

# Faith school cancels children's author talk over 'witchcraft' fears

Posted: Mon, 23rd May 2022

A faith school has reportedly cancelled a visit from a children's author because it feared his books would 'promote witchcraft'.

Andy Sagar said on [Twitter](#) on Friday that his first school event in London had been called off because the school "didn't want to be seen to be 'promoting witchcraft'".

Sagar's debut children's book '[Yesterday Crumb and the Storm in a Teacup](#)' (pictured) was published in March and features a magical teashop run by a witch. Last month the Sunday Times [named](#) the novel Children's Book of the Week.

The Sun [reported](#) that the school in question is a faith school.

Sagar, who previously worked as a teaching assistant in a primary school, is pursuing a PhD on the role of law in historical witch-hunts, which inspired his fiction.

Just this March, Southwark Diocese [forced](#) two Catholic schools to cancel a talk by children's author Simon James Green because his books feature gay characters.

## GP Taylor: 'The need for secularisation'

Several Twitter users responded to Sagar's tweet with their own experiences of books featuring witches being banned in UK schools.

Fellow children's author and ordained Anglican vicar GP Taylor [said](#) his [books](#), which feature magic but are inspired by Christianity, had been locked in the safe of one school after an evangelical parent complained they were "evil".

He said: "As a Christian heavily influenced by paganism I was very shocked that a number of schools excluded my books from their libraries as they had pagan content".

He added that these schools were usually 'church schools' and said this indicated the need to secularise the school system.

Twitter user Jacqueline Harris said at her first teaching practice she experienced a similar issue when the school decided to ban all books with mention of witches.

She said: "They had trouble when they found the maths scheme had counting cauldrons and witches hats!"

## NSS comments

NSS head of policy and research Megan Manson said: "Schools banning children's authors because of concerns their fantasy books promote witchcraft shows that deference to religious taboos is getting out of control in our education system."

"We are particularly concerned that the religious institutions behind faith schools may put school leaders under pressure to reject texts, however innocuous, that could be perceived to contravene the ethos of the school.

"The Department for Education needs to show some leadership and support schools to expose children to a wide variety of books without fear of religious censorship.

"These incidents also show increasingly incongruity of state-funded faith schools in modern British society."

[Discuss on Facebook](#)

## Share your story

Secularism isn't just about moral or theoretical arguments, it's about people's real lives. Telling your story can help our campaigns and others in similar situations.

- [Share your story](#)
- [Need advice?](#)
  
- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Faith schools](#), [Free speech](#)

## Related Campaigns

•

### [\*\*No more faith schools\*\*](#)

We need inclusive schools free from religious discrimination, privilege or control.

[Read More](#)

•

### [\*\*Protect freedom of expression\*\*](#)

We promote free speech as a positive value.

[Read More](#)

## Related Articles

### [NSS announces major conference on protecting liberal values](#)

Kenan Malik, Joan Smith and more speaking at NSS Secularism 2024 conference in London. [Read More »](#)

### [Faith schools should not impose hijab on girls, report says](#)

Report also recommends government resist 'Islamophobia' definitions that inhibit criticism of religious practices [Read More »](#)

### [Established church hinders religious freedom, NSS tells UN expert](#)

The NSS has told a UN expert that lack of separation between Church and state is undermining freedom of religion or belief in the UK. [Read More »](#)

### [Ep 55: Pastafarianism and the meaning of 'religion'](#)

A spoof religion devised to mock creationism has attracted a global following. But what does 'religion' mean anyway?... [Read More »](#)

### [Election 2019: Where do the major parties stand on secularist issues?](#)

*Megan Manson studies the election manifestos for the main UK-wide parties – and says religion will continue...* [Read More »](#)