a full list of the participating organizations.

The interviews sought to uncover insights on the key challenges schools face, their strengths, what is needed to support their improvement, and potential barriers to progress.

Data from these interviews underwent thematic analysis and were integrated with findings from the first phase of data collection. The following sections lay out the main findings as they relate to the strengths of schools, the challenges they face, and possible strategies for addressing those challenges.



# FINDINGS

## Strengths of Jewish Schools in the UK

Those who study, service, and assess the work of schools, that is, those who view schools from the outside, largely agree on where OCR and US schools do well and where their strengths lie in Jewish terms. These views are generally echoed by those working within the schools, although there are differences of opinion about which experiences and interventions produce these outcomes and what obstructions constrain school improvement and impact.

### **1** Positive Jewish identity outcomes

There is widespread consensus that Jewish schools play a crucial role in fostering a strong sense of Jewish pride among students, at both the primary and secondary levels. Graduates leave with a deep appreciation for their Jewish

heritage, well-established friendships that prove invaluable as they transition to university and working life, and a strong connection to the broader Jewish community.

Observers typically depict these outcomes as built in to the Jewish school experience by virtue of the schools being Jewish subcultures (distinct and distinctive Jewish environments), populated by hundreds of young Jews, and explicitly organised around the Jewish calendar. These circumstances contribute to the most foundational outcomes of Jewish day school education without requiring active efforts from the schools themselves. As one observer expressed it, *"The schools enable students to connect to their Jewish identity without even thinking about it."* Similarly, in the context of primary schools, another remarked, *"Judaism is part of the environment, especially in the build up to chagim ... you don't get that elsewhere."*



These findings align with research on the outcomes of Jewish secondary schooling in the UK, recently published in the 2024 volume *Jewish lives and Jewish education in the UK: School, family and society*. Reflecting on this longitudinal study of over a thousand students who began secondary school in 2011, the authors conclude: “Jewish day schools excel in providing young British Jews with an experience of solidarity and community... Most [students] appreciate the sense of warm embrace and of belonging. At a moment in their adolescent development, finding such a place of belonging, finding community, is no small matter. Being Jewish, students convey, is akin to being members of a warm, extended family... These [schools] are places of community in which most who pass through find a place to belong within a larger collective.”<sup>6</sup>

## 2 School-Based Informal Jewish education

The positive Jewish identity outcomes seen in UK Jewish schools are often the result of a well-established and expansive set of extracurricular and experiential Jewish life offerings at the schools, sometimes arranged as substitutes for scaled-back classroom experiences (see more below) and in the best cases designed as supplements to and reinforcement for classroom learning. In primary schools, these experiences typically revolve around Shabbat and Jewish festivals, with, for example, 70 percent of schools running a family Jewish life programme.

In secondary schools, these experiences occur during lunchtime gatherings and extracurricular activities, especially Shabbatonim, further extended by interactions with positive Jewish role models.

A common theme across all of these experiences is that they occur outside the traditional classroom setting. Examples include Seed’s Friday night dinner and Havdalah events for families; Etgar’s grand final at Wembley Stadium where Year 5 students come together at the end of a year-long Jewish general knowledge competition; leadership development programmes where older students mentor younger students; and workshops that provide opportunities for young students in particular to apply the knowledge they have gained in classrooms. The highlight of these informal experiences for most secondary students includes Year 9 trips to Israel and Year 11 trips to Poland. These experiences are not only the ones most vividly remembered by graduates but are also among the most formative in shaping a sense of Jewish community, joy, collective purpose, and, not least, a positive connection to Israel.

## 3 Reach and scale

A higher proportion of Jewish youth from non-Haredi homes attend Jewish schools in the UK than in nearly every other country. In the 2020–21 school year, 14,325 students were reported to be enrolled in “mainstream schools,” meaning non-separatist institutions with a full curriculum of Jewish and general

<sup>6</sup> Miller, H. & Pomson, A. (2024). *Jewish lives and Jewish education in the UK: School, family and society*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, p. 63.

studies. This number has been estimated to represent more than 40 percent of the eligible Jewish population.<sup>7</sup>

These aggregate numbers mask certain challenging trends: enrolment in mainstream primary schools has plateaued since 2017–18 and has seen a slight decline in the last couple of years; as described below, 20 US/OCR schools report being unable to fill their places with Jewish students; and 13 report that more than 5 percent of their student body is non-Jewish due to unmet capacity. Viewing the cup half-empty: only 40 percent of eligible children attend Jewish school even though they are academically excellent and state-aided (about more of which below). And yet, despite these challenges, Jewish schools in the UK continue to serve a higher proportion and greater diversity of Jewish families than Jewish schools in most other countries, offering thousands of Jewish youth 12 years of day school education. By comparison, in the United States, only 19% percent of children being raised in non-Haredi homes have attended Jewish schools. In the UK, Jewish schools enrol a much more diverse Jewish population. For this reason alone, they constitute an invaluable community asset.

## 4 Academic quality

The strong enrolment numbers in UK Jewish schools are not solely due to lower costs compared to private alternatives or the perception of schools as safe and supportive environments in an era of rising antisemitism. As many interviewees noted in the course of

this study, Jewish schools deliver excellent academic results, with graduates of Jewish secondary schools moving on to top universities, sometimes at higher rates than students from leading private schools.

Academically, Jewish schools are considered excellent, with many ranked as outstanding by Ofsted. Their reputation for strong academic performance is a significant factor in their ongoing appeal and sustainability. Research on Jewish parents' priorities when selecting schools underscores this point. Parents who choose Jewish schools value academic quality just as highly as those opting for selective private institutions.<sup>8</sup> Alongside these aspirations, parents want their children to graduate with a strong sense of Jewish pride while being socialized into the Jewish community. Although parents also seek to instil a sense of Jewish pride and community in their children, academic success remains a key driver behind their school choices, particularly at the secondary level. Academic quality is vital to the appeal of Jewish schools.

## 5 Government funding

Although many schools find themselves in increasingly precarious financial situations, Jewish schools in the UK have long benefitted from substantial state funding while retaining a great deal of autonomy over the design of their Jewish offerings. While the voluntary aided model may constrain the intensity of Jewish education that schools offer, and while schools attest that it has ceased to deliver sufficient financial support, it still constitutes

<sup>7</sup> Boyd, J. (2023). *A Jewish or a Non-Jewish School: What Lies Behind Parents' Decisions About How to Educate Their Children?* JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research. September 2023. Syaetsky, D. and Boyd, J. (2016). *op cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Boyd (2023), *op cit.*; Miller and Pomson (2024) *op cit.*

a remarkable compact between the State and faith communities in the UK. With the government contributing substantially towards capital costs and operating expenses for non-sectarian educational offerings, Jewish schools in the UK receive significant assistance in meeting the single greatest challenge to the sustainability of Jewish day school education in countries or jurisdictions with strict church-state separation.<sup>9</sup> And the fact that this financial dividend has come with relatively few limitations on Jewish offerings at mainstream schools is all the more noteworthy.

## 6 Contribution to communal life

Although limited quantitative data exists on this topic, interviewees believe that the expanded reach of Jewish schools over the last three decades has positioned them as the major engine of Jewish continuity in the UK. Research from other countries indicates that Jewish schools serve as anchors of Jewish community, fostering cohesion at a time of increased polarisation and social fragmentation.<sup>10</sup>

In the UK, where a large proportion of Jewish youth now spend their formative years in Jewish schools, these institutions play a critical role in maintaining the viability and vitality of Jewish life. In fact, the only question debated by interviewees in relation to this phenomenon is whether the schools' contribution has been at the expense of Jewish youth movements which, historically, have incubated Jewish communal leadership. Longitudinal research suggests that schools and youth movements

play complementary roles, with about half of students in Year 9 and Year 11 at Jewish schools attending youth movement summer camps and two-thirds regularly participating in youth movement activities (once a month or more).<sup>11</sup> On this basis, and at a time when synagogue attendance continues to be diminished, Jewish schools have likely become the most significant contributors to the continuity of Jewish life in the UK.

## A Focal Challenge: Improving the Jewish Outcomes of Jewish Schooling

As described above, Jewish schools in the UK generally excel in fostering **Jewish pride, Jewish connection** and a **positive relationship with Israel**. At the same time, some, if not many, schools are perceived to fall short in respect of other outcomes of Jewish education, particularly **Jewish literacy**, Hebrew communicative proficiency, and **religious commitment**. One observer who works closely with many schools summarized the situation:

“There’s a shift away from knowledge and skills in some schools. Some focus on spirituality but neglect Jewish knowledge, which results in kids coming out as ‘mensches’ but lacking real Jewish knowledge.”

<sup>9</sup> Rosov Consulting (2017). *Challenges and Opportunities on the Jewish Day School Landscape. A Thought and Action Paper for Jewish Federations*. Jewish Federations of North America.

<sup>10</sup> Miller and Pomson (2024) *op cit*.

<sup>11</sup> Miller and Pomson (2024) *op cit*.

For educators and community leaders, this state of affairs is especially exasperating given that many students spend up to 12 years in Jewish schools. The reality is that with only one to two hours a week devoted to Jewish subjects in some schools, it is challenging to make classroom-based Jewish education a meaningful and transformative experience. Priorities and expectations must be set within these limited hours. As one secondary school head explained:

“Yes, I would love the kids to be fluent, to be more knowledgeable, but at the moment I’m happy with their engagement and their pride, as a sacrifice.”

More than three-quarters of both primary and secondary schools reported that their curriculum covers a wide breadth of content, including, most commonly, middot (values), prayer, and the Jewish calendar, as well as parashat ha-shavua (weekly Torah portion), Israel, and chumash (the Five Books of Moses). However, it seems that primary schools often focus above all on Hebrew reading, specifically decoding rather than comprehension. This was explained by a primary school head:

“Hebrew reading is the main goal, that children leave as good Hebrew readers. That’s their heritage and ticket to the future, their link to the past. That they can use the siddur, look at chumash, participate in a bar mitzvah or any service, that they can keep up with what’s happening at shul.”

At secondary school, in Key Stage 3, the curriculum tends to be broad but thin. Faced with a diversity of students and not wanting to stream by religious background, schools often aim at a lowest common denominator in an effort to keep everyone on board. At Key Stage 4, the focus is driven by the GCSE curriculum where Judaism is one of a number of foci. In the sixth form, the Jewish studies curriculum becomes highly fragmented, taking a backseat to A Level courses, occupying very little time, and functioning as a kind of optional extra. Ironically, as students develop intellectually, they spend less time on serious Jewish content. Against this backdrop, some parents complain that their children seem to know less, and be less inspired in religious terms, when they finish secondary school than when they finish primary school.

Reflecting what was conveyed by interviewees, the *Jewish Lives* longitudinal study of students’ experience in Jewish secondary school concludes: “It is hard to escape the conclusion that in classrooms, at least, what [is] being offered [is] at best broad but shallow. Certainly, what students experienced over the years [is] a pale reflection of what the schools advertise to prospective students. They promise that students will encounter a wide range of Jewish texts, but at hardly any of the schools were those texts studied systematically or in their original Hebrew.”<sup>12</sup> And in respect to Israel education, “it seems that Jewish schools have poorly prepared their students for the worst expressions of disdain for Israel that they encounter at university...[even while they have] cultivated a strong emotional attachment to the Jewish state. In fact, this attachment is so

<sup>12</sup> Miller and Pomson (2024) *op cit.* p.53

strong it seems to resist the corrosive potential of the worst criticisms aimed at Israel.”<sup>13</sup>

## Intensifying Jewish Life in Schools: An Interconnected Web of Tasks

The Chief Rabbi’s Schools Review was prompted by a widely shared recognition that US and OCR schools are grappling with significant structural, financial, human resource, and cultural challenges all of which contribute to mixed Jewish educational outcomes (on the hand, stronger Jewish identity outcomes; on the other, weaker

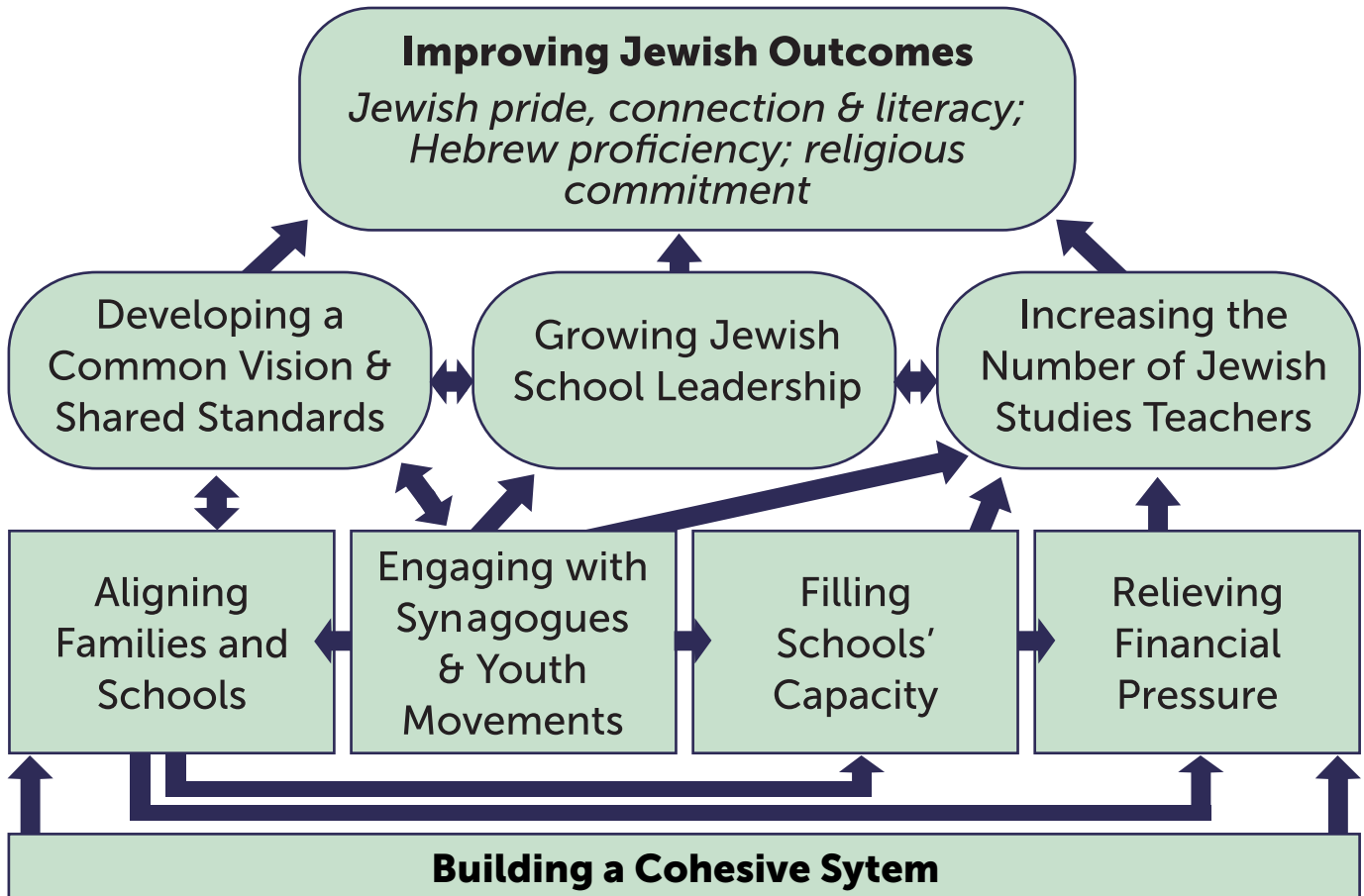
Jewish literacy outcomes). This study confirms the pervasive nature of these challenges, and how, although these challenges may be more acutely felt outside London, they are not limited to provincial communities. This study also confirms the interconnections between

To address these challenges requires undertaking a web of interconnected tasks, as shown in Figure 1. This section of the report describes these tasks and the challenges such tasks would address.

### 1 Developing a common vision and shared standards

School leaders and those who work with schools agree that a common vision for Jewish education in the UK would go a

**Figure 1: A Web of Tasks Facing US and OCR Schools Today**



<sup>13</sup> Miller and Pomson (2024) *op cit.* p.191

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long way to driving improvement in the outcomes of US/OCR schools. Interviewees recommended developing a communal outline of what an educated young Jew should look like at different developmental stages to inspire schools to set measurable, benchmarked goals for Jewish learning. Absent these compass-setting resources, few schools rigorously and continuously assess student progress in Jewish learning, as they do in secular subjects. Similarly, parents are unable to evaluate what their children are gaining from Jewish education. The students themselves are not motivated to take their Jewish learning seriously since they have not been set any obvious measurable targets.

Interviewees noted that the lack of consensus on what constitutes a quality Jewish education has led to inconsistent outcomes across schools and a lack of genuine accountability. It is true, they acknowledge, that most schools receive exceptionally positive assessments from Pikuach about the Jewish education they offer, but that is largely because Pikuach inspects schools in relation to the standards and goals each school sets for itself. As a consequence, its assessments are seen to possess limited bite. As one interviewee explained:

“Until there is guidance from the United Synagogue, things will be weak. This results in schools receiving ‘outstanding’ ratings when their Jewish studies content is quite weak.”

To be clear, the aspirations expressed here do not assume that all schools should follow the

same curriculum and seek to achieve exactly the same goals. What schools currently lack is a unified vision that they could then translate into a delineated although not necessarily uniform set of minimum expectations about their Jewish life offerings and what their students should learn each year. A unified vision would give them direction, and, no less important, would clarify what resources are needed to make desired outcomes possible. At present schools lack these targets.

## 2 Increasing the number of Jewish studies teachers

Most schools struggle to attract and retain qualified Jewish studies teachers. In the schools themselves, especially in those outside London, this is one of the most acutely felt obstructions to greater Jewish impact. As a primary school head recounted,

“The biggest challenge has been the quality of the staff, delivering the content at the school. It took a long time to find staff who align with our vision and want to support our students.... It’s the same challenge that other schools have, to find really good Jewish educators, with the knowledge base and engagement skills.”

When schools cannot fill positions, they often cut back on the hours of Jewish studies, reduce support for needy students, or assign responsibility for some Jewish education functions, including tefillah, either to non-Jewish staff or to unqualified staff members of Jewish background.<sup>14</sup> The Jewish studies staff

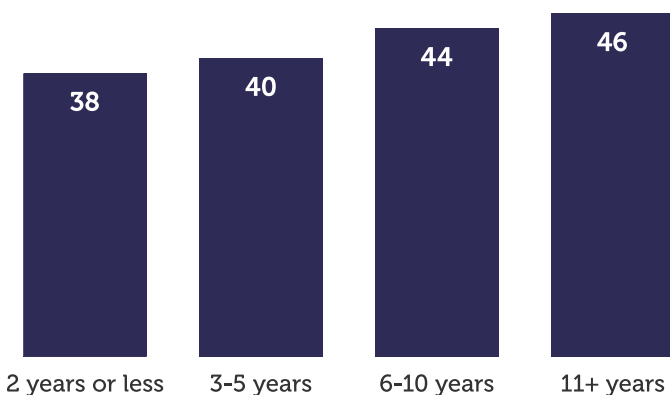
<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that some schools also reduce Jewish studies hours in order to free up time they can use towards delivering high standards in secular education.

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they do employ must often carry exceptionally heavy workloads, including curriculum development and extracurricular engagement programs on top of regular classroom teaching, all of which leads to concerns about burnout. Schools that struggle to raise sufficient money by means of voluntary contribution end up cutting Jewish studies positions, resulting in an even heavier burden on the remaining Jewish studies staff.

Although some assume that the crux of the problem is teacher retention—holding on to staff when they are asked to do so much—data from schools suggest that the issue is more complex. As seen in Figure 2, a plurality of experienced faculty who have taught in the same school for several years are working alongside a group of less experienced teachers who transition in and out of these positions every couple of years. This study has shown that turnover is actually not any greater than in other subject areas or other service-providing professions.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 2: Number of Jewish Studies Teachers, by Length of Tenure (n=168)**



It is more likely that the core difficulty is recruitment, drawing people to the profession in the first place, when the profession lacks prestige and when salaries are not competitive enough to attract new talent.<sup>16</sup> Since Covid, the UK, like other western countries, has seen decreased interest in the teaching profession. Moreover, Jewish schools in the UK are competing in a global marketplace where qualified Jewish studies teachers can find more appealing positions elsewhere in the English-speaking world particularly because those countries might be experiencing even higher levels of teacher turnover.<sup>17</sup> It's a sellers' market, with a smaller pool of Jewish studies candidates requesting higher salaries than similarly qualified general studies teachers. Smaller schools and those with fewer resources are simply unable to afford the candidates that are available. Schools outside London are further challenged by trying to incentivize relocation away from the larger centres of Jewish life.

"We don't have Jewish infrastructure. It's hard to recruit.... We're not in a religious area. People aren't willing to relocate or travel."

Ironically, the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS), the primary gateway for new teachers, is probably offering a more robust array of pathways to the Jewish school sector than ever before. It currently prepares about 5 new Jewish studies teachers each year. Evidently, that is not enough.

<sup>15</sup> Rosov Consulting (2019). *On the journey: Concepts that support a study of the professional trajectories of Jewish educators*. George Washington University: CASJE.

<sup>16</sup> [Research shows that low salaries are more likely to deter people from entering professions in the first place than cause them to leave once they start work. Once they start work, they're aware of what their pay will be.](#)

<sup>17</sup> Rosov Consulting (2021). *Mapping the market: An analysis of the preparation, support and employment of Jewish educators*. George Washington University: CASJE.

## 3 Growing Jewish school leaders

School leadership makes a difference. It is second only to teaching among school-related matters in its impact on student learning. This was the conclusion of an influential study supported by the Wallace Foundation some twenty years ago, and the situation is no different today. As the authors reported: "The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning accounts for about a quarter of school effects."<sup>18</sup> Institutions rarely thrive without compass-setting leadership. For Jewish schools engaged in identity formation, seeking to inculcate a love for Judaism and Jewish pride, inspirational Jewish leadership is even more important.

Currently, a quarter of OCR and US schools do not have a head of Jewish studies on their leadership team. They lack a senior Jewish educator to help shape the direction of their Jewish studies curriculum and the Jewish experiences they provide. In some instances, this situation is the result of financial challenges. In others it seems to be a consequence of deprioritising Jewish studies relative to other concerns, with the head of Jewish studies not being replaced following a retirement or other departure. No less significant, we estimate that fewer than 10 OCR and US schools are led by individuals who define themselves as Jewish educators, distinct, that is, from individuals who are first-class educators who happen to be Jewish. These heads of school are often outstanding; no interviewee questioned the competence of those who currently lead OCR and US schools. Some did raise questions about the possibility

of maintaining Jewish direction and purpose at schools absent Jewish educational leaders in the most senior positions.

This challenge relates to both supply and demand. The educators who might successfully fill such positions have been put off by limited opportunities for advancement and career development. Pay and conditions are also a deterrent. As happens with teachers, some potential heads have taken up senior positions in other countries or fields instead. A head of school put it like this:

"If you are inspirational and qualified, you are also brilliant at other things. You need to be a leader. Leaders are more attractive in other professions. The Jewish community's professional slant is to other careers. £100,000 will attract the right people, not £40,000."

Improving Jewish outcomes in schools will be contingent on growing Jewish educators who can lead these institutions. As seen in Figure 1, Jewish leadership is at the fulcrum of intensifying the Jewish impact of schools.

## 4 Aligning families and schools

Parents tend to be very satisfied with the secular education offered by Jewish schools; they vote with their feet and continue to enrol their children in large numbers. When in 2018 hundreds of parents at mainstream Jewish secondary schools were surveyed about their children's schooling at the time their children were graduating, 85 percent thought that

<sup>18</sup> Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., and Wahlstrom, K. (2004). "How Leadership Influences Student Learning."



# FINDINGS

the seven years of Jewish secondary school education had been worthwhile. In follow-up interviews, very few criticized the secular education their children had received.<sup>19</sup>

And yet, a gap exists between what schools seek to accomplish in Jewish terms and what many parents seek. Most interviewees, inside and beyond the schools, report that parents prioritise academic success over Jewish education, and that the Jewish lives families lead at home are not aligned with the Jewish ethos and curriculum promoted by schools. When educational success depends on a partnership between school and home, the lack of alignment between parents and schools is a problem.

There is a tendency to blame parents for this state of affairs, with interviewees expressing different degrees of critique:

From a head of Jewish studies:

“Generally, [parents] are focused on Hebrew reading. They have a mantra of wanting their kids to be able to say Kaddish when they die. They’re not against Jewish education, but they’re not particularly fussed about it.”

From a partner to schools:

“Parents feel like they’ve already taken care of the Jewish education by sending their kids to a Jewish school. There’s no further involvement or engagement with Jewish matters at home, which limits the impact of Jewish education.”

And from another partner:

“Parents don’t want it (Jewish education). And the community doesn’t get worried about it.... The problem is that the parents don’t care enough.”

These are strong criticisms, but they are not universally shared. Others recognise the same lack of alignment but argue that the schools could do more to demonstrate the relevance and seriousness of their Jewish offerings (the visions and standards challenge described above). For example, primary schools could better synchronise parent engagement efforts with the classroom curriculum. Generally, schools could be better integrated with other community institutions, especially synagogues; and the faculty they employ could be more relevant as role models for students. An interviewee expressed this view forcefully:

“There’s a disconnect between what the families look like and what the teachers look like, between what the families want and what the schools think they should provide.... Teachers are much more strictly Orthodox than the families. And that all makes Jewish education into ‘something other.’”

This last comment gets to the crux of the challenge: how to ensure that Jewish education and Jewish life is not “something other,” but relevant and compelling to the full range of families whose children attend the schools.

<sup>19</sup> Miller and Pomson (2024) *op cit*.

## 5 Engaging with synagogues and youth movements

When surveyed about their relationship with local rabbis, almost all of the 33 schools reported that their relationship was “very positive.” Three-quarters characterised their relationship with their local Jewish community in similar terms. Interviewees echoed these reactions:

“The rabbis are very supportive, they come in for holidays. They are always excited and more than happy to come in, they love to help. We have had all of the rabbis of the community come into the school.”

At the same time, it is evident that very few of these relationships have been developed systematically or coherently. While almost all schools are formally connected to a rabbinic principal, the role has been interpreted in various different ways and never been fully developed. Some schools evidently do have deep associations with local clergy, with some local rabbis assuming active roles as teachers. More commonly, local rabbis come into schools to participate in holiday and milestone celebrations. In many cases, these relationships seem more symbolic than substantive; they also tend to flow in one direction, with the synagogue being introduced into the school in the shape of a single person, the rabbi. These relationships rarely flow in the other direction, with members of the school community (families and children) being intentionally integrated into local shuls.

There is one exception, when, as part of applying to primary school, secondary school, or the sixth form, families seek to achieve a CRP (Certificate of Religious Practice), demonstrating, as required by law, their Jewish practice in terms of “the three pillars of Jewish faith: prayer, education and acts of kindness.”<sup>20</sup> This formal requirement represents a tremendous opportunity for connecting shuls and schools, but it is not utilised as a springboard for a more organic or continuous partnership. Once Year 6 families receive their certificates, most are not seen again until the run up to bar and bat mitzvah. The same pattern then repeats itself, with families disappearing after a period of frequent attendance. When it comes to bar and bat mitzvah, secondary schools tend to take a very hands-off approach, not wanting to invade a space that historically belonged to the shul. This, too, feels like a missed opportunity to cultivate longer-lasting relationships between families, schools, and shuls.

When the schools do connect with the wider community it tends to be by means of a haphazard patchwork of more than 20 outside providers who offer a variety of extracurricular or plug-in classroom programmes. It’s noteworthy that although 13 schools partner with Tribe, the United Synagogue’s youth department, just five reported being in an ongoing relationship with any other of the community’s youth movements. Why so few partner in this way is not clear, but given the broader debate about the negative impact of schools on the youth movements, it is surely worth further exploring more intensive

<sup>20</sup> [https://theus.org.uk/assets/uploads/2024/03/CRP-FAQs-2025-26\\_Mar24.pdf](https://theus.org.uk/assets/uploads/2024/03/CRP-FAQs-2025-26_Mar24.pdf).

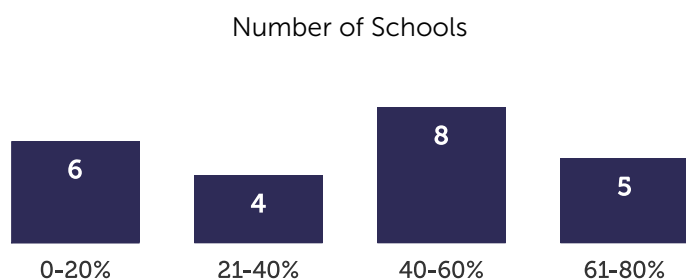
relationships with them. They can help draw students into participation in a wide range of communal institutions.

## 6 Relieving financial pressure

As noted above, parents whose children attend Jewish schools are invited to pay an annual voluntary contribution to support the Jewish studies curriculum. The recommended contribution varies by location: in London, the average “ask” is £2,000, in North Manchester £1,900, and in other communities £600. These voluntary contributions are a fraction of what parents in many other diaspora communities pay for their children’s Jewish day school education.

The voluntary contribution (VC) system is widely perceived to be broken. The proportion of contributions collected by schools has plummeted in recent years. Today, no school collects from more than 70 percent of parents; in London, on average, 52 percent of parents contribute, in Manchester, just 33 percent, and in other communities, 20 percent, even though the contribution being requested is substantially lower. Figure 3 shows collection rates among Jewish state schools.

**Figure 3: Proportion of Families Making a Voluntary Contribution<sup>21</sup>**



Because schools are only allowed to cover a small part of their Jewish education provision with government aid, the contraction in VCs has had a severe impact on the extent of Jewish offerings; it has also constrained other “extras” schools might offer which also depend on funds generated by the VCs. To make ends meet, schools have cut staff, replaced teachers with teaching assistants, scaled back their Modern Hebrew programs, and reduced extracurricular activities. They try to make up the shortfall with fundraising campaigns, but few are well equipped to run such campaigns and often end up competing with one another. It is a brutal situation: schools are wrestling with rising operating costs and widespread cuts in government support. While nine schools do not run a deficit, 11 schools reported annual deficits in excess of £100,000. In London, the average annual deficit is £287,500, in North Manchester £214,000, and elsewhere £245,000. Sixteen primary schools reported carrying a deficit, with an average deficit of £150,000. The average deficit for all primary schools (including those with no deficit) was £100,000.<sup>22</sup> Four secondary schools reported a deficit, with an average deficit of £790,000. The average deficit for all secondary schools (including those with no deficit) was £527,000.<sup>23</sup> While single-form-entry primary schools do not run the highest deficits in absolute terms, they are among the most financially challenged without recourse to economies of scale.

Interviewees from schools offered two primary explanations for the collapse in VCs: a cost-

<sup>21</sup> Twenty-three (23) schools provided data in response to this question.

<sup>22</sup> Seven (7) primary schools reported no deficit, and 1 primary school did report a deficit, but did not include an amount.

<sup>23</sup> Two (2) secondary schools did not report a deficit, and 1 secondary school did report a deficit, but did not report an amount.

of-living crisis which, since the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen parents left with less disposable income, and a changed perception of Jewish schools wherein parents do not see a need to pay for “free” state education. Interviewees outside the schools offered an additional perspective: the decline in contributions, they argue, is symptomatic of the disconnect between parents and schools, as described above. In their view, because parents are less aligned with schools, they do not see a special reason to support the schools’ Jewish offerings.

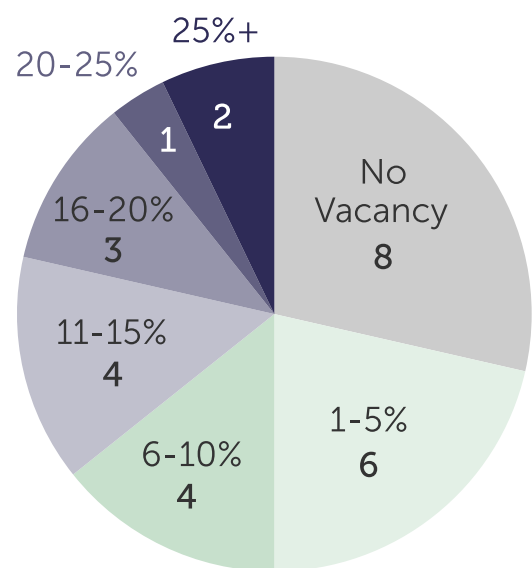
## 7 Filling schools’ capacity

While many more young Jewish people attend Jewish schools today than 10 or 20 years ago, enrolment levels have slightly declined over the last few years. Just eight of the 28 schools that reported their numbers are completely full. As seen in Figure 4, some schools are faced with substantial underenrolment. Private schools in this sample are facing greater difficulties than are state schools; on average they are 18 percent below their Published Admission Number, compared to 8 percent in state schools. Whether private or state-aided, schools’ budgets are directly related to enrolment levels, and, without doubt, this situation has further intensified the financial pressures on schools.<sup>24</sup>

This challenging state of affairs is largely due to demographic trends rather than to concerns about quality. Schools with empty places are typically located in areas where

today there are fewer school-age Jewish children than in the past. In large part, this constitutes the fall-out from the massive expansion in the Jewish school sector at the start of this century where several schools were opened to accommodate growth in the number of Jewish school-age children. Now that that growth has levelled off, some of the newer schools are struggling to fill their places.

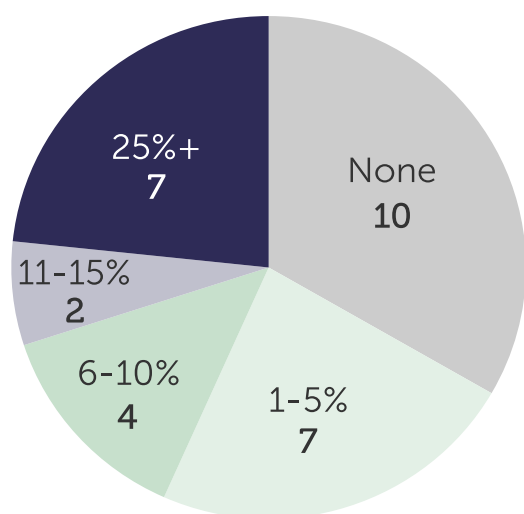
**Figure 4: Percentage of Empty Places (number of schools)**



State-aided schools are required to fill empty places with non-Jewish students; private schools can choose to operate under capacity if they can afford to do so. As seen in Figure 5, 13 US/OCR schools now fill more than five percent of their places with non-Jewish students.

<sup>24</sup> Counting the number of schools with empty places creates a distorted picture of the situation. Five of the 8 schools with no vacancies are outside London, four of which report that more than a quarter of their students are not Jewish. These particular schools are full but not with Jewish students.

**Figure 5: Proportion of Non-Jewish Students  
(number of schools)**



None of the interviewees from outside of schools spoke about this issue, other than in relation to three schools where more than two-thirds of the students are not Jewish. School data indicate that this phenomenon is in fact much more widespread. It surely challenges one of the most powerful features of diaspora Jewish day school education: the experience of intimate Jewish community set apart from a larger social context where Jews constitute a very small minority. It may not matter much when schools admit a handful of non-Jewish students, but once those numbers increase, it can set a cycle in motion where Jewish families start departing at an accelerated rate, as indeed has happened at a couple of schools. In these circumstances, schools struggle to support strong Jewish learning options for a dwindling number of students.

## 8 Building a system

Funding and enrolment challenges highlight the extent to which the schools exist in a highly fragmented system where they often compete with one another. It is a situation

that is especially striking when compared with other faith communities in the UK whose schools are connected in much more tightly coordinated networks. Four United Synagogue schools are part of JCAT, a Multi-Academy Trust, where some technical and administrative pressures are reduced; the remainder function as independent entities, often reflecting their origin stories at the initiative of small groups of locally organised activist families uncoupled from other already existing schools. Many of the challenges faced by OCR and US schools are exacerbated by their fragmentation. Fragmentation is most evident in the lack of shared standards and educational vision across the schools, but also in the struggle to address staff shortages, the narrow leadership pipeline, the inconsistent relationships between schools and their local communities, the financial pressures schools face, and their enrolment challenges. In the best cases, resources are being duplicated, in the worst cases, single, siloed schools can't muster sufficient resources to address the challenges they face. As depicted in Figure 1, few tasks that schools face are not aggravated by their fragmentation.

This is the historic legacy of the incremental growth of the Jewish school system in the UK over the last century or more. The launch of the Chief Rabbi's Schools Review and the positive response of schools to participating in this study indicate a willingness to face the future in a more collaborative fashion. School leaders acknowledged in interviews and in subsequent interactions that they face common challenges. They express a willingness to develop strategies for addressing those challenges in a collaborative and coordinated fashion.



# THE ROAD AHEAD

This report underscores the complex challenges facing Jewish day schools in the UK today, while highlighting significant opportunities for growth and renewal. As Jewish schools confront financial constraints and demographic shifts, they also benefit from strong academic reputations, government support, and a rich tradition of fostering Jewish identity. The Chief Rabbi's Schools Review has confirmed the many strengths of schools and also identified areas where coordinated efforts across the sector can yield meaningful improvements: establishing a common educational vision, addressing teacher shortages, and enhancing family and community engagement. Schools must also work collaboratively to address funding issues, deepen their partnerships, and align their Jewish education and Jewish life offerings more closely with the needs and expectations of parents and students.

Speaking to representatives of so many schools, and to those from organisations that support schools, has provided an opportunity to see patterns — shared challenges and shared concerns — across the entire educational landscape. The challenges identified in this report are not unique to any one school; many are shared by most schools, and the roots of these challenges extend further than the schools themselves. The study underlines that schools are part of a wider landscape that includes the Jewish community as a whole, hence the potential for families, local synagogue communities and youth movements, by way of example, to contribute to improved Jewish outcomes at schools. One should never view schools in isolation, nor should one expect schools to deliver solutions on their own. In this instance, the wider communal infrastructure is a significant asset to be utilised appropriately in enhancing the outcomes created by schools.

In the course of this work, the research team had an opportunity to hear not only about the strengths and weakness of schools but also to hear from people deeply invested in OCR and US schools about what it will take to address the current challenges schools face and how to build on their historic strengths. These perspectives came both from those closer to the ground in schools and from those with broader perspectives, from advocates for the schools as well as from friendly critics. Those who participated in this process do not lack of ideas – and perhaps more significantly, they have signalled a readiness to work together to further explore these ideas. In the past, schools were less ready to work together to such a degree

This is truly a watershed moment. As described at the start of this report, external circumstances have created acute pressures for Jewish schools, and yet other circumstances have also brought about some very special opportunities for those who are invested in schools, not least their appetite to work together to address shared challenges. It would be too simplistic to characterize this moment as either the best of times or the worst of times, but it is surely a propitious occasion for taking steps to secure the future of Jewish schools in the UK. The words of Hillel the Elder could not be more appropriate, “if not now, when?”

# Appendices

Appendix A.

**Office of the Chief Rabbi and United Synagogue Schools**

Appendix B.

**Balcony Level Interviewees  
(Organizations External to Schools)**

Appendix C.

**School Questionnaire**

Appendix D.

**Quantitative Data About Schools  
(From School Questionnaire)**

Appendix E.

**Leadership Team Interview Guide**



# Appendix A.

## Office of the Chief Rabbi and United Synagogue Schools

Brodetsky Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Broughton Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Bury and Whitefield Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Calderwood Lodge Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Gesher School	Primary/Secondary	Independent
Hertsmere Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
IJDS	Primary	State-Aided
Immanuel College	Secondary	Independent
Immanuel College Prep School	Primary	Independent
JFS	Secondary	State-Aided
Kerem School	Primary	Independent
King David High School Liverpool	Secondary	State-Aided
King David High School Manchester	Secondary	State-Aided
King David Primary School Birmingham	Primary	State-Aided
King David Primary School Liverpool	Primary	State-Aided
King David Primary School Manchester	Primary	State-Aided
Leeds Jewish Free School	Secondary	State-Aided
Mathilda Marks-Kennedy	Primary	State-Aided
Naima JPS	Primary	Independent
Nancy Reuben Primary School	Primary	Independent
North Cheshire Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
North West London Jewish Day School	Primary	State-Aided
Rimon Jewish Primary	Primary	State-Aided
Rosh Pinah Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Sacks Morasha Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Shalom Noam Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Simon Marks Jewish Primary school	Primary	State-Aided
Sinai Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Wolfson Hillel Primary School	Primary	State-Aided
Yavneh College	Secondary	State-Aided
Yavneh Primary School	Primary	State-Aided

# Appendix B.

## Balcony Level Interviewees (Organizations External to Schools)

Etgar

Ignite

JPR (Institute for Jewish Policy Research)

London School of Jewish Studies

Office of the Chief Rabbi

PaJeS

Pikuach

Seed

TalentEd

United Synagogue

Yehudi

# Appendix C.

## School Questionnaire

### Introduction

---

Thank you so much for setting up an interview to speak with us. Our team at Rosov Consulting is working with The United Synagogue, The Office of the Chief Rabbi, PaJeS, UnitEd, and Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combatting Anti-Semitism to learn about the current state of UK Jewish schools with the goal of strengthening students' Jewish experiences and identities. As part of this process, we are conducting interviews with those who know the situation best: representatives from the schools themselves. We are very grateful for your time and perspective.

Prior to our conversation, we'd greatly appreciate your written responses to the following questions. These responses will help us learn more about your school and community and make the most of our limited time together in the interview. During the interview we'll dig deeper into some of your responses here.

Please be assured that whatever you share in this questionnaire or in the interview will not be associated with your name or any other identifying information. Your responses will be kept private and secure.

### Background

---

1. When was your school founded? [DATE]
2. What year groups does your school include? [SELECT FROM LIST]

### Students & Admissions

---

3. What is the current total number of students enrolled at your school? [NUMBER]
4. What percentage of students at your school are Jewish? [NUMBER]
5. How many students are there in each year group? [LIST YEARS – NUMBER]
6. Do you currently have student vacancies at your school? [YES/NO]
  - a. IF YES: What percentage of student places are not filled? [NUMBER]

### Jewish Life

---

- a. Which of the following areas are covered in your Jewish Studies curriculum? [*Jewish History, Parshat Hashavua, Chumash, Mishna, the Jewish Calendar, Israel, Tefilah, Dinim/Halacha, middot/values, Hebrew reading/literacy*]
7. What Jewish skills do you want students to learn from the Jewish studies curriculum?"?
8. Which daily events take place as part of Jewish Life at your school?
9. What celebrations take place as part of Jewish Life at your school?
10. What trips take place as part of Jewish Life at your school?
11. Does your school have an Israel Education curriculum? [YES/NO]
  - a. IF YES: What elements are included in the Israel Education curriculum?
12. What percentage of students attend a gap year program in Israel following graduation? [NUMBER]
13. Does your school have a family Jewish Life education programme? [YES/NO]
  - a. IF YES: Which of the following elements are included in the family Jewish Life education programme?[SELECT FROM THE FOLLOWING] *Social action, chesed, tzedakah projects, visits to old age homes*

# APPENDIX C. SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

## Prayer

14. How often does prayer take place at your school?  
a. LIST: More than once a day, Daily, Weekly, Monthly, On Holidays
15. Which prayer services are included?  
a. LIST: Shaharit, Mincha, Other [ELABORATE]  
b. IF SECONDARY SCHOOL: Do students put on tallit and tefillin? [YES/NO]
16. Which of the following opportunities for communal prayer does the school offer? Whole school, as a year group, as a class, on Rosh Chodesh and holidays
17. Is prayer optional or compulsory? [OPTIONAL/COMPULSORY]
18. Is prayer explicitly taught as part of the educational curriculum? [YES/NO]  
a. IF YES: What prayer elements are included in this curriculum? [WRITE IN]
19. Which staff members are responsible for prayer at your school (e.g. class teachers, Jewish studies specialists, coordinator/head of Jewish studies)?
20. Who leads prayer at your school? Is it staff-led or is it student-led?  
a. Please indicate if any of the following community members are invited to join prayer at the school? Parents, rabbis, other members of the community.

## Hebrew

21. Some Jewish schools emphasize teaching Modern Hebrew (speaking and understanding conversational Hebrew), others emphasise Classical Hebrew (Hebrew for prayer or text study).

Where on this continuum would you place your school?



22. What do you prioritize when teaching modern Hebrew?  
MATRIX - SCALE, 1–5. “Not at all” to “Very much” plus “does not apply”  
Reading, Writing, Speaking, Understanding, Communicating
23. How many hours of Hebrew language instruction does your school include per week? [DROP DOWN NUMBER]
24. Which of the following informal opportunities to use Ivrit are offered at your school? Lunch time clubs, after school activities, activities led by shinshinim
25. How would you rate the average graduate’s level of proficiency in modern Hebrew from very low (1) to very high/fluent (5)?

	1 Very low	2	3	4	5	Unsure/ Does not apply
Very low	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very high/fluent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading Hebrew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening in Hebrew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking Hebrew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing in Hebrew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. How would you rate the average graduate’s level of proficiency in Classical Hebrew from very low (1) to very high/fluent (5)?

	1 Very low	2	3	4	5	Unsure/ Does not apply
Reading Hebrew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading Hebrew	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Outside Organisations

---

27. To what extent does your organisation work with the following organisations?
- MATRIX, LIST: Aish, Chabad, Chazak, Etgar, Gift, Ignite, Jewish Futures, Jigzi, JLGB (Duke of Edinburgh), JNF, JWA, Keshet UK, LSJS, Maccabi (Streetwise), ORT (Jump), Pikuach, PJ Library, Seed, Stand with Us, Tribe, UJIA, UJS, Yehudi, Jewish youth movements
  - Not at all, rarely, sometimes, frequently, very frequently
28. Are there any other organisations that you work with that are not listed here?
29. Of the organisations you listed, which three are most helpful to you, and in what ways?
30. Which, if any, unmet Jewish curriculum needs of yours are not currently supported by outside organisations?
31. What is your relationship with the local Jewish community like?  
SCALE: Very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, negative, very negative, n/a
32. What is your relationship with Rabbis at local synagogues like?  
SCALE: Very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, negative, very negative, n/a

## Parents

---

33. Roughly what proportion of parents are graduates of Jewish schools?  
More than half, about half, less than half, very few, don't know
34. Roughly what proportion of parents attended the school themselves?  
a. More than half, about half, less than half, very few, don't know

## Teachers and Staffing

---

35. How many JS teachers are currently employed at your school? [NUMBER]
36. Are there any non-teaching JS staff? (such as reading assistants, kodesh senco, etc.) [YES/NO]  
a. IF YES: How many? [NUMBER]
37. Is your lead JS teacher a member of the school's leadership team? [YES/NO]
38. What proportion of your JS teachers have been with your school for the following lengths of time:
- Two years or less
  - 3-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11+ years

## Governing Body

---

39. What proportion of your governors have been serving your school for the following lengths of time:
- Two years or less
  - 3-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11+ years?
40. Is there a JS dedicated governor [YES/NO]
41. Do your governors have any specific training re: JS? [YES/NO]

## Financial Information

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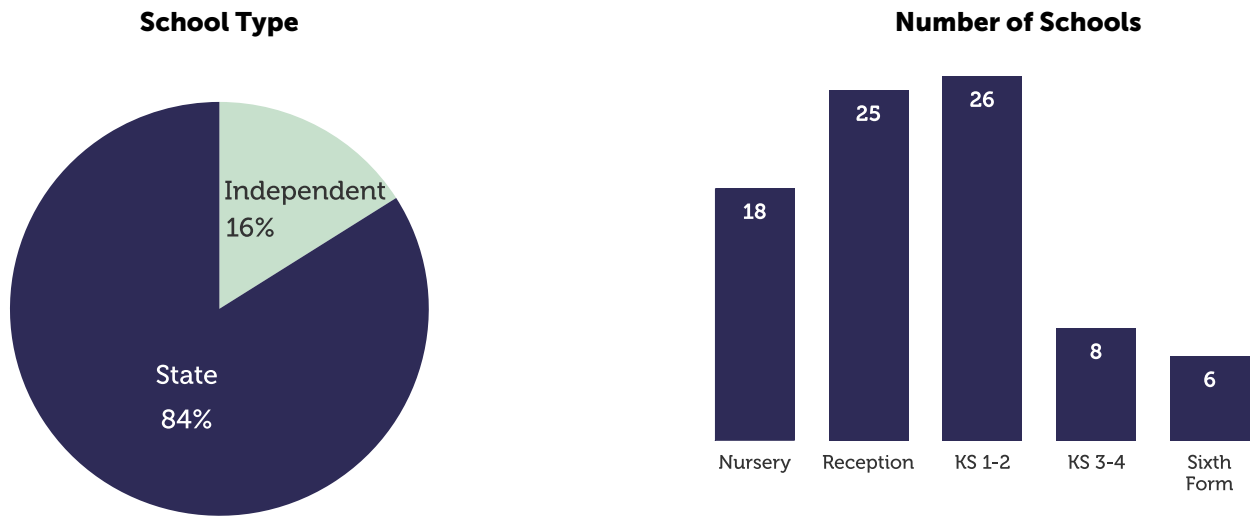
42. What sum are parents expected to contribute as an annual voluntary contribution? [NUMBER]
- What percentage of families at your school make a voluntary contribution? [NUMBER]
  - Do you currently have a financial deficit? [YES/NO]  
a. IF YES: How much is your current annual deficit?
43. Do you organise fundraising events in addition to voluntary contributions? [YES/NO] (*such as charity extra campaigns, fundraising dinners, etc.*)

# Appendix D.

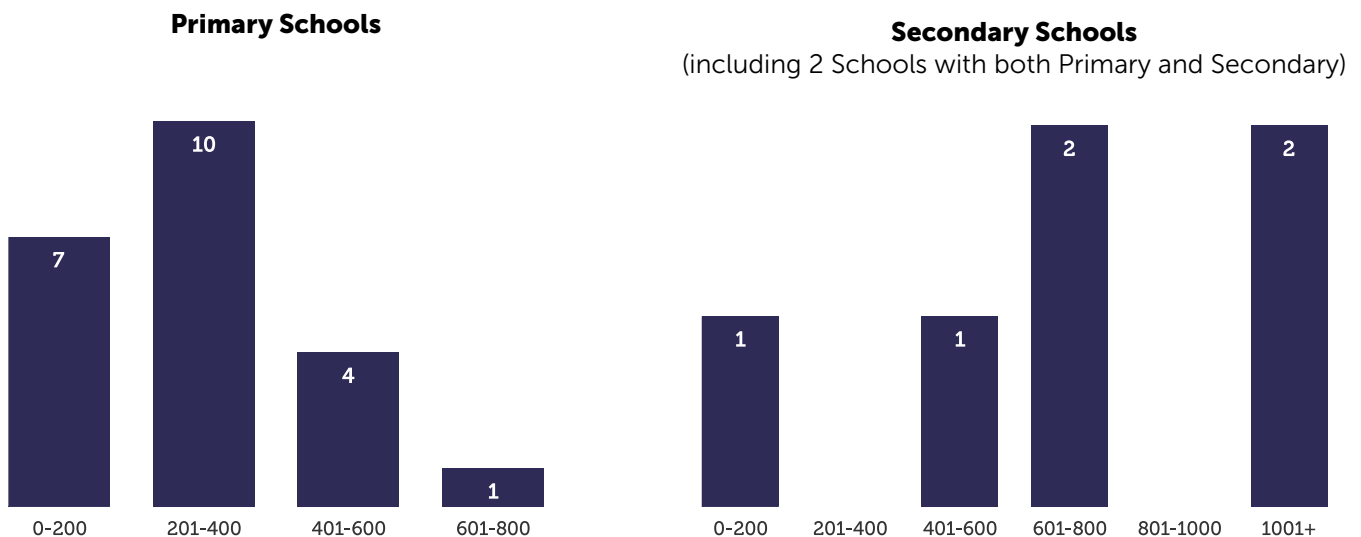
## Quantitative Data About Schools (From School Questionnaire)

### A. Mapping the Field

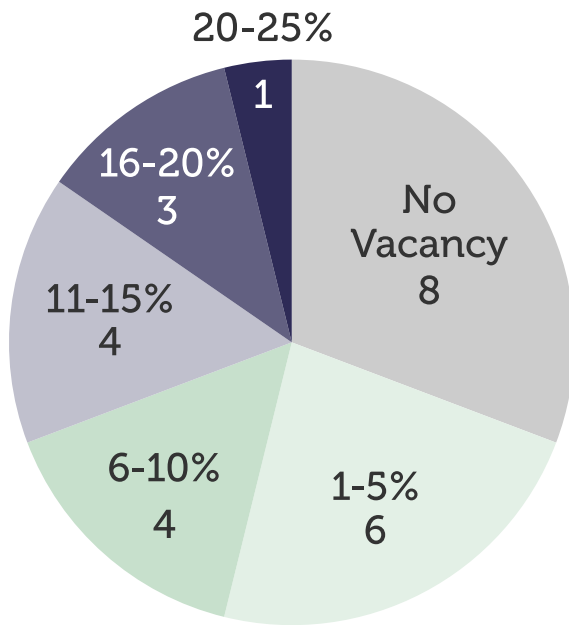
#### 1. Financial Information



#### 2. School Size



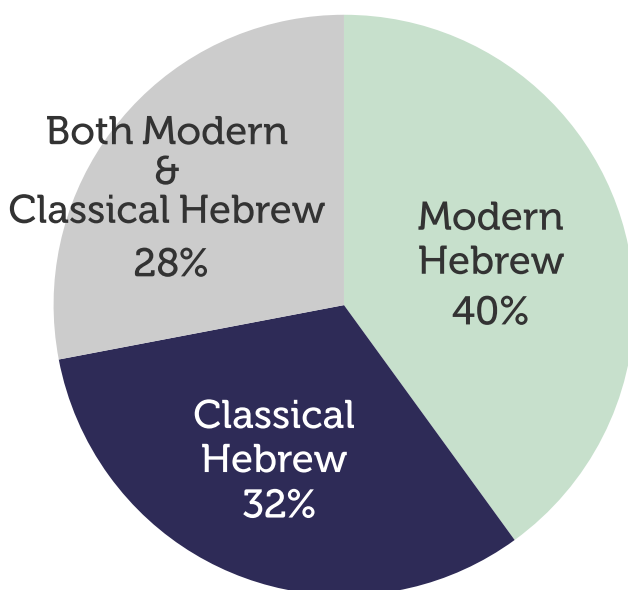
## 3. Student Vacancies (number of schools)



- **Independent schools:**  
average of 18% of PAN vacant
- **State schools:**  
average of 8% of PAN vacant
- **Provincial schools:**  
average of 3% of PAN vacant
- **North Manchester:**  
average of 15% of PAN vacant
- **London:**  
average of 11% of PAN vacant

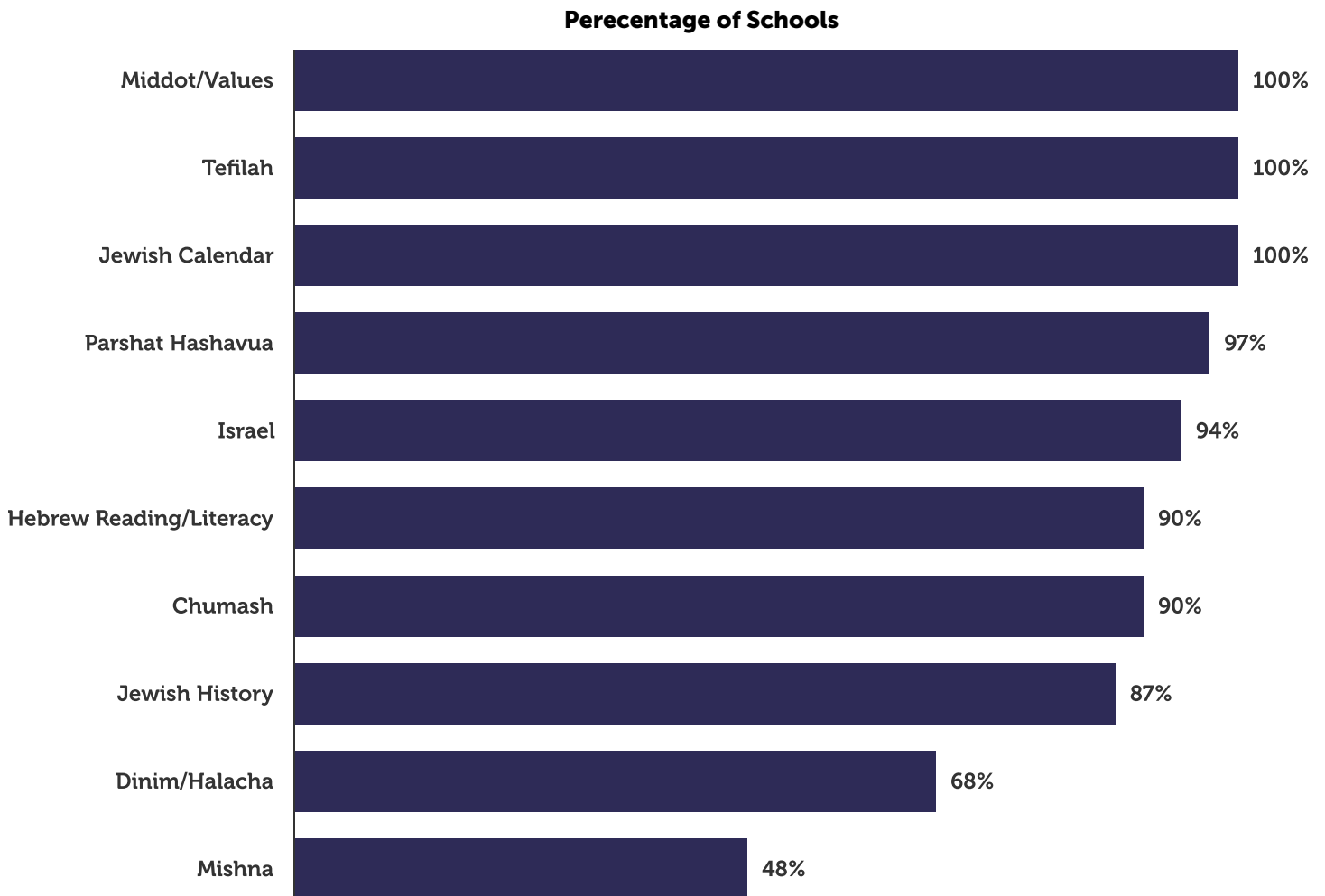
## B. Scope of Jewish Studies

### 1. Focus of Hebrew Programme (proportion of schools)



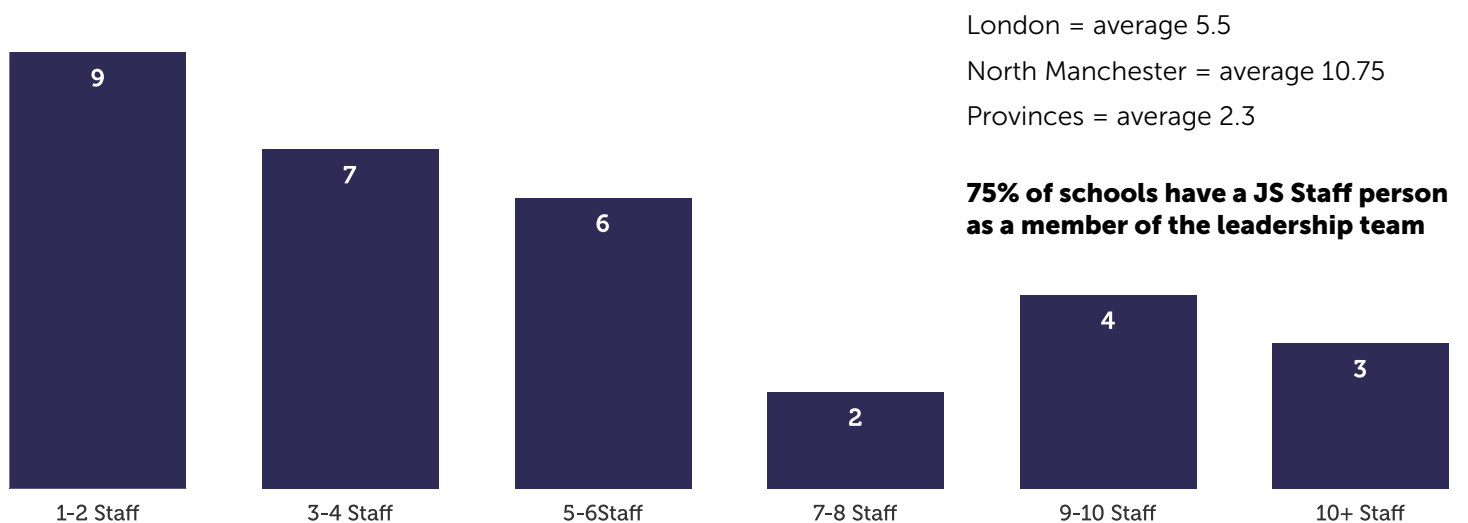
- All schools have an average of 2 hours of Hebrew instruction per week
- North Manchester schools emphasise Classical Hebrew
- Provincial Schools emphasise Modern Hebrew
- Secondary schools emphasise Modern Hebrew

## 2. Breadth of Jewish Studies Programme



## C. Jewish Studies Personnel

### 1. Extent of Jewish Studies Staff (number of schools)



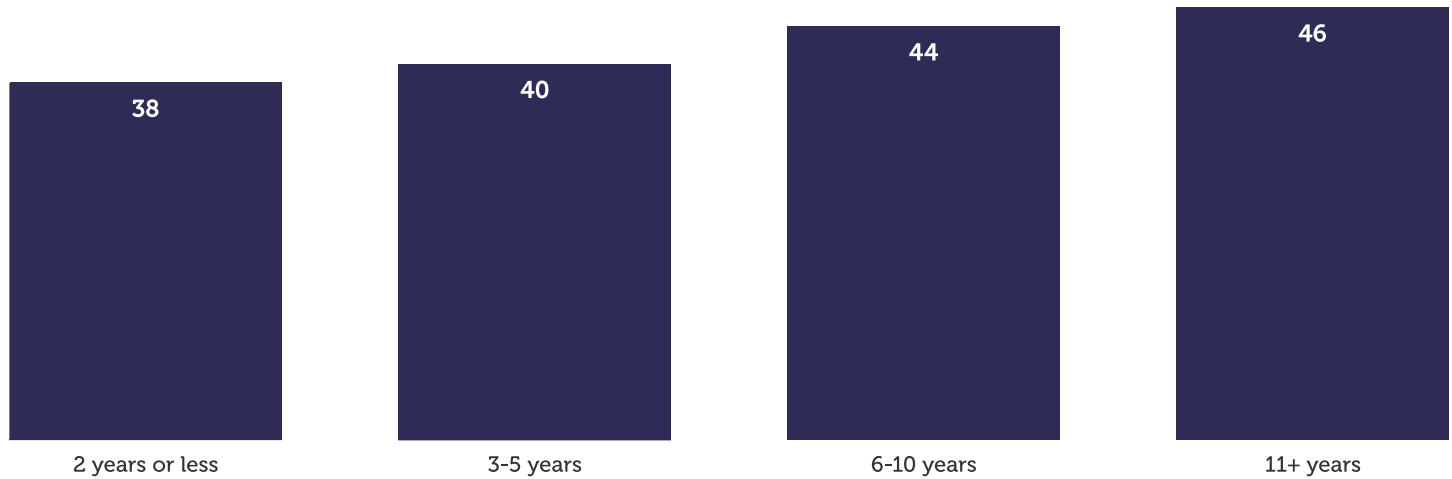


# APPENDIX D. QUANTITATIVE DATA ABOUT SCHOOLS

## 2. Length of Tenure (field wide)

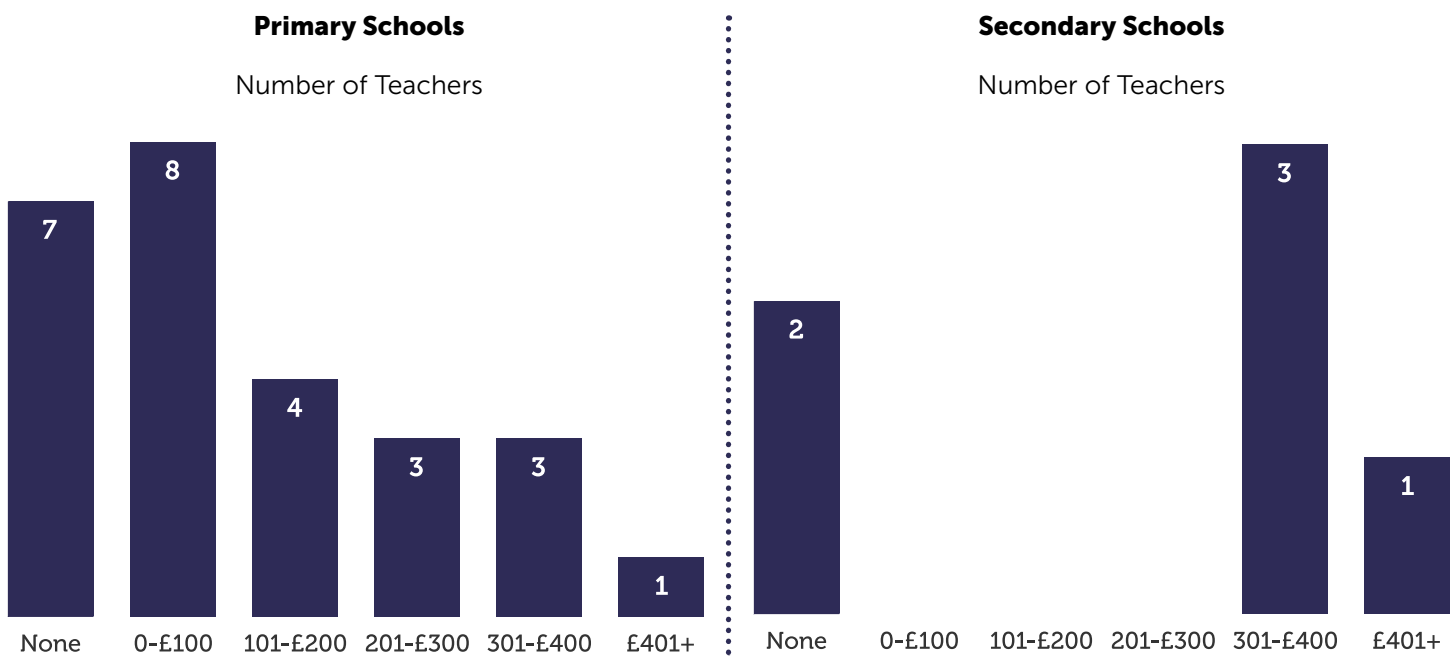
- Total: 168 JS Staff
- 75% of JS Staff in provincial schools have 11+ years of experience
- 50% independent schools have <5 years of experience

Number of Teachers



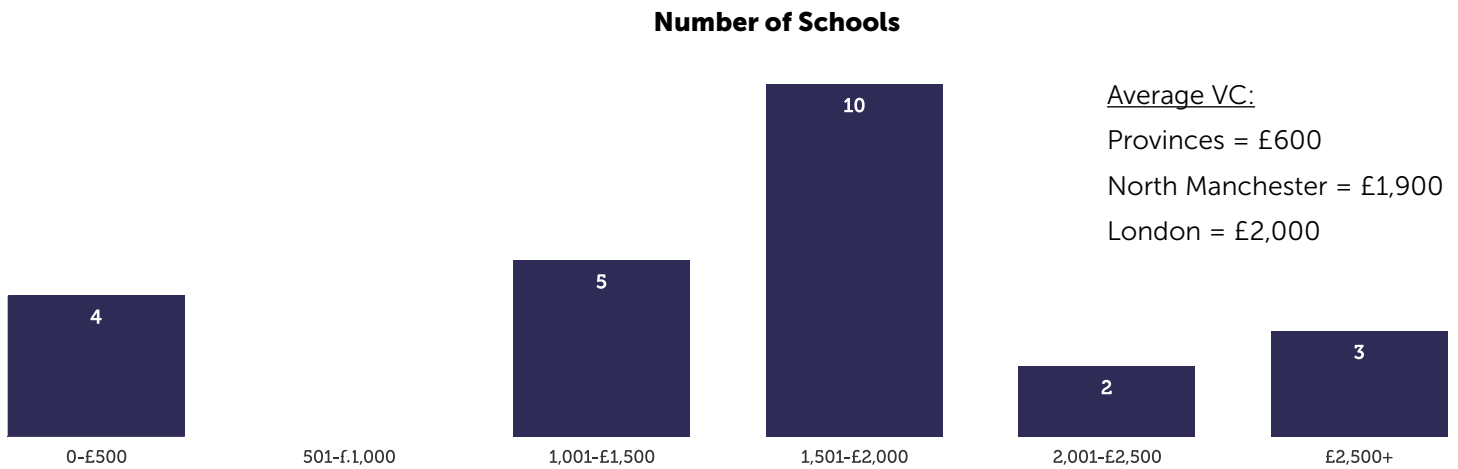
## D. Funding and Voluntary Contribution

### 1. Annual Deficit: Primary and Secondary (thousands £)



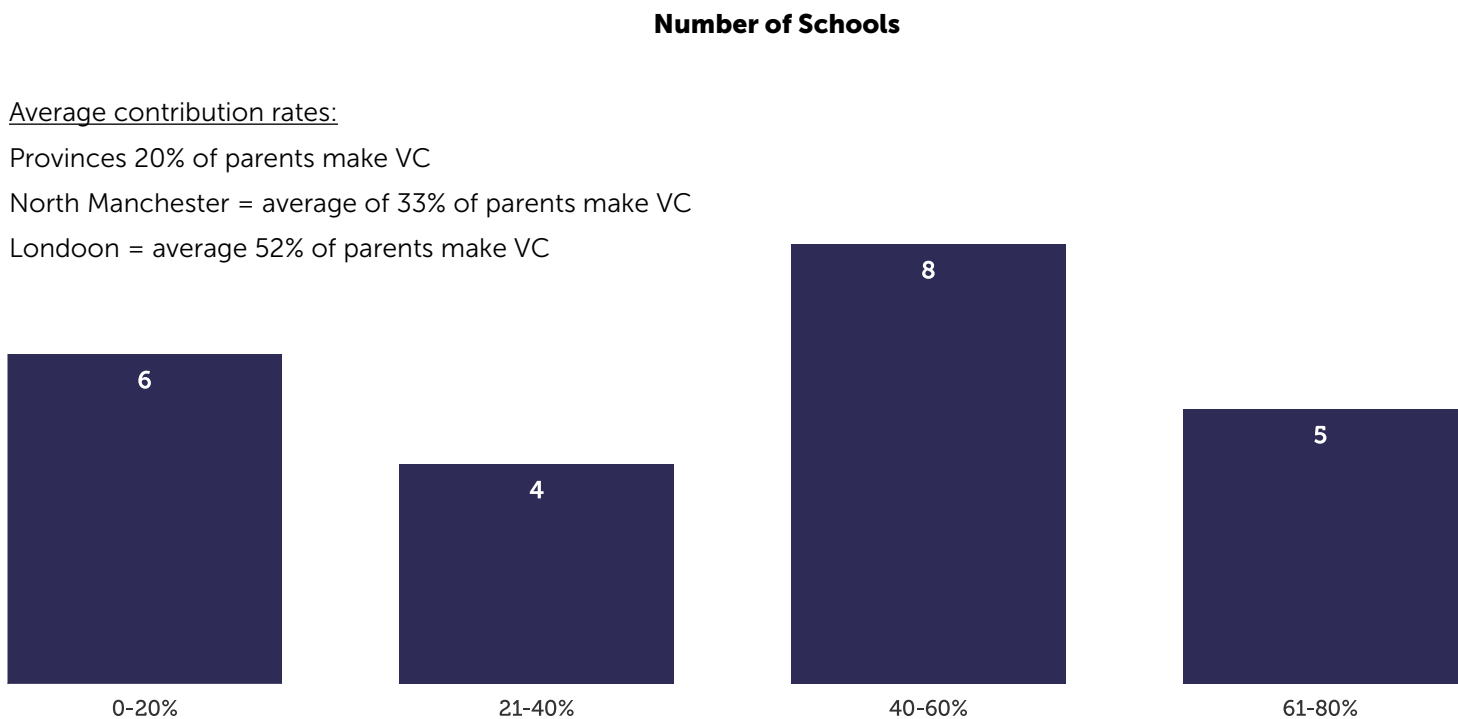
\* Excluding 1 primary school, and 1 secondary school that do have a deficit, but did not provide an amount

## 2. Voluntary Contributions: Requested VC – Annual



- \* Excluding 5 independent Schools
- \* Excluding Calderwood Lodge +1 school that did not respond

## 3. Voluntary Contributions: Proportion of Families Contributing



- \* Excluding 5 independent Schools
- \* Excluding 1 state school that does request VC but did not report an amount
- \* The highest rate was 70%

# Appendix E.

## Leadership Team Interview Guide

### Introductory Script

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Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I work with Rosov Consulting and am based in \_\_\_\_\_. As you may know, our company is working with the United Synagogue, the Office of the Chief Rabbi, PaJeS, UnitEd, and Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combatting Antisemitism to learn about the current state of UK Jewish schools, with the goal of strengthening students' Jewish experiences and identities. As part of this process, we are conducting interviews with those who know the situation best: representatives from the schools themselves. We are very grateful for your time and perspective.

Thank you also for filling out the initial survey questions we asked of you. Our team has had a chance to read your responses. Today I'll be digging a bit deeper and asking you more about your vision for the school, specifically in regard to Jewish life, and what it would take to achieve that vision. Please be assured that whatever you share with me today will not be associated with your name or any other identifying information. The interview should last approximately 60 minutes and will be recorded for later analysis. The recording will be kept private and secure.

Although I am not British, as you may have noticed, I have a general understanding of the British school system and members our team are deeply familiar with it. Of course, if you mention something with which I'm unfamiliar, I may ask you for further explanation.

Finally, please don't feel you all have to answer every question. Because we're quite short of time, if you're comfortable with how one of your colleagues has answered a question, please say, and we can move on.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

### Introductions

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2. Could you each please confirm your role in relation to [the school], how long you've been in that role, and how long overall you've been associated with [the school].
3. What would you say are the school's main goals in terms of the Jewish experiences, knowledge, and skills it wants to provide for its students?
4. In terms of achieving these goals, I'd like you to reflect on ways in which you feel the school is currently successful, as well as challenges and barriers you face.
  - a. Are you happy with what your graduates have learned and accomplished by the time they leave your school?
  - b. Are you satisfied with the kinds of institutions to which your graduates advance when they leave your school?
5. How do you measure your school's achievement of these goals?

### Jewish life and experiences

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#### General

6. Tell me a bit (more) about the ethos of your school as it relates to its Jewish components.
  - a. Probe: What particular Jewish values do you try to cultivate in students, and what are the main ways in which you try to do so?
  - b. What are the main obstacles, whether internal or external to the school, to accomplishing these aspirations?
7. Tell me about what Jewish curricula and experiences look like at your school.
  - a. In what ways does it "feel" like you're in a Jewish school at [school]?

[Probe for: What does one see, hear, etc. that conveys it is a Jewish school? E.g. Hebrew signage; Israeli flags; etc.]

## Tefillah/Davening

8. How positive an experience is school tefillah for your students? What do you think are the main influences on the students' experience, whether internal or external to the school?
9. What are the challenges toward teaching/implementing prayer at your school?

## Ivrit

In your questionnaire, you indicated that the school prioritizes [insert from questionnaire answers: reading; recitation; comprehension; etc.]

10. Regarding Hebrew for prayer/text study: How satisfied are you about your offerings?
  - a. Probe: *If satisfied. "What are the main reasons for your satisfaction?"*
  - b. Probe: *If unsatisfied: "What are the main contributors to your sense of dissatisfaction?"*
11. What about modern Israeli Hebrew for communication: How satisfied are you with your offerings?
  - a. Probe: *If satisfied. "Many schools are dissatisfied with what their Ivrit offerings. I'd love to hear more about what contributes to your satisfaction?"*
  - b. Probe: *If unsatisfied: "What are the main contributors to your sense of dissatisfaction?"*

## Outside organisations

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12. Tell me more about your relationships with outside organisations like \_\_\_\_\_ that you've indicated work with your school to support the Jewish experiences you offer.
  - a. Why have you chosen to work specifically with these organisations? (e.g. curriculum support, PSHE requirements)
  - b. Which of these organisations are most helpful to you, and in what ways?
  - c. What forms of support are most valuable to your school?
  - d. What gaps do these organisations fill?
13. We'd like to learn more about your relationship with three organisations:  
(a) The United Synagogue; (b) The Office of the Chief Rabbi, and (c) PaJeS
  - a. *What is the role of these organisations vis-à-vis your school? How do they currently support your school?*
  - b. *What else could they offer to your school?*
14. What is the school's relationship with local Jewish community?
15. What is the school's relationship with local rabbis like? [*Probe for: positive and negative aspects; in what ways could they be more helpful.*]

## Parents

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16. Specifically, regarding Jewish education and experiences, what are some of the central things that parents express they want and need from the school? What are some of the key complaints you are hearing?
17. Where there is a discrepancy between the school's ethos, and the Jewish commitment of families, how do you address it?

## Staffing

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18. To what extent do staff align with/support the school's Jewish ethos?
19. What has your experience been with recruiting qualified teachers? What have proven to be your most effective channels for recruitment, both in respect to JS teachers and chol/secular teachers?
20. What ideas do you have for attracting higher numbers of qualified Jewish studies teachers?
21. What CPD do your kodesh/JS staff access? How do you determine the focus? How effective do you think it is?

## Vision and Needs for Jewish life

22. Considering all we have just talked about; I'd like you to think about your vision for what Jewish life at the school could be with the proper support. What are the key components of that vision?
23. What kinds of changes and resources would be necessary to get to that place?
  - a. What changes are necessary across the broader community? In your school?
24. What is the biggest challenge you face, in terms of delivering a Jewish education?
  - a. *Probe: Are there challenges or obstacles that conflict with the Jewish ethos of your school?*
25. Are there any other key challenges your school faces that we haven't discussed here?
26. What are your biggest financial challenges?
  - a. Do you find that you have to cut back on any programs or services at your school?
27. What other feedback/ideas do you think will be helpful for us to keep in mind as we continue this study?

## Specific questions for London

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What, if any, opportunities or challenges do you see as associated with being a London area school, in respect to anything we discussed above?

## Specific questions for Provinces

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What, if any, opportunities or challenges do you see as associated with being a Jewish school in this area of the country, in respect to anything we discussed above?

## Concluding Remarks

Thank you very much for your time and your willingness to share these insights with our team. As we've reached the end of the interview, **would you be willing to share your name (and school) with the partner organisations leading this research project?** Identifying information about you or your school would still not appear on any published materials. This identification would be for internal purposes only, among these organisations, for their own reference, or to follow up with you individually in a future conversation.

Office of The  
CHIEF RABBI



PaJeS  
Supporting Jewish Schools

UnitEd

