

# Islamic school segregates and treats girls unfavourably, says Ofsted

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An independent Islamic school in Birmingham is segregating children by sex and treating girls unfavourably more than two years after the practice was ruled unlawful, inspectors have found.

In a [report](#) published this week Ofsted found that Redstone Educational Academy was unlawfully segregating boys and girls by sex for all school activities, except for weekly assemblies.

In 2017 the Court of Appeal [ruled](#) that segregating children by sex within an individual school was unlawful. But Redstone is one of several independent faith schools which have been found doing so in recent months.

Redstone's report found it 'inadequate' in all areas and also found pupils were not safe or being sufficiently prepared for life in modern Britain.

It said boys at the school were "treated favourably", "have more privileges" than girls and "enjoy school more than girls". Its evidence included that:

- A group of pupils told inspectors a member of staff, who has since left the school, had told them university was not for females.
- Boys had more opportunities to play sport than girls and were allowed to choose work experience placements first – a policy which some girls complained about.
- Boys had more opportunities to join after school clubs than girls.
- School trips were organised separately for boys and girls, with boys treated preferentially.

It said the school's leaders had recently applied to open a separate girls' school on the same premises, to stay within the law, but had been unsuccessful. They had no new plans to address the segregation issue.

The report said all pupils studied Islamic studies and learnt "a little about other faiths but not enough to prepare them well for life in modern Britain".

It added that the quality of education was inadequate and said: "Pupils say that they feel safe in school, but they are not."

**National Secular Society campaigns officer Megan Manson said: "It's shocking that this level of sexist discrimination exists in a UK school.**

**"Such harmful attitudes towards male and female pupils are rooted in archaic notions of gender roles promoted by religious ideology.**

**"Nothing can justify treating girls and boys unequally and depriving children of the knowledge and skills they need for life in modern British society. Faith schools mustn't be allowed to use religion as an excuse to flout standards that all schools must follow."**

**Other independent faith schools still sex segregating**

- In recent months Ofsted has found at least two other independent Islamic schools, both in Lancashire, still segregating children by sex: [Markazul Uloom in Blackburn](#) and [Rochdale Islamic Academy](#).
- The government [issued warning notices](#) to two independent faith schools – one Islamic and one Jewish – which were segregating boys and girls last year.

## Notes

- Redstone's report was based on an inspection held on 12-14 November 2019.
- The school's headmaster told [The Telegraph](#) that the school had no intention of defying the law "if it turns out that our application for a separate girls' school is formally refused". He also questioned Ofsted's findings.

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