

Government threatens Jewish schools' "purity", rabbi claims

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A rabbi has called on Orthodox Jewish schools to resist requirements to teach evolution and about non-traditional relationships in the latest sign of defiance of the government and inspectors.

In an [article](#) published on EverywhereK, Mordechai Rose said the government and Ofsted threatened the "survival and purity" of Orthodox Jewish schools.

Mr Rose is an orthodox rabbi [affiliated](#) with Chinuch UK, a pressure group which opposes secular influence in Orthodox Jewish faith schools.

In the article he described evolution as "the scientific theory of creation" and criticised rules which prevent creationism being presented as fact, as well as "seemingly perverse alternative relationships". He also expressed opposition to plans to [make](#) relationships and sex education (RSE) compulsory in all English schools from 2020.

"The government is about to introduce obligatory relationship education which would force Jewish schools to teach about same-sex relationships and other immoral subjects which are totally unacceptable for our community", he said.

Rose said it was "self-evident that Charedi schools will find it impossible to fulfil the requirements of the new proposed RSE legislation". A government consultation on relationships and sex education is due to close on 7 November.

Rose criticised measures to give pupils "contact with other communities and other faiths" and prepare them "for a lifestyle where men and women mix and intermingle". He claimed this showed "how the government's new legislation discriminates particularly against our schools since we wish to keep ourselves separate from the non-Jewish way of life".

In the final line of the article he wrote: "It is time for strong and united action in order to protect ourselves from these threats to the survival and purity of our schools."

He noted that 19 Charedi Jewish schools could be under threat of closure in the coming year after Ofsted rated them inadequate over their failure to prepare children for life in modern Britain.

The article quoted Ofsted reports at length, apparently critically, including when leaders and staff were criticised for restricting "pupils' access to any information that they perceive to be in conflict with the school's faith teachings". Another report he cited noted that school leaders had arranged for textbooks and other resources to be censored before pupils used them.

The independent school standards were strengthened in 2014, with National Secular Society support. Rose opposes proposals which would allow failing schools to be closed quicker if they fail to make improvements.

The article is the latest sign that Orthodox Jewish groups are prepared to resist even relatively modest requirements to provide a secular education. In June almost 7,000 Charedi Jews [gathered](#)

for a demonstration of concern against the government and Ofsted.

Alastair Lichten, the NSS's education and schools officer, said the government should "hold all schools to consistent standards regardless of religion".

"The promotion of strict gender roles and creationism, and the shielding of young people from knowledge about different faiths and beliefs, relationships and lifestyles, undermines their education and leaves them hopelessly unprepared for life in modern Britain. This is why the government and Ofsted must ignore religious groups' pleading for special treatment and exemptions from equality law.

"Rabbi Rose's eleven-page screed actually does a pretty good job of documenting the shocking failings of many Orthodox Jewish faith schools. He just doesn't see these as problems and would rather they weren't pointed out. At the heart of this is a view which completely neglects the rights of children and regards schools as places to mould young people into specific and narrow religious roles."

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