

Independent Jewish school fails fifth Ofsted inspection in a row

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An Orthodox Jewish school has been found in breach of the independent school standards for the fifth time in a row after inspectors criticised its curriculum and safety checks.

In a [report](#) published on Tuesday, the education watchdog Ofsted said Wiznitz Cheder School in north London had failed to meet all the standards checked in an inspection in January.

Inspectors' criticisms of the school, which is attended by children aged from three to 13, included that:

- Its leaders refused to make pupils aware of sexual orientation and gender reassignment in Year 7, arguing that doing so would go against "the school's Orthodox Jewish ethos".? Inspectors noted that the school's personal, social and health education programme is delivered through its religious studies curriculum.
- Shower and toilet facilities were unclean, a medical room was cluttered and portable electrical devices which had not been safety checked by a qualified professional for years.
- Vetting checks on staff were not recorded appropriately.

Wiznitz Cheder failed a full Ofsted inspection in June 2018, when inspectors [said](#) they had only been able to speak to three pupils as parents and carers of other children had withdrawn consent.

At that time Ofsted also said the school's "narrow curriculum" and "very limited schemes of work" meant pupils were "ill-prepared for life in British society". Additionally, leaders failed to "encourage respect or appreciation of a range of cultures other than their own".

In 2019 the school [failed](#) two further inspections designed to monitor its progress. Ofsted also identified unmet standards during an inspection in 2016.

National Secular Society spokesperson Megan Manson said: "The repeated failings at Wiznitz Cheder School are a reminder that some religious groups who run schools are stubbornly refusing to abide by reasonable standards.

"And when PSHE is delivered via religious studies, children are frequently taught distorted views about society and relationships. Schools may omit vital information entirely if it doesn't fall in line with religious teachings.

"Ofsted and the government mustn't allow schools to undermine children's fundamental rights in the name of promoting their religious ethos."

The NSS campaigns for [independent schools](#) to be held to consistent standards regardless of their religious outlook.

The society has also previously highlighted concerns that schools [distort](#) teaching about relationships and sex when they teach about them through a religious lens.

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