

**REVIEW OF PIKUACH  
FOR THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS**

**(ABRIDGED SUMMARY FOR ONWARD DISTRIBUTION)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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**JUNE 2014**

## Executive Summary

Pikuach has been established for 18 years and over that time it has successfully completed 138 school inspections. There are currently 49 Jewish state aided schools including Free, Academy and Voluntary Aided schools; Pikuach is servicing the majority of these which straddle the breadth of the religious spectrum. 17 new schools have opened up or become voluntary aided since Pikuach started, thus requiring inspection.

Pikuach is the only inspection service that is accredited by the DfE to undertake inspections at Jewish schools, and as a result there is a good working relationship and contacts with DfE and Ofsted.

The framework used for the Inspections closely follows the Ofsted one and this has raised reservations from some of the stakeholders as there are no agreed standards of Jewish Education across the Jewish community by which to provide comparative data, yet this closeness is welcomed by others who feel that it adds to the credibility of the inspections.

Pikuach operates on a total budget of approximately £39,000 per annum, with an expected shortfall in funding this year of nearly £23,000. The Board of Deputies now funds Pikuach as UJIA are no longer able to support this programme. This level of funding is insufficient for its needs and the resources allocated to Pikuach including to the professional, administrative and management staffing need to be reviewed with new blood being brought in to reinvigorate the process.

Pikuach is largely meeting the objectives that it originally set itself but that consideration should be given to adapting them for the changed landscape that now exists.

The current training of Sikh inspectors alongside the Jewish trainees has been very well received; it is encouraging to see an increasing number of current teaching staff training to be inspectors.

Pikuach needs to ensure it is sufficiently able to meet the differing needs of schools at both ends of the religious spectrum, or it is at risk that some schools will choose to opt out of using it.

Better use of current technology would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

Use of the Jewish Press and social media should be used to increase awareness amongst the parental body which might also lead to interest from potential funders.

Reinstating the advisory/consultancy service would be welcomed by schools.

Addressing the issues highlighted as part of this review will allow Pikuach to be fit for purpose for the next generation and a secure financial footing.

## Recommendations

### Management of Pikuach

1. Re-establish a Management Board that can challenge current thinking and provide ongoing strategic direction to ensure the inspection service is fit for purpose going forwards. This needs to contain a range of engaged and interested lay individuals. Specific new tasks for this committee would include:
  - a. Development of a complaints/recourse process
  - b. Sub group to review what core areas can be established and agreed as key criteria by which each school can be assessed thereby leading to improved standards of Jewish education in our schools
  - c. Re-establish an added value consultancy/advisory service
2. Succession Planning - this needs immediate focus to secure the right individual(s) to take over the Chair's role and a plan in place to succeed the Co-ordinator on her retirement. As part of this all processes and contacts must be written down and kept centrally at the BoD, to ensure a smooth handover but also to act as a reference point in case of any unforeseen, emergency situation.
3. Recruitment strategy and application process for new inspectors needs overhauling with new criteria and new documentation. It should operate in a professional manner with selection decisions being made directly by the Advisory or Management Board.
4. The Board of Deputies should use its connections with the Jewish Press and other media to create some regular positive news stories about Pikuach aimed at increasing awareness of its inspection service and its impact on the Jewish education in our schools. The target audience is the parent body and potential funders as much as it is the other key stakeholders.
5. Devise a strategy (and follow through) for dealing with outside inspectors ensuring they accurately represent their position as non-accredited individuals and preventing them from guising as Pikuach. The good brand of Pikuach is being undermined by these activities and this review has uncovered confusion amongst some Governors and Headteachers (and no doubt parents) who thought that their inspection had been done by Pikuach, when this was not the case.
6. It is important that Pikuach remains an Independent organisation and although should stay part of the Board of Deputies, there are advantages for it to establish as much independence as possible so that all religious denominations feel they can subscribe to its inspection service. (Independent includes the organisation not being aligned to any religious body as well as Inspectors not being seen to promote a certain way of doing things nor particular commercial products such as Jewish Interactive.)

### Funding

This review has highlighted that Pikuach is underfunded which is impacting on its ability to make changes to its service offering, its professionalism and it is over – reliant on individuals goodwill. It is important that the Board of Deputies explores all opportunities to secure new sources of funding by not only adding value to the basic service but also to look to increase the annual budget.

## Administrative and Professional Resources

1. Inject new blood into the Inspectors by:
  - a. Retiring the inspectors (and readers) who have been out of the teaching environment for more than 5-10 years and are too far removed from current teaching practices
  - b. Any inspector who has not been part of an inspection team for 3 years should be asked to step down as an inspector
  - c. Continue to encourage current teaching staff across the religious spectrum to train as inspectors
2. Review the need for both an administrator and a co-ordinator. It may be possible to amalgamate these roles into one suitably trained and experienced individual who was employed as a part time (3 days a week) permanent member of the Board of Deputies.
3. Make better use of current technologies by:
  - a. Creating an online shared area for all current documentation, training manuals, school inspection reports, advisory board minutes etc. so that each stakeholder can access what they need in a timely and convenient manner
  - b. Establish a single email address for all communication to ensure that the recipients don't overlook any time critical emails(suggest Pikuach@BoD.org.uk or name@Pikuach.uk)
  - c. Enable all inspectors to attend training by using video conferencing/Skype from a 'northern' hub (possibly a school or UJIA's Manchester office).
4. Improvement to the Training programme:

Comprehensive and professional training needs to be given to all key stakeholders, this includes the trainees and in life inspectors but also to the schools and their Governors so they know what to expect.

### Specifically for trainees:

- a. Consider changing the timings of the trainee sessions to fewer longer days to assist those travelling from further afield
  - b. The training must follow a prescribed format that is communicated in advance (including to those who need to complete their training from previous years).
  - c. Learning objectives, training manuals, feedback loops and the process for assessment markings all need to be reviewed, updated and clearly communicated.
  - d. Set up a follow up session for each group of trainees so that they can 'meet' as a group again post the training
5. Set up a feedback process after each inspection to assess stakeholder satisfaction