

Jewish school defies Ofsted on sex lessons

By Olivia Rudgard

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A PRIVATE Jewish girls' school for children aged three to eight has failed three Ofsted inspections because it does not teach pupils about homosexuality or gender reassignment.

Inspectors visiting Vishnitz Girls School, an Orthodox school in Hackney, north London, found that it does not give pupils "a full understanding of fundamental British values".

The inspection last month, the third since February last year, found that pupils "are not taught explicitly about issues such as sexual orientation.

"This restricts pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and does not promote equality of opportunity in ways that take account of differing lifestyles," the report said.

It added that school leaders "recognise the requirement to teach about the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

"However, they acknowledge that they do not teach pupils about all the protected characteristics, particularly those relating to gender re-assignment and sexual orientation.

"This means that pupils have a limited understanding of the different lifestyles and partnerships that individuals

may choose in present-day society." The school, which has 212 pupils, and charges annual fees of £5,200, was praised for "good subject knowledge and high-quality classroom resources".

It had improved in safeguarding and leadership since the last inspection, but had not changed its stance on sexuality. Private schools that do not meet Ofsted's requirements can face closure by the Department for Education.

Gill Robins, of the campaign group Christians in Education, said in a blog

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The number of Ofsted inspections that Vishnitz Girls School has failed since last year over lack of teaching on LGBT issues

post that the decision showed that "the Equality Act is actually hierarchical, with sexual orientation and gender re-assignment at the apex of the Act.

"All equalities are equal, but some equalities are more equal than others. It doesn't matter how good your school is in all other respects - simply refusing to teach very young children about gender reassignment will lead to your closure," she said.

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