

Jewish school stocked sexist texts and limits curriculum, Ofsted says

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An Orthodox Jewish school stocked texts which said women are "guards" to their families' wellbeing rather than "workers" and is failing to provide an adequate secular curriculum, inspectors have said.

An [Ofsted report](#) on Lubavitch Senior Boys' School, an independent school in north London, found that children couldn't cite texts they had read other than through religious studies.

In the report, which was published on Wednesday, the school was told it was failing to meet the independent school standards for at least the third time since 2018.

The report said texts found in the school's main room, among religious textbooks, talked about how to "manage" women and did not teach "respect for women".

It also said the school was devoting "insufficient time" to its secular curriculum and cited failings in its safeguarding procedures.

Key findings in report

The Ofsted report, which came after inspectors visited the school in December, also found:

- The school devoted "limited time" to English and reading.
- Pupils were unable to provide any written evidence of their English work that term or to cite any texts that they had read "other than through their Kodesh [Jewish religious] studies".
- Teachers effectively censored age-appropriate textbooks by selecting "subject matter that they feel reflects their Jewish beliefs", meaning pupils did not have access to many of the school's new textbooks.
- The school provided no evidence of "a wider curriculum, including trips or activities to support pupils' social and cultural development".
- There were failings relating to the school's safeguarding procedures and records, and leaders could not explain how to refer concerns to the authorities.

In response, National Secular Society spokesperson Megan Manson said: "This is a clear example of a school prioritising religious inculcation over the education and welfare of its pupils.

"By failing to ensure appropriate textbooks are used, and stocking texts promoting sexist messages, the school is depriving children of their right to an education that adequately prepares them for life in 21st century UK.

"The Department for Education must make clear that religion is never an excuse to ignore children's fundamental right to a broad and balanced education. And when schools are repeatedly failing to address concerns, ministers must be prepared to take all steps necessary to protect children's interests."

Lubavitch's history

- Lubavitch Senior Boys' School opened in London E5 (in the borough of Hackney) in January 2017. It is now registered to admit up to 40 boys between the ages of 11 and 13. All its pupils are from Orthodox Jewish backgrounds.
- Ofsted [found](#) the school 'inadequate' during its first inspection in June 2018, leading the Department for Education to [issue](#) it with a warning notice in November 2018. Inspectors cited concerns about safeguarding, pupil welfare and the school's curriculum.
- Ofsted found the school had not addressed all the concerns highlighted during a further visit in April 2019. Inspectors also visited in August 2019, when they said the school was "likely to meet" a limited set of standards if it moved premises and brought in a new head.
- At the latest inspection the school had moved to London NW11 (the Golders Green area). Inspectors criticised the school for failing to update its address on important documents.

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