



# THE TROJAN HORSE REPORTS: AN OVERVIEW OF EQUALITY ISSUES

A BRAP BRIEFING PAPER

June 2014



# FOREWORD

This paper does two things:

- it summarises the key equality issues arising from inspections and reviews of various Birmingham schools
- it outlines some of our own thoughts about what these findings mean

People come at the Trojan horse debate from a variety of perspectives. What you think about it will depend on how you answer particular questions. At what point does something become a 'plot'? What constitutes the inappropriate promotion of religion in schools? What's the difference between poor governance and a systemic unwillingness to tackle bad practice?

We can't answer those questions for you. What this paper does is set out the evidence – such as it exists – that relate to these questions. Then it's up to you.

There are three broad sets of reports to look at:

- findings from the Education Funding Agency
- Ofsted's Advice Note
- Ofsted's inspection reports

We've provided one- or two-page summaries of each one in sections 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Section 4 outlines some of our thoughts. Let us know what you think (our contact details are at the end of the paper).

## 1 EDUCATION FUNDING AGENCY REPORTS

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) manages the funding used to support all state-provided education. Following Ofsted inspections in March 2014 (see below) the Department of Education asked the EFA to visit schools managed by two academy trusts:

- Park View Educational Trust
- Oldknow Academy Trust

The purpose of the visits was to review governance and management standards. The academies all had particular funding requirements and the EFA used these visits to determine whether these requirements were being met.

Below are brief summaries of the EFA's findings, focusing on equalities issues.

FUNDING REQUIREMENT AREA	EDUCATION FUNDING AGENCY KEY FINDINGS
<b>PARK VIEW EDUCATIONAL TRUST</b>	
<p><b>Promotion of community cohesion and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the EFA found there is insufficient evidence that the Trust is promoting community cohesion as required by the funding agreement. In addition the agency found that in Park View School:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a daily act of Islamic worship is offered. Posters on the wall in most classrooms advertise the virtues of prayer and promote Friday prayers. There were posters in some classrooms which encouraged pupils to begin and end each lesson with a short prayer (the agency reported that ‘teachers said it was the pupils’ decision whether they wanted to read the prayers or not’)</li> <li>- staff said that the call to prayer was broadcast on loud speakers across the school</li> <li>- a senior member of staff expressed the view that some members of staff had taken the Islamic focus too far by, for example, introducing a Madrassa curriculum in Personal Development an external speaker, Sheikh Shady Al-Suleiman, known to extol extremist views (e.g. stoning of adulterers) had been invited to address students</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Compliance with Equality Act 2010</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in addition to seeing lessons where boys and girls were mixed, the EFA also observed gender segregation in some classes at Park View School and Golden Hillock School. This was often with boys sitting toward the front of the class and girls at the back or around the sides</li> </ul>
<p><b>Curriculum content is broad and balanced</b></p>	<p>The EFA claim that in Park View School schemes of work for PSHE, biology, and sex and relationship education have been restricted to comply with a conservative Islamic teaching. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in Biology, GCSE year 11, discussion with pupils indicated that the teacher had briefly delivered the theory of evolution to comply with the syllabus, but had told students that ‘This is not what we believe’</li> <li>• pupils had been told to read textbook material relating to reproduction at home on their own. Topics such as body structure, function and the menstrual cycle were not covered in class</li> <li>• students allegedly claimed that, as Muslims, they were not allowed to study matters such as reproduction with the opposite sex</li> </ul> <p>The EFA also claim that in Nansen Primary School aesthetic and creative education is limited</p>

FUNDING REQUIREMENT AREA	EDUCATION FUNDING AGENCY KEY FINDINGS
<b>Collective worship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the EFA claim that worship of an Islamic character has been introduced at all schools in the Trust</li> </ul>
<b>OLDKNOW ACADEMY TRUST</b>	
<b>Promotion of community cohesion and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the EFA found there is 'some' evidence that the Trust is promoting community cohesion as required by the funding agreement. For example, the school held a Christmas lunch and organised a trip to a local synagogue in connection with an RE Judaism module</li> <li>however, teachers reportedly claimed that much positive work had been phased out over the preceding 12 months and the school had become 'increasingly Islamic'. Examples cited by the EFA include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>during the summer of 2013, teachers were rehearsing a play with pupils. The pupils reportedly said they weren't allowed to sing because it was Ramadan. The teachers felt the children had been put under pressure as they'd always used music in the past</li> <li>during assemblies, a teacher reportedly made statements such as "Jesus wasn't born in Bethlehem, was he?" The children were expected to reply "No". "We don't celebrate Christmas do we?" To which they again replied "No"</li> <li>a teacher sitting in on a music lesson reportedly covered his ears all the way through. Staff claimed the same teacher told a Muslim member of staff she wasn't sufficiently covered up</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Compliance with Equality Act 2010</b>	<p>In relation to this the EFA found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a trip to Saudi Arabia excluded non-Muslim pupils</li> <li>whilst children sat on mixed-work tables in 'almost all' observed classes, the EFA did see one class, other than PE lessons, in which boys were sitting at the front and girls were sitting at the back</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum content is broad and balanced</b>	<p>In relation to this the EFA found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 6 pupils didn't have RE in their timetable</li> <li>PSHE is not currently taught nor is regard given to sex and relationships education</li> <li>fewer enrichment and extra-curricular activities are available now than there were a year ago. For example, one child stated that there used to be an after school art club, but this had been stopped</li> </ul>

FUNDING REQUIREMENT AREA	EDUCATION FUNDING AGENCY KEY FINDINGS
<b>Collective worship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teachers claimed that only Muslim staff led Friday assemblies. Children reported that assemblies covering other faiths also took place in addition to Islamic assemblies</li> <li>in separate interviews staff claimed that during the Friday assembly inappropriate words such as 'white prostitute' were used</li> </ul>

Each of the trusts have issued responses to the Education Funding Agency reports where they respond point by point to these allegations. To give you a flavour:

- Park View Educational Trust claim the Principal of the Park View School met with Mr Al- Suleiman in advance and informed him that the school is not a faith school and his audience would consist of children of different faiths. The trust claim Mr Al-Suleiman's short talk was focused on the promotion of positive values such as time management, self-study, and taking responsibility for ones' actions. It goes on to say that whilst there is no formal vetting policy in place, the school had established that Mr Al-Suleiman had visited the UK over 25 times in the previous 10 years to deliver talks and education courses.
- Oldknow Academy Trust claim it's 'completely inaccurate' to suggest a teacher covered his ears during a music lesson and that it's completely untrue' that a staff member was told to cover up. The trust also claim the word 'prostitute' was used once by an ex- employee but in an entirely 'non-offensive' context and that no member of staff has ever used the term 'white women were prostitutes'

You can read the full Park View Educational Trust report [here](#)<sup>1</sup> and the Oldknow Academy response [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## 2 OFSTED ADVICE NOTE

Ofsted carried out 21 inspections in Birmingham between March and May 2014. Fifteen of these schools were inspected at the request of the Department for Education. Six were inspected because of Ofsted's concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding and leadership and management in these schools. In addition to producing reports on individual schools, Ofsted also produced an advice note that drew together evidence from all the inspections and meetings with other stakeholders.

Below is a summary of the key findings.

<sup>1</sup>[www.parkview.bham.sch.uk/ckeditor\\_image/14%2006%2012%20EFA%20and%20PVET%20responses.pdf](http://www.parkview.bham.sch.uk/ckeditor_image/14%2006%2012%20EFA%20and%20PVET%20responses.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.oldknowacademy.co.uk/spice/fckimage/Sunday%20Times%20response.pdf](http://www.oldknowacademy.co.uk/spice/fckimage/Sunday%20Times%20response.pdf)

HEADLINE	EVIDENCE
<p><b>Some head teachers reported that there has been an organised campaign to target certain schools in Birmingham in order to alter their character and ethos</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted claim ‘several’ headteachers reported they’d come under concerted pressure from governing bodies to organise the school in line with the personal views of governors. These headteachers suggested a ‘faith-based ideology’ was being promoted through</li> <li>• things like curriculum changes and manipulation of staff appointments</li> <li>• it’s alleged these governors would work ‘within the rules’ but still cause disruption to decision-making (by filibustering, for example, or leaving meetings early to make them inquorate)</li> <li>• Ofsted found that schools were in different positions in relation to this</li> </ul>
<p><b>A culture of fear and intimidation has developed in some of the schools since their previous inspection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some headteachers claimed they had been marginalised or forced from their jobs. Ofsted claims some staff felt ‘intimidated’, ‘undermined’ and ‘bullied’ by governors. In one instance, for example, a school leader was so worried about speaking to Ofsted a meeting was arranged in a supermarket car park</li> <li>• as a result, it is claimed, some schools previously judged to be good or outstanding have experienced high levels of staff turbulence, low staff morale and a rapid decline in their overall effectiveness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Birmingham City Council has failed to support a number of schools in their efforts to keep pupils safe from the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism. It has not dealt adequately with complaints from headteachers about the conduct of governors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted claim a number of school leaders said that the council hadn’t supported their efforts to keep pupils safe from the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism. Ofsted inspectors found that in some schools efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of extremism were ‘very limited’</li> <li>• Ofsted claim headteachers have ‘consistently’ complained about some of the issues above, but the council hasn’t kept adequate records</li> </ul>
<p><b>A number of academies have breached funding agreements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted claim ‘a number’ of the academies inspected are in breach of their funding agreements by not, for example, providing a broad and balanced curriculum or adequately promoting community cohesion</li> </ul>

HEADLINE	EVIDENCE
<p><b>In several of the schools inspected, children are being badly prepared for life in modern Britain</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by this Ofsted mean, firstly, that in some schools pupils' experiences are being restricted. For example, one school had separate faith- based singing clubs. In another, music had been removed from the curriculum and pupils had few opportunities to study different European languages other than English</li> <li>• second, Ofsted is concerned that boys and girls aren't being treated equally. For example, in one school, some members of staff actively discouraged girls from speaking to boys and from taking part in extra- curricular visits and activities. In this school, boys and girls were also taught separately in religious education and personal development lessons</li> <li>• third, Ofsted found that in some schools religious education curriculum is now being taught in a way that isolates the pupils from a fuller understanding of different religious and cultural traditions</li> </ul>

### 3 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

Ofsted inspected 21 schools in Birmingham. Out of these five were placed in special measures:

- Park View School
- Nansen Primary School
- Golden Hillock Academy
- Oldknow Academy
- Saltley School & Specialist Science College

It has been noted in the press that two of the schools now in special measures – Park View and Oldknow Academies – were previously graded 'outstanding'. All the schools were graded 'inadequate' with regards to 'Behaviour and Safety of Pupils' and 'Leadership and Management', as the table below shows:



<b>PARK VIEW ACADEMY (Park View Educational Trust Ltd)</b>					
Date of inspection	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of Teaching	Behaviour & Safety of Pupils	Leadership & Management
<b>2012</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>2014</b>	Inadequate	Good	Good	Inadequate	Inadequate

<b>NANSEN ACADEMY (Park View Educational Trust Ltd)</b>					
Date of inspection	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of Teaching	Behaviour & Safety of Pupils	Leadership & Management
<b>2010</b> (different inspection regime)	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Good
<b>2014</b>	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Inadequate

<b>GOLDEN HILLOCK ACADEMY (Park View Educational Trust Ltd (PVET))</b>					
Date of inspection	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of Teaching	Behaviour & Safety of Pupils	Leadership & Management
<b>2013</b>	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>2014</b>	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate

<b>OLDKNOW ACADEMY (OLDKNOW ACADEMY TRUST)</b>					
Date of inspection	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of Teaching	Behaviour & Safety of Pupils	Leadership & Management
<b>2013</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>2014</b>	Inadequate	Outstanding	Outstanding	Inadequate	Inadequate

<b>SALTLEY SCHOOL &amp; SPECIALIST SCIENCE COLLEGE</b>					
Date of inspection	Overall effectiveness	Achievement of pupils	Quality of Teaching	Behaviour & Safety of Pupils	Leadership & Management
<b>2013 (May)</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
An additional monitoring inspection was carried out in November 2013 following concerns about the leadership and management at the school. The inspector's letter concluded: <i>"Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the dysfunctional relationship between the governors and the head teacher is damaging the school's capacity to improve."</i>					
<b>2014</b>	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate

Here's a summary of the key reasons the schools were placed in special measures (focusing in particular on the equalities aspects).

<b>'SPECIAL MEASURES' KEY FINDINGS</b>	
<b>Park View School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the academy's work to raise students' awareness of the risks of extremism is inadequate. External speakers have not been vetted properly. For example, those who speak to students as part of a programme of Islamic-themed assemblies</li> <li>• students are not taught how to use the internet safely. They are not taught sex and relationships education effectively. They are not suitably supported in understanding how to protect themselves from all types of bullying</li> <li>• equality of opportunity is not promoted well (eg few students with special educational needs become prefects because many struggle to complete the written application form and no help is given to them)</li> <li>• there are few opportunities for students to learn about different types of beliefs and cultures in the older year groups. Students are not taught citizenship well enough or prepared properly for life in a diverse and multi-cultural society</li> <li>• a significant number of staff reported to inspectors that they have no confidence in either senior leaders or governors. Staff believe that governors involve themselves inappropriately in the running of the academy</li> <li>• some staff feel intimidated and are fearful of speaking out against changes.</li> <li>• the academy has not ensured that recruitment practices when appointing or promoting staff are fair and transparent</li> <li>• governors have failed to ensure that safeguarding requirements and other statutory duties are met</li> </ul>

<b>'SPECIAL MEASURES' KEY FINDINGS</b>	
<b>Nansen Primary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governance, safety, pupils' cultural development, equal opportunities and the teaching of religious education are all inadequate</li> <li>• the governing body and senior leaders do not adopt effective strategies that develop pupils' awareness of the risks of extremism or radicalisation</li> <li>• leaders do not sufficiently develop pupils' understanding of the different customs, traditions or religions that exist in Britain. This does not prepare pupils adequately for life in modern Britain</li> <li>• pupils are not taught how to deal with different types of bullying</li> <li>• the governing body does not give leaders and teachers reasonable scope to exercise fully their day-to-day management responsibilities (eg governors insisted on vetting the script for the school's nativity play and told staff 'they must not use a doll as the baby Jesus'). Many staff are fearful of losing their jobs if they challenge the governing body's decisions</li> <li>• teachers and support staff are not given a fair chance to apply for jobs within the academy</li> <li>• pupils do not get a broad education. The governing body has removed some subjects, such as music, from the timetable</li> <li>• pupils have limited knowledge of religious beliefs other than Islam</li> </ul>
<b>Golden Hillock School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the academy's work to keep students safe is inadequate. Too little is done to keep students safe from the risks associated with extremist views (eg the academy has been slow to engage with local and national initiatives such as the 'Prevent' programme. Staff have only very recently been trained in recognising signs of radicalisation and extremism and how to tailor their teaching to counter this)</li> <li>• some staff, including senior leaders, are concerned about a perceived unfairness and lack of transparency in the recruitment process and the breadth and balance of the curriculum.</li> <li>• some female members of staff complained that at times they are spoken to in a manner which they find intimidating</li> <li>• the equalities policy is not fit for purpose</li> <li>• senior and middle leaders do not adequately monitor the progress of specific groups of students in each year group to inform their planning and actions</li> <li>• the curriculum has weaknesses (eg sex and relationships education has not been delivered through a carefully planned curriculum)</li> <li>• achievement is inadequate because students make too little progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 in English and mathematics</li> <li>• teaching is inadequate. Teachers make little use of assessment information to plan lessons</li> </ul>

‘SPECIAL MEASURES’ KEY FINDINGS	
<b>Oldknow Academy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership and management are inadequate. The chair and other governors exert too much control over operational matters in the academy</li> <li>• governors do not meet their statutory responsibilities to safeguard pupils because they have not taken steps to protect them from the risks of radicalisation and extremism</li> <li>• a small group of governors is making significant changes to the ethos and culture of the academy without full consultation. They are endeavouring to promote a particular and narrow faith-based ideology in what is a maintained and non-faith academy</li> <li>• many members of staff are afraid to speak out against the changes taking place in the academy</li> <li>• the academy is not adequately ensuring that pupils have opportunities to learn about faith in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural and religious traditions. Behaviour and safety are inadequate because pupils and staff are not equipped well enough to deal with the risk of extreme or intolerant views</li> <li>• academy leaders and governors have not made sure that pupils are always safe on trips</li> </ul>
<b>Saltley School And Specialist Science College</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• groups of staff believe some members of the senior leadership team do not treat everyone equally. Governors have failed to ensure that equality issues are dealt with quickly and openly (eg the equality policy is out of date. Although a new policy was written, the governing body has insisted it is not circulated. Some members of staff said they are treated unequally because of their beliefs, religion or background)</li> <li>• the governing body has spent the school budget unwisely</li> <li>• students’ overall achievement is inadequate, particularly in mathematics</li> </ul>

## 4 OUR THOUGHTS

What are we to make of all this? We first wrote about the so-called Trojan horse plot in March 2014<sup>3</sup>. In that paper, we talked about the need for a discussion of how we place equality at the heart of education. We also said this wasn’t an issue relevant only to one type of school or one particular community. ‘The voiceless,’ we argued, ‘are exploited across a wide spectrum of society and across a range of schools’. Bearing this in mind, these are some of our reflections on education, governance, and equality.

Firstly we need to talk seriously about what we should be teaching in schools. Most young people today will grow up to live in a plural society where difference will be the norm.

However, findings from the recent British Social Attitudes Survey show 1 in 4 people born after 1980 admit to having some level of racial prejudice. We could relay similar statistics

<sup>3</sup> [www.brap.org.uk/about-us/blog/489-the-plot-thickens-rights-and-religion](http://www.brap.org.uk/about-us/blog/489-the-plot-thickens-rights-and-religion)

relating to homophobia and sexism. It's important we impart young people with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate tomorrow's world. Partly, this will require teaching them about different faiths and ideas. Partly, it will mean creating a space so students can explore key equality issues, like:

- how human rights protect individual (and group) freedoms
- the responsibilities we have to other people
- the responsibilities we have to larger society
- how we can manage conflicts when individual rights and/or people's wants collide

Secondly, too often, we frame the debate about children's education by talking about parents' rights and creating a dialogue with parents. Fine, this has its place<sup>4</sup>. But clearly, the focus of all our actions should be the rights of the child and this includes their right to an education which allows them to participate in a modern society. Historically, it has been hard to strike the right balance between parents' and children's rights – particularly when issues of cultural or religious entitlement are concerned. But it's the responsibility of adults to prepare young people for the future – not to make them live the future we would like.

Parents, governors, and teachers (from all backgrounds) need to engage in more open and critical discussions about cultural or religious values and practices.

Finally, to ensure the above is done, we need to take equality seriously. At the moment, for example, Ofsted have some scope to comment on equality issues they come across during inspections. However, the previous inspection reports for the five academies barely touched upon these issues and when they did it was usually to provide 'context' about the school (for example, Oldknow Academy's 2013 report talked about how remarkable its results were given the number of students it had who spoke English as an additional language). This inattention to equalities has also been raised with us by teachers and parents at other schools. Given its importance to ensuring children have an effective, high-quality education, Ofsted should regularly be inspecting for – and reporting on – schools' equality performance. We're not talking about having the right policies and box-ticking exercises here – we're referring to equality being part of the fabric of how the school operates and the way people treat each other within the school.

The scope of equality issues considered by Ofsted inspectors may need a refresh to reflect some of these 'grey' areas of equality and human rights practice. It's interesting to note, for example, that schools are now being picked up on things they were previously praised for (in January 2013, for example, Ofsted talked positively about Oldknow Academy subsidising trips to Saudi Arabia using school funds). A school may have all of the policies that the law requires, but still be an environment within which certain rights are infringed on a regular basis. Schools need to walk the walk as well as talk the talk and Ofsted inspectors need to know what to look for and where to look for it in a more systematic and consistent manner.

At the moment, it appears key stakeholders missed opportunities to investigate whether there was a risk to children's education, to the welfare of staff, and to the good running of

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<sup>4</sup> As the Telegraph points out, parents at some of the academies were instrumental in getting these issues brought to light: [www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10899804/Trojan-Horse-how-we-revealed-the-truth-behind-the-plot.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10899804/Trojan-Horse-how-we-revealed-the-truth-behind-the-plot.html)

schools<sup>5</sup>. Were these risks overlooked because people were afraid to handle the sensitivities involved? Was there a lack of understanding of the role that culture plays in education, which meant that questions were not asked and people were not held to account? Some of the schools we discussed here greatly improved outcomes for pupils – was this deemed to be more important than giving children a balanced and well-rounded education? One thing is clear: equality can't matter sometimes. It's not useful to 'roll it out' occasionally and use it as a stick to beat people with. It matters because it has always mattered – it is unfortunate that generally, we only remember its relevance when we have experienced the costs associated with ignoring it.

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<sup>5</sup> Further reports have been commissioned by Birmingham City Council and the Department for Education to explore this more fully



June 2014

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