

Education secretary to cut public funding to nurseries promoting 'extremist views' – including creationism

Posted: Fri, 8th Aug 2014

The Government has announced plans to cut public funding to nurseries that teach creationism as scientific fact or fail to promote 'British values', Education Secretary Nicky Morgan has announced.

Toddlers will be expected to be taught "fundamental British values in an age-appropriate way" and nurseries that do not "support this aim" will not receive public money, Ms Morgan announced.

The promotion of 'British values' will be added to the early years curriculum in England, which sets out the statutory standards that all early years providers must meet.

Nurseries that teach creationism "as scientific fact" will also be ineligible for taxpayer funding under the new rules – but a government source has said: "We are absolutely not saying, 'You can't teach Bible stories'."

The move will bring nurseries in line with publicly funded schools which are not permitted to teach creationism and intelligent design as science.

Ofsted, the education watchdog, will use the new guidelines in its inspections of nurseries. A consultation will take place in September and the education secretary hopes the rules will come into force in the New Year.

In a speech outlining the proposals, Nicky Morgan said: "There can be no place for extremist views anywhere in the education system. The changes we are making today will ensure that all early years providers and schools are aligned with the need to protect children from views that are considered extreme."

Writing on the National Secular Society website [earlier this year](#), Jenna Scaramanga, a campaigner against fundamentalism in schools, urged the Government to cut funding to 'creationist nurseries' after the British Humanist Association (BHA) identified 67 'nurseries of concern' that were either creationist or had associations with extremist religious groups.

A [report commissioned by former education secretary](#) Michael Gove in April to investigate claims of a plot to takeover state schools in Birmingham uncovered evidence of "co-ordinated, deliberate and sustained action to introduce an intolerant and aggressive Islamist ethos into some schools.

Stephen Evans, campaigns manager at the National Secular Society, said: "The Government has a duty to protect children and young people from harm, including exposure to intolerant or extremist views. A child's rights to receive a sound education is paramount so it is right to ensure that public money is not used to support early years providers that in any way undermines children's education or increases the potential for radicalisation of young people.

"However, it's not at all clear how a clear distinction can be drawn in nurseries between creationism being taught as a religious story and it being taught as "scientific fact", particularly as there no

formal science classes."

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