

Ofsted: curriculum at Jewish school restricted pupils' development

Posted: Fri, 18th May 2018

An independent faith school in north London is facing deregistration and may close after inspectors said it was reducing its secular curriculum and not preparing students for life in modern Britain.

Getters Talmud Torah is an independent orthodox Jewish boys' school in Stamford Hill. Open six days a week, it teaches a secular curriculum for "at least an hour a day", with all other teaching time devoted to faith education.

According to the [latest report](#) published by Ofsted, "Pupils' personal development is restricted by the narrow curriculum" and "They do not learn enough about culture, belief and lifestyles beyond their own community." The report found that the school's secular curriculum had been reduced with the agreement of parents, despite inspectors noting that the school did not have a legal basis to do so. This included aspects specifically required by the [Independent School Standards](#).

While the report found pupils learned about the importance of contributing to their own community, it said they were not prepared to participate in wider society and were "inadequately prepared for their future lives in modern Britain".

In March the National Secular Society [reported](#) that Charedi rabbis from across the country met in Nottingham in an attempt to agree a common front against requirements to teach respect and tolerance under equality law.

Education and schools officer Alastair Lichten said reports that "nearly all parents" had insisted inspectors not speak to their child or ask them any questions were "disturbing".

"In oversight of independent faith schools a balance has to be struck between the freedom of those who have opted out of the state system and protecting children's rights. Where there are failings in safeguarding putting children's welfare at risk, where equality law is being breached and where children are being taught a narrow curriculum preparing them not for life in modern Britain, but only for membership in a religious community, the Department for Education must act.

"In this school significant inadequacies have been identified across multiple inspections since it opened, culminating in this latest report. It's right that Ofsted attempts to work constructively with schools to address shortcomings, but a decade of failure has let children down.

"Independent faith schools need to be held accountable, which is why we supported the introduction of new independent school standards in 2014/15."

Last year analysis by *Schools Week* [showed](#) that Ofsted had repeatedly failed dozens of independent faith schools since the standards were introduced. Recently published letters have [revealed](#) that the DfE warned 23 independent faith schools they were failing to meet the standards expected of them between September and November 2017.

The DfE is currently [consulting](#) on a new policy statement on regulatory and enforcement action taken by the department for independent schools not meeting those standards.

Share your story

Secularism isn't just about moral or theoretical arguments, it's about people's real lives. Telling your story can help our campaigns and others in similar situations.

- [Share your story](#)
- [Need advice?](#)

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Faith schools](#)

Related Campaigns

-

[**No more faith schools**](#)

We need inclusive schools free from religious discrimination, privilege or control.

[Read More](#)

Related Articles

[**NSS announces major conference on protecting liberal values**](#)

Kenan Malik, Joan Smith and more speaking at NSS Secularism 2024 conference in London. [Read More »](#)

[**Allowing more religious selection in schools would be a big mistake**](#)

Abandoning the 50% admission cap would exacerbate the discrimination, disadvantage and division inherent with faith schools, argues Stephen Evans. [Read More »](#)

NSS joins open letter against faith school discrimination

Education experts, politicians, religious leaders and public figures unite to call on Education Secretary to keep the faith school admissions cap. [Read More »](#)

Faith school found inadequate for ten years fails inspection again

Jewish school where teachers slapped children criticised for poor secular education in latest inspection. [Read More »](#)

NSS urges PM to retain cap on faith-based admissions

Supporters of inclusive schools encouraged to tell MPs to protect the 50% cap. [Read More »](#)