

Record numbers attending Jewish faith schools as Orthodox numbers grow

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Almost two-thirds of Jewish children in Britain attend Jewish faith schools, the majority of which are "strictly Orthodox", according to new research.

A [report](#) published by the Board of Deputies and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research found that Jewish pupils are disproportionately more likely to attend a faith school than non-Jewish children.

63% of Jewish schoolchildren attend a faith school, compared to one in four of all children in the UK.

The Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies Gillian Merron [said](#) the growth in Jewish schools was "huge".

The report, 'The rise and rise of Jewish schools in the United Kingdom', found that "Both the number of Jewish schools and the number of Jewish pupils in these schools have almost doubled since the mid-1990s."

Despite a "declining Jewish population" in the UK between the 1950s and the present day, the percentage of Jewish parents sending their children to a Jewish faith school has dramatically increased, the research found.

"Whereas one in five children attended Jewish schools in the 1970s, today the proportion is about two-thirds," the report notes.

Among the most striking of the research's findings was the dominance of ultra-Orthodox schools. Many more Jewish children are enrolled in "strictly Orthodox" than what the authors call "mainstream" Jewish faith schools.

"Of the 30,900 Jewish children enrolled in Jewish schools across the United Kingdom in the academic year 2014/15, 13,400 were in mainstream Jewish schools and 17,500 were in strictly Orthodox Jewish schools," the report found.

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish schools overwhelmingly outnumber "mainstream" schools, with 97 "strictly Orthodox" schools compared with 42 "mainstream" ones.

The report also noted that "as children age in the strictly Orthodox sector, they become increasingly unlikely to be found within the registered school system."

"About half of strictly Orthodox boys aged 11-15 years do not appear in the strictly Orthodox school system," the research found.

The authors of the report also warned that "there is little discussion about the effects of the concurrent decline in the number of Jews in non-Jewish schools".

The Board of Deputies had been lobbying the Government to remove the 50% faith-based admissions cap on new faith academies for some time.

When Government plans to remove the cap were announced Vice President of the Board of Deputies, Sheila Gewolb, [said](#): "We have been advocating for this for some time ... We look forward to working with the Government to enable more Jewish free schools to open and developing more effective means of their contributing to community cohesion."

NSS campaigns director Stephen Evans said, "It is worrying to see segregation on such a large scale of Jewish children away from children of other backgrounds. It is very hard to see how this helps to build an integrated and cohesive society. If as a society we are to break down the barriers that too often divide us, children need more contact with their peers from other backgrounds, not more division."

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