

Islamic schools accused of sex discrimination after segregating boys and girls at break time

From the [Birmingham Mail](#)

Two Islamic schools have been reported to the Government for segregating boys and girls on their premises. The AVECINNA Academy and The Wisdom Academy in Birmingham were flagged up for 'sex discrimination' by education watchdog Ofsted.



AVECINNA was found to be practicing segregation across year groups including during break times while Wisdom was said to be "failing to prepare students for life in modern Britain".

At AVECINNA an independent school for up to 100 pupils aged 11 to 17 boys and girls were found being taught on separate floors of the building.

The Ofsted report reads: "The school operates a policy of segregation by sex. Boys and girls are taught on separate floors of the building in all year groups. Boys and girls have their breaks at the same time but have separate playgrounds and are not allowed to mix during break times. When pupils visit places, they do so together. However boys sit at the

front of the coach and girls sit at the back.”

“Ofsted’s view is that the policy of segregation by sex creates a detriment to girls (who are denied the choice to socialise with boys in lessons and during break times and miss out on the educational benefits of doing so) and a detriment to boys (for the same reasons). Given this detriment the policy constitutes direct discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010. . . . “

At The Wisdom Academy segregation was also found to be disadvantaging pupils in breach of the equality law. The primary school, run by a trust called the United Children’s Foundation was criticised for failing to prepare students for life in modern Britain.

The inspectors found: “The school operates a policy of segregation by sex in all key stage 3 lessons. This segregation is for religious reasons only, rather than for genuine educational reasons and accordingly it is not possible for the ‘positive action’ exception, under section 158 of the Equality Act 2010, to apply...”

Department for Education guidance states that education providers should not generally separate pupils along lines such as sex, race or faith while at school. Exceptions include girls or boys suffering a disadvantaging related to their sex or each group’s participation in an activity being disproportionately low.

Approached by the Birmingham Mail, Avecinna headteacher Mohammed Dahir said: “As you are already well aware the issue surrounding the compliance of the Equality Act 2010 is a matter raised by Ofsted with many schools.

The Wisdom Academy did not respond to a request for comment.