

Islamic school that refused entry to inspector warned by DfE

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An independent Islamic faith school has been warned by the government after it refused entry to a school inspector and was rated 'inadequate' by education watchdog Ofsted.

Rashid Raja, headteacher of Islamic Preparatory School Wolverhampton, refused to allow lead inspector Tim Hill onto the premises on the second day of the school's Ofsted inspection in February.

In its inspection [report](#), Ofsted called the incident "unacceptable" and said it had reported it to the Department for Education (DfE).

Refusing entrance to school inspectors contravenes Section 110 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, which provides inspectors with the right of entry to any school to carry out a lawful inspection.

In a [warning notice](#) issued to the school in April and published on the DfE website last week, the DfE said obstructing an inspector is a "criminal offence".

Ofsted criticised the headteacher for his "weak" understanding of safeguarding procedures and said his checks on the quality of teaching which are "not effective enough".

Inspectors found "several hazards" in the school, including an unlocked cupboard in the girls' toilets containing "flammable and hazardous materials accessible to young children" and a fire door opening onto a "small enclosed area".

The designated safeguarding lead was not able to satisfactorily explain the number of attempted log-ins to "inappropriate website content" on school computers.

Islamic Preparatory School Wolverhampton is part of the registered charity [Wolverhampton Mosque Trust](#) and shares the same site as Wolverhampton Central Mosque. It also [failed](#) its inspection in May 2017.

National Secular Society head of education Alastair Lichten said: "This is not the first time we have seen school authorities working to prevent Ofsted inspectors carrying out lawful investigations, assessing children's welfare and educational provision.

"This must always be seen as a serious red flag. When inspectors are prevented from assessing compliance with independent school standards then such standards can be assumed to be breached. Schools cannot be allowed to isolate pupils and evade oversight."

In recent months Ofsted reports have [revealed](#) that parents have withdrawn permission for children to speak to inspectors at several Charedi Jewish schools.

In a letter to independent school heads earlier this year the government said inspectors must be able to speak to pupils.

The DfE published warning notices which it had sent to 19 independent schools last week. Islamic Preparatory School Wolverhampton was one of four Islamic schools while two were Jewish, one Catholic and one Seventh Day Adventist.

Among them were an Islamic and a Jewish school which [segregate](#) children by gender and a Jewish school which encourages girls to enter "caring professions".

Weaknesses in safeguarding were among the failings at all four of the other schools.

The other Islamic schools were [Al-Mahad-Al-Islami](#), an all-girls school in Croydon in south London, and [Paradise Primary School](#) in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.

The Catholic school was [St Pius X Preparatory School](#) in Preston in Lancashire. The Seventh Day Adventist school was [Stanborough Secondary School](#) in Watford in Hertfordshire.

Schools that receive warnings must improve within a specified period or they will be removed from the independent schools register.

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