

Ofsted: Jewish school teaching creationism and censoring resources

Posted: Mon, 9th Mar 2020

An independent Jewish school is teaching creationism as science and refusing to enter pupils for GCSEs because leaders are not allowed to censor papers, according to a damning Ofsted report.

An inspection report found Bnois Jerusalem Girls School in Hackney in north London 'inadequate' in all areas. The school caters for 840 pupils and had recently been warned by the government over a litany of failures.

The [report](#), which follows a visit to the school in December and was published today, says the school is teaching creationism in Geography and Science. It adds that "pupils do not learn anything about the scientific theories about the origins of life".

It also says the school does not enter pupils for GCSEs because exam regulations don't allow leaders to censor papers, severely limiting pupils' options for post-16 study.

The report adds that the school:

- is censoring fiction books and text, photographs and illustrations in Geography text books, while not stocking English language books in its library;
- has limited the scope of its curriculum to "make it fit with Orthodox Jewish teaching";
- is leaving children unprepared for life in Britain and lacking confidence in English.

It also says the school did not allow inspectors to talk to pupils during its latest inspection, apparently at the request of parents. As a result inspectors were unable to judge whether the school safeguarded children effectively.

The school was [given a warning notice](#) by the government in 2018 after Ofsted criticised it for preventing pupils from gaining GCSEs, censoring resources and other failures. It also failed to meet standards which were checked at an additional inspection in March 2019.

In response to the latest report, National Secular Society spokesperson Megan Manson said: "This is a particularly appalling example of a school prioritising religious teachings over pupils' education and welfare.

"Teaching creationism as science, censoring resources, and depriving children of the chance to gain qualifications and even communicate in English is utterly inexcusable. Fundamentalist religious zealotry should never be allowed to run roughshod over children's basic rights in this manner."

The NSS is now planning to raise the case with the Department for Education.

Creationism in independent schools

- The independent school standards [allow](#) schools to teach creationism "as part of a belief system" but not to present it "as having a similar or superior evidence base to scientific

theories".

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