Deadline approaches for changes at Al-Madinah school

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The Al-Madinah free school in Derby will be told this week that it must replace its board of governors or have its state funding removed.

Britain's first Muslim free school has been in this news this year after complaints from non-Muslim staff that they were forced to wear hijabs and after an Ofsted inspection that found it "dysfunctional". There have also been suggestions of financial irregularities in the school.

The Education Secretary Michael Gove is expected to take a hard line on the school, making an example of it to save himself further embarrassment as the first of his free schools fails.

A senior Whitehall source told *The Sunday Times*: "The board will be told by the Department for Education [DfE] this week that they either all step down or have their funding withdrawn. It will be a showdown".

The school had been ordered by the Government to meet as list of demands for improvement by 1 November. It is thought it failed to meet all the requirements by the deadline. Chair of the trustees Shazia Parveen has already stepped down.

It is thought a completely separate organisation could take over the running of the school, after accusations of extremism and over-emphasis on religion were made.

The Sunday Times reported that earlier this month, a group of parents with children at the school wrote to ministers requesting that changes to the leadership team should "reflect the theological views of the majority of the local Muslim community". It is understood that about 30 children have left since the affair broke.

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