

Government to investigate Islamic school which banned socialising with 'outsiders'

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The DfE has written to the National Secular Society confirming that it will be "looking into" the NSS' concerns over why an Islamic school that banned its pupils from socialising with 'outsiders' was rated "good".

The Islamic Institute for Education in Dewsbury was found by [Sky News](#) to be banning students from socialising with "outsiders" and teaching pupils not to watch TV, read newspapers or listen to the radio.

Despite this the school was rated "good" by Ofsted in 2011. "The Islamic Institute of Education provides a good quality of education and meets its stated aims very well," its report said.

The National Secular Society [wrote](#) to the Department for Education and Ofsted calling for a new inspection as a matter of urgency, and asking whether the school met the previous standards at the time of the inspection.

In a letter sent to Schools Minister Nick Gibb at the end of July, the NSS wrote that while "the most recent inspection report from 2011 predates the 2014 revision of the regulations" and the new emphasis on "British values", the Society has "serious doubts as to whether the school met the standards in operation at the time of its previous inspection."

In response to our letter Lord Nash, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, said that the Department would be "looking into this particular case to ensure compliance with the relevant regulatory standards."

The NSS is still waiting to hear back from Ofsted in response to our serious concerns that the Institute of Islamic Education was not up to the standard of the old inspection guidance, despite being rated as 'good'.

Stephen Evans, National Secular Society campaigns manager, said: "We're pleased to see the DfE are looking into this. It seems extraordinary that the school should have been rated 'good' and then deteriorated during the period of the Government stressing 'British values'. The alternative explanation is that the school was never up to standard, raising serious questions about the 2011 Ofsted inspection."

Lord Nash said that the "government places the utmost importance on tackling extremism and remains vigilant of extremism in schools."

"Independent schools were not assessed on their promotion of British values when the Institute of Islamic Education was last inspected. Inspection standards have since changed, however, and there is now a tougher inspection framework in place reflecting the new standards. This includes an emphasis on fundamental British values."

Mr Evans added, "Our concern is not only that the school is failing to meet the current standards, but that the school did not meet the standards in place at the time of the previous inspection."

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