



House of Commons
Education Committee

Extremism in schools: the Trojan Horse affair: Ofsted Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2014–15

**Second Special Report of Session
2015–16**

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The Education Committee

The Education Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Education and its associated public bodies.

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr Lynn Gardner (Clerk), Kevin Maddison (Second Clerk), Martin Smith (Committee Specialist), Anna Connell-Smith (Committee Specialist), Mike Everett (Senior Committee Assistant), Simon Armitage (Committee Assistant), Beryl-Joan Bonsu (Social Media Assistant) and Hannah Pearce (Media Officer).

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Second Special Report

The Education Committee reported to the House on *Extremism in schools: the Trojan Horse affair* in its Seventh Report of Session 2014–15, published on 17 March 2015.¹ The Government Response was received on 2 July 2015 and is published as an Appendix below. The Committee's original conclusions are included in bold.

The Government's response to the report was published as a Command paper on 26 June 2015.²

Appendix: Government response

Response to recommendations directly addressed to Ofsted

Ofsted's inability to identify problems at some Birmingham schools on first inspection when they were found shortly afterwards to be failing raises questions about the appropriateness of the framework and the reliability and robustness of Ofsted's judgements and how they are reached. Either Ofsted relied too heavily on raw data and did not dig deep enough on previous occasions or alternatively the schools deteriorated so quickly that Ofsted reports were rapidly out of date, or it could be that inspectors lost objectivity and came to some overly negative conclusions because of the surrounding political and media storm. Whichever of these options is closest to the truth, confidence in Ofsted has been undermined and efforts should be made by the inspectorate to restore it in Birmingham and beyond. (Paragraph 41)

Ofsted fiercely guards our reputation as an independent inspectorate that reports without fear or favour. As was explained to the Committee last year, sudden changes in governance and leadership can have a significant impact on the standards of education in schools. These Birmingham schools were no exception.

As the Chief Inspector made clear in his original advice note to the Secretary of State on these matters: "A culture of fear and intimidation has developed in some of the schools since their previous inspection. Some headteachers, including those with a proud record of raising standards, said that they have been marginalised or forced out of their jobs. As a result, 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."

Ofsted is committed to ensuring that such drastic declines are identified as quickly as possible and will continue to work closely with other agencies, such as local authorities and the regional school commissioner, to address any areas of concern in any school. This is particularly important where pupils may be at risk.

Ofsted inspection frameworks for maintained and non-association independent schools make clear that schools are required to be inspected against how well they are promoting

1 [Education Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2014–15, Extremism in schools: the Trojan Horse affair, HC473](#)

2 [Government response to the Education Select Committee report Extremism in schools – The Trojan Horse affair \(Cm 9094\)](#)

fundamental British values such as tolerance and the rule of law, and how well pupils are being prepared for life in modern Britain. Ofsted's inspectors now draw closely on the Department for Education's guidance on Fundamental British Values within spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, published in the autumn 2014.

As part of wider reforms, from September 2015 Ofsted will begin conducting shorter inspections of good schools every three years. This approach will mean that signs of decline can be spotted earlier and the necessary action can be taken. In addition we are bringing contracts with inspectors in-house and will have direct control over recruitment, training and quality assurance of their work. We are confident that this will further enhance confidence in our work. These changes have been welcomed by the sector.

It is important to return to the need to ensure a good education for the children at the schools affected. They, and their schools, will continue to require support from local and central agencies to make this a reality. (Paragraph 81)

Ensuring a good education for children in these schools has been at the absolute heart of Ofsted's inspection activity in Birmingham. It is what motivated our inspection work in the first instance. Her Majesty's Inspectors have continued to monitor and support the schools that were placed in special measures following the inspections in spring 2014 and we will shortly publish an up dated overview of the picture in these schools. We will share this with the committee.

Sir Michael Wilshaw has visited a number of the schools and met with parents, teachers and governors to reassure them of our commitment to helping these schools regain their high standards.

The Regional Director and her senior team are also working with the local authority and regional commissioner on issues facing Birmingham schools, sharing information to better understand the context of Birmingham schools and enable Ofsted to hold the local authority to account for the work in their schools. As part of this work, Ofsted is a member of the Education Improvement Group for Birmingham.

In addition Ofsted has worked with National Leaders of Education and Local Leaders of Education in the city to develop their skills and understanding of current school improvement issues and training has been delivered on transition of key stages within the primary phase.