



Department
for Education

Review into possible warnings to DfE relating to extremism in Birmingham schools

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Introduction and background

I was commissioned in June by the former Secretary of State to review whether or not the Department or its predecessors had received warnings relating to extremism in Birmingham schools, and how any such warnings had been dealt with.

This review follows those of Peter Clarke, Ian Kershaw and Ofsted following the receipt of the 'Trojan Horse' letter in Birmingham in December 2013.

These reviews, amongst other things, noted that warning signs about potential extremism in Birmingham schools had been missed by local agencies over a long period of time. The review was also prompted by a series of media reports and questions in Parliament about specific 'warnings' given to the Department, particularly in 2010, but also in 2008/09 and 1994.

I have investigated all the instances of 'warnings' quoted in the media and elsewhere. I have also sought to identify whether there were any other cases over the last 20 years where the Department was made aware of issues relating to extremism in Birmingham schools. This has involved an extensive search of the Department's paper and electronic records as well as discussions regarding individuals' (both within the Department and outside) recollections of events.

This report covers my findings and reflections on the handling of the individual instances under review. Where relevant, I have offered some suggestions about potential actions. In conducting the review I have sought to establish whether any warnings were missed, the factors that led to them being missed and therefore whether the right systems and processes are in place in the Department today to avoid similar issues occurring in future.

The review has been carried out in accordance with the Civil Service Code, and in accordance with rules governing papers from previous administrations.

Scope, conduct and evidence

1. I have focused on a 20 year period between 1994 and December 2013, and any warnings received by the Department for Education relating to alleged extremism in Birmingham schools during that period. This timeframe was selected because:
 - the earliest media report of a warning related to events in 1994; and
 - Peter Clarke's report suggests that issues in Birmingham began to arise in the early 1990s.
2. I have not considered any events after the receipt of the Trojan Horse letter by the Department in December 2013.
3. I have considered:
 - what, if any, warnings were received;
 - what the nature of those warnings was;
 - whether those warnings were dealt with appropriately; and
 - what follow up actions were taken and whether these were appropriate, given the role of the Department at the time (see paragraph 10).
4. In undertaking the review, I have taken a wide definition of 'extremism', and looked into the sorts of issues highlighted in Peter Clarke's report, including issues with school Governing Bodies and concerns around religious extremism and radicalisation.
5. I have looked in detail at the known instances where relevant information was brought to the Department's attention about alleged extremism in Birmingham. A thorough enquiry process was conducted to seek to identify any such instances. At the beginning of the process the Department was aware of three instances (dated 1994, 2008-2010-pre election and 2010-post election).
6. The enquiry process involved:
 - contacting all Secretaries of State and Permanent Secretaries who had been in post since 1994 to ascertain if they had any recollections of the issue of extremism in Birmingham schools coming to light during their period in office;
 - issuing a call for evidence across the Department's 3,400 staff, via 150 members of the Senior Civil Service;
 - commissioning targeted electronic record and email searches;
 - a search through the Department's 820,000 pieces of correspondence received since 2003;
 - a search through the Department's 250,000 historic paper files;
 - a search through the 454 consultations on the Department's consultation database; and

- interviews, including with current and former Ministers, Civil Servants, advisers and relevant third parties.
7. Inevitably when dealing with 20 years of records and memory there are some instances where there are discrepancies or gaps in the evidence or recollections are unclear. Where these occur I have taken account of them. Whilst every effort has been made to make the review comprehensive, it is of course not possible to log every exchange relating to Birmingham schools over this period, particularly as not all of them will have been recorded or filed. Some issues have also been identified with the Department's records management. Steps will be taken to address these issues. Nevertheless, I am clear that the evidence and conclusions are robust.
 8. I have not sought to identify instances relating to areas other than Birmingham. However, had the review uncovered issues elsewhere, these would have been investigated.
 9. I have only looked at information received by DfE and its predecessor Departments. I have not considered information sent to other Government Departments or Government Offices.
 10. Much has changed in the twenty years since the beginning of the period in question. In conducting this work I have taken account of the changing role of the DfE and its predecessor Departments during that time. In particular the period from 1994 to 2014 has been characterised by a shift from a largely Local Authority-managed education system to one in which national Government and the Department have taken an increasingly active role in aspects of the overall system and in individual schools.

Findings

11. I have found no instances where direct warnings of 'extremism' in Birmingham schools were received by the Department and ignored. On a small number of occasions over the last 20 years the Department received information about these issues, but I have found that largely they were dealt with in line with the procedures in place at the time. I have not found any instances where Ministers, officials or advisers have acted inappropriately. I have found one instance (a letter received by DfE in 2013 about Alternative Provision – see below), where further specific follow-up action was necessary.
12. I have not found evidence of the Department having been warned about violent extremism in particular schools. The issues that have been raised with the Department are, however, similar to those raised in Peter Clarke's report. They include warnings about, for example, difficult relationships between staff and Governing Bodies in particular schools, or potential narrowing of school curricula, and the fact that these sorts of issues have the potential to cause political, cultural and religious tensions in schools and their communities.
13. Whilst I have not found instances of warnings having been ignored or of individuals having acted inappropriately, I have found that the Department has lacked inquisitiveness about this issue, and that procedures could have been tighter than they were. Whilst this is an easy thing to say in hindsight, there is a marked contrast between, for example, how the Department responds to reports of child protection issues and how it has historically responded to reports of potential extremism.
14. Overall I find that in future the Department needs to be more vigilant, more inquisitive and have more robust systems in place than it has had in the past if in future it is to play its part in preventing and countering the issues identified in the Clarke Report.
15. I have found six instances where concerns were raised with the Department. A brief summary of each is provided below.
 - **1994** – The Department was contacted by Revd John Ray, who raised concerns with Ministers about extremist infiltration of Birmingham schools. Departmental records show that senior leaders in three schools in Birmingham wrote to education Ministers in 1994, copied to the then Prime Minister¹, expressing their concerns about the extremist group Hizb-ut-Tahrir gaining an influence over schools in the city. This was reported by Sky News on 3 June 2014. A copy of the online story is attached at Annex 1.

¹ Although the letters were copied to the then Prime Minister, the DfE has no record of the letters having been brought to his attention.

- **1997** – The Department received a letter and attached paper from Revd John Ray, setting out the pros and cons of state funding for Muslim Schools. The letter made reference to Islamic radicalism and the role of schools in preventing it. The letter was addressed to the Secretary of State but was assigned to officials to respond to on the Secretary of State's behalf.
- **2008-10** – Records show that from 2008 the Department was aware of problems with the Governing Body of Moseley School in Birmingham, particularly the problematic relationship between governors and staff at the school (including the head teacher). The Sunday Express published a story about this on 8 June 2014. A copy of the story is attached at Annex 2.
- **2010** – In May, immediately post-election, an email was received by the Department from a Birmingham resident, who was also an assistant head teacher (of an unspecified school). It reiterated concerns about some of the people who had been on the Governing Body at Moseley School.
- **2010** – Post-election, a DfE Minister and officials met a Birmingham head teacher, Tim Boyes, on two occasions in 2010. The then Secretary of State was not aware of these meetings at the time. At both of these meetings, there was a discussion about the challenges that political Islam posed for schools in Birmingham. The discussions covered similar issues to those raised in the Trojan Horse letter. This was reported by the BBC on 28 May 2014. A copy of the story is attached at Annex 3.
- **2013** – An email was received by the Department from a consultant specialising in SEN provision, regarding the potential for young people being educated in Alternative Provision to become radicalised, particularly in places like Birmingham.
- **2013** – During the course of the review, I have also received a copy of a letter which Lord Hunt of Kings Heath wrote on 23 March 2013 to Lord Hill, then Leader of the House of Lords, and which, according to Lord Hunt, they subsequently discussed. This letter referred to similar issues to those raised in the Peter Clarke report. As this was not a letter sent to the DfE, it is not formally within scope of this review. The Leader of the House subsequently arranged for Lord Hunt to see DfE officials, following the receipt of the Trojan Horse letter.

Assessment of Departmental handling

16. I have assessed how each of these instances (with the exception of the event not within scope of the review) was handled, and have concluded the following:

- In 1994, the Department received information from Revd John Ray and head teachers in three Birmingham schools, regarding concerns of potential infiltration of school governing bodies in Birmingham. The Department received differing accounts of the situation. Officials considered the available information and provided advice to Ministers, including on the legal position. The policy at the time was that issues about Governing Bodies in individual schools were a matter for the relevant Local Authority. Departmental officials advised Ministers accordingly and Ministers acted on that advice, responding to Revd Ray to advise him that the fact he was due to meet with Council Leaders was the right course of action.
- The Department received a letter and attached paper on 27 January 1997 from Revd John Ray, setting out the pros and cons of state funding for Muslim Schools. The letter was addressed to the Secretary of State but was assigned to officials to respond to on the Secretary of State's behalf.

The letter made a passing reference to Islamic radicalism in the context of the important role of schools in preventing it, but made no specific allegations about particular schools. The attachment was a general discussion paper setting out the arguments for and against granting Grant Maintained or Voluntary Aided status to Muslim schools, and in doing so reiterated some of the points he had made in 1994. The paper used a funding proposal from a particular school as an example, but did not make specific references to specific schools in the context of radicalism.

The letter received a response from a Departmental official on 28 February 1997, which noted the wider comments on funding and provided a full explanation of the process for the establishment of Grant Maintained Schools, including references to the specific proposal referred to in the letter. I am satisfied that this was dealt with appropriately, in line with the procedures in place at the time.

- In 2008-10, the Department's flagship school improvement programme (National Challenge) had a major focus on Birmingham, given the large number of Birmingham schools that were below the floor standard. The National Challenge programme explored a number of solutions for underperforming schools, including tackling problems with governance. In the case of Moseley School, the Department was aware of problems with the Governing Body, and worked with the Local Authority to put a solution in place to replace it with an Interim Executive Board (IEB).

The problems were often highlighted in terms of political sensitivities, which were not uncommon in the work on the Birmingham National Challenge. My review found a single reference to the problems with governance being linked to political Islam, amidst extensive references about general weaknesses of governance and educational underperformance in the school. The removal of the Governing Body on account of poor educational standards was in line with Departmental procedures at the time².

- On 17 May 2010, post-election, the Department received an email from a Birmingham resident who was also an assistant head teacher (of an unspecified school). The email was a general offer to support the new Secretary of State in his new role, and made one specific reference to Birmingham. It mentioned that some of the members of the Moseley School Governing Body (which had been recently replaced with an IEB), had been promoting an Islamic agenda for the school. The email was assigned to policy officials who issued a response on the Secretary of State's behalf. In line with normal practice for handling correspondence, Ministers were not informed.

The response that was sent to the correspondent on 9 June 2010 set out the fact that the Governing Body had been replaced by an IEB, and clarified that the school and Local Authority were working together to secure sustainable educational improvements for the school. I am satisfied that this was dealt with appropriately, in line with the procedures in place at the time.

- In 2010, post-election, Ministers made a decision to strengthen the Department's work on due diligence and counter extremism³. At a meeting about the Building Schools for the Future programme, the issue of potential extremism in Birmingham schools was raised with the Department by a head teacher, Tim Boyes. The Minister arranged for Mr Boyes to come into the DfE to discuss this issue further with officials who were working on due diligence and counter extremism. At this second meeting, there was a presentation from Mr Boyes, which set out the kinds of challenges facing schools in Birmingham, through the use of largely anonymised case studies. All attendees described the discussion that accompanied the presentation as a general policy discussion which would help shape the Department's thinking on its new counter extremism function, rather than a discussion which was calling for specific DfE intervention in particular schools⁴.

² Before any concerns at this school came to light, the then Secretary of State had already acted, at the very beginning of his tenure, to strengthen the Department's capacity to support the Prevent Strategy by requesting the secondment of a Senior Civil Servant with appropriate security clearance to lead this work in the Department.

³ Prior to the election the Department had a Community Cohesion Unit, responsible for ensuring schools met their duty to promote community cohesion and contributing to wider government work on preventing violent extremism.

⁴ There was not a designated Minister responsible for counter extremism at this time

The fact that the Minister followed up the initial concerns with a wider policy discussion with the relevant officials and advisers seems a reasonable step to have taken. The briefing provided for the Minister for the second meeting did not go into detail about the issues of extremism in schools. It is worth noting that at the time the team dealing with these issues had only just been established. It was made up of only five people and was establishing its method of operation. It was widely agreed by the attendees who we interviewed that the Minister was not present at the end of the meeting, having left the head teacher and officials to continue the discussion. A suggestion was made at the end of the second meeting for a further discussion with a wider group of head teachers. This suggestion is referenced in the note of the meeting, but not as a specific action with a named individual charged with taking it forward. The further meeting did not take place. Given the general policy nature of the discussion, none of the attendees at the meeting expected there to be follow up on Birmingham-specific issues, and no follow-up therefore took place.

- On 13 October 2013, an email was received by the Department from a consultant regarding the potential for young people being educated in Alternative Provision to become radicalised, particularly in places like Birmingham. The email outlined general concerns about the oversight of Alternative Provision, but did not cite particular examples. The email was assigned to policy officials who issued a response on the Secretary of State's behalf. In line with normal practice for handling correspondence, Ministers were not informed.

The response that the correspondent received set out a reasonable description of the Department's approach to counter extremism, but did not address the specifics of their concerns in the way that it should have done.

17. None of these instances show evidence of individuals having acted inappropriately, though the response to the 2013 email ought to have addressed the issues in more detail.
18. Whilst I have not found evidence of people having acted inappropriately, I have concluded that in individual instances the Department has lacked inquisitiveness on issues relating to potential extremism or destabilisation of schools by external interests. It is also true that the processes for dealing with such warnings were not as robust as, for instance, the process around child protection concerns which are raised with the Department.
19. Issues on extremism in Birmingham schools that have been raised with the Department have in general been assumed to be the responsibility of other authorities, and when they have been brought to the Department's attention have been dealt with as one-off pieces of transactional business. With hindsight, I believe the Department could have shown a greater level of inquisitiveness

regarding these issues, and asked itself the question of whether the issues being brought to its attention were symptomatic of wider trends. In particular:

- In 1994, whilst the Department's conclusion that this was a matter for the Council was reasonable at the time, the Department was also aware that the person who had raised concerns was having trouble meeting the Council. With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to conclude that a more inquisitive Department might have approached the Council directly, given the seriousness of the allegations.
 - In 2008-10, the fact that the Moseley School Governing Body was removed on school standards grounds was entirely in keeping with the Government's policy at the time. With the benefit of hindsight, if a similar question about the religious or political views of governors were to be raised now, I would expect the Department to be more inquisitive about whether there were wider problems going beyond the individual school standards issues.
 - In 2010, the Department's decision to treat the information provided by the head teacher as general policy information to inform its thinking on the formation of the counter extremism division was appropriate. A more inquisitive Department, with a stronger approach to counter extremism work, would have arranged the suggested follow-up discussion, and looked to draw further conclusions from it. The Department might also have treated the information as more than general policy information, and contacted the Local Authority to urge them to look into the issue in more detail.
 - In 2013, the reply issued by the Department to a correspondent who had raised concerns about the potential for young people being educated in Alternative Provision to become radicalised, did not address the issue in the way it should have done. This is dealt with in more detail at paragraph 22 of this report.
20. In general, my review has found that, in the context of these issues, the Department has historically shown less willingness to follow up specific allegations relating to individual schools than I would expect to be the case now. The Department has, of course, intervened in schools directly on standards and other grounds since the mid-1990s.

Conclusions

21. My overall conclusions are as follows:

- There are no instances I have found where specific ‘warnings’ were ignored by the Department. I have found that the information received by the Department was sporadic and general in nature.
- The information received was dealt with in line with procedures and the role of the Department at the time. I have found no cases where Departmental officials or Ministers have acted inappropriately. I have, however, found that the Department has lacked inquisitiveness on this issue, and that the Department has not historically treated the issue with the same robustness as it has demonstrated in dealing with warnings about, for example, child protection.
- Much has changed in the twenty years since the start of the period my review has looked at, and it is right that the Department should change accordingly. In future, I have found that the Department needs to be more vigilant, more inquisitive and have more robust systems in place than it has had in the past, if it is to play its part in preventing and countering the issues identified in the Clarke Report.
- In response to these conclusions, a number of actions are needed (some of which are already in hand). These are set out in the following pages.

Actions

Actions arising from specific cases

22. Of the individual instances highlighted above, the only issue requiring specific attention relates to the letter received in 2013 from a consultant specialising in SEN provision. The original reply issued by the Department did not address the specific issues in the way that it should have done.

This correspondent has now been contacted and confirmed that they do not have any concerns about specific settings, but a general concern about the potential for radicalisation of young people educated in Alternative Provision settings, in places like Birmingham. This is being considered as part of the Department’s wider work on counter extremism. On the more general point about how to handle correspondence of this nature, we are introducing a strengthened casework approach within the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division.

General actions

23. The Department has already taken a number of steps to improve its approach to due diligence and counter extremism in the light of the Trojan Horse experience.

These include:

- increasing the size of the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division (DDCED) to 25 staff;
 - strengthening the Academy conversion process, which includes, for schools in Prevent priority areas, open source checks on key members of the Academy governance structure and detailed checks by colleagues in DDCED where any issues are identified; and
 - strengthening the Academy sponsor approval process, which includes open source checks on sponsors and detailed checks by DDCED where areas of concern are identified.
24. There has also been general awareness raised of this issue across the Department as a result of the Deputy Director call for evidence issued as part of the review.
25. In the light of events in Birmingham and the findings of this review, I am taking the following steps within the Department:
- further strengthening the DDCED, increasing its size to 36 and establishing it as a Group (DDCEG) under a newly-recruited Director with sole responsibility for this area of work⁵;
 - introducing a formal system for staff across the Department to refer concerns about extremism to DDCEG. This includes a clear process for staff recognising what might constitute such an issue and a requirement that any instances are reported to DDCEG;
 - introducing a formal case handling system within DDCEG for logging and managing warnings received from both DfE staff or from external sources;
 - widening the DDCEG's remit to include a proactive role identifying potential future trouble spots;
 - establishing a Counter Extremism Steering Group, which will be chaired by the Director for DDCEG and will support delivery of the Department's overall vision and aims by providing coherent strategic oversight of the activity which makes up the due diligence and counter extremism programme;
 - introducing a requirement for all Deputy Directors to receive briefing on extremism, the Department's procedures and how it might affect DfE's work, and to be clear about the arrangements needed within their divisions to deal with any issues arising; and
 - introducing a system for the DDCEG to report monthly to the Department's Management Committee on cases received and action taken.

⁵ The current unit has thus far reported to a Director who also had other responsibilities.

26. The Department's Internal Audit function will conduct a review of these actions after three months and will advise me and the Department's Management Committee on implementation progress. There will be regular six monthly checks by Internal Audit on implementation, with advice to the Management Committee.
27. The aims of these actions are threefold:
 - to ensure that the DDCEG has the right resources, systems and remit to deal with any future warnings;
 - to ensure that identifying and taking action on warnings is seen as a priority in all parts of the Department, not just in DDCEG; and
 - to ensure that the Department becomes and remains inquisitive on this issue.
28. These actions should apply equally to warnings of 'extremism' from whatever source, not just those relating to Birmingham or to Islamist extremist ideology.

**CHRIS WORMALD
PERMANENT SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION**

Annex 1

'Muslim School Plot' Fears Were Raised In 1994

A letter sent to Prime Minister John Major detailed concerns about the influence of an extremist group in Birmingham schools.

12:53, UK, Tuesday 03 June 2014

By Afua Hirsch, Social Affairs And Education Editor

Fears that hardline Muslim governors have been infiltrating Birmingham schools go back at least two decades, and were raised with the government in 1994.

Sky News has learned that senior leaders at three schools in Birmingham were so concerned about the influence of Muslim extremists in the 1990s they took their fears to the top.

In a letter to education ministers, copied to then Prime Minister John Major, the heads said extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir was gaining an alarming influence over schools in the city.

Former chair of governors at Golden Hillock School, John Ray, met with then education minister Emily Blatch in Westminster.

He says that had the government acted then, the current trend - in which conservative Muslims have been able to dominate school leadership - could have been averted.

"(The Trojan Horse plot) reveals something, something that is true," said Mr Ray.

"It reveals a mess that the city council has not been able to check - the development of this whole infiltration of this ceding in of governors of one particular ideology. They are not people who have the welfare of these children at heart."

Like many, Mr Ray believes the content of the so-called Trojan Horse letter, which alleges a plot to oust non-hardline Muslims from schools in Birmingham, is a fake. But he maintains the concerns themselves are very real.

He resigned after 25 years as a governor at Golden Hillock School - one of the schools at the centre of the alleged plot - last year when it was taken over by the Park View Educational Trust, the organisation headed by Tahir Alam, who is accused of exerting pressure on state-funded, secular schools to conform to conservative Islam.

But Mr Ray's claims are disputed by Mohammed Shafique, another former chair of governors of Golden Hillock School.

He said: "John Ray never expressed any concerns, never asked 'why have you joined the governing body?' Never asked me about my views, what my ideology was for joining the governing body.

"I'm quite concerned that he can actually say there was a mass movement to go into governing bodies. I certainly haven't experienced it at Golden Hillock School, or another school I was governor at."

Concerns about Tahir Alam and the influence of the Park View Educational Trust have led to a spate of high-level investigations by Ofsted, the Department for Education and Birmingham City Council.

Golden Hillock is now expected to be placed in special measures following the results of an Ofsted inspection to be published next week.

The Department for Education says it has been tackling extremism in schools since 2010, and Birmingham City Council is conducting an investigation which will also look at retrospective evidence.

But details of claims going back two decades will place further pressure on the authorities to explain why it took so long to act.

"I think the city council but also central government and all parties were very reluctant to question the received wisdom that suggests it is fair enough that a separate Islamic identity should be stressed," said Mr Ray.

<http://news.sky.com/story/1274139/muslim-school-plot-fears-were-raised-in-1994>

Annex 2

Exclusive: Labour under fire over alleged Birmingham school Islamic coup

LABOUR was last night embroiled in the Trojan Horse row after it was revealed that a former Birmingham grammar school was at the centre of an alleged Islamic coup back in 2008

By: [Caroline Wheeler](#)

Published: Sun, June 8, 2014

Former education secretary Ed Balls disbanded the governing body at Moseley School amid claims a small group of hardline Muslim governors were attempting to seize control.

Mr Balls only took action in 2010, more than a year after the departure of the school's popular headteacher Dave Peck, said to have been forced out by governors.

Mr Peck, who is believed to have signed a confidentiality clause and received a six-figure pay out, requested the governing body be disbanded before he left in December 2008.

He was told the Secretary of State would not wear it, a school insider told the Sunday Express.

Mr Balls faced criticism last night for "failing to take action or properly investigate" from within his old department.

A source told the Sunday Express: "These problems were known about in 2008 yet Ed Balls and the last Labour government failed to take swift action or properly investigate. It's a pity Labour didn't do the same and instead let the problem fester for years."

The Cabinet row over the alleged plot intensified last night as Theresa May's closest aide quit and Education Secretary Michael Gove was forced to apologise.

The Home Secretary's special adviser Fiona Cunningham resigned following the investigation ordered by David Cameron into the briefings and counter-briefings which overshadowed the launch of the Government's programme for the final year of the coalition.

Theresa May will now be called before a Commons committee for questioning over her "unseemly" row with Education Secretary Michael Gove about tackling extremism.

Home Affairs Select Committee chairman Keith Vaz has written to Mrs May demanding a full explanation, and said she would be questioned about it by the cross-party group of MPs in due course.

He said there was also a "strong case" for Fiona Cunningham, the Home Secretary's aide who resigned for briefing against Mr Gove, to give evidence to the committee.

Mr Vaz said: "I have written to the Home Secretary for a full explanation of what has happened. The committee will in due course question her about these matters.

"There is a strong case to hear from Ms Cunningham herself as to why she has resigned.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper called for Mrs May to explain her actions, including whether she breached the ministerial code which sets out the standards of conduct expected of members of the Government.

She told BBC1's Andrew Marr Show: "We've seen the Education Secretary apologise, the special adviser to the Home Secretary resign, but we've so far heard nothing from the Home Secretary even though it looks pretty clear that she has breached the ministerial code by writing and then authorising the publication of this letter.

A prospective governor at Moseley told the Sunday Express that problems began back in 2007 when a new group of governors joined the body.

Mr Gove wrote to apologise to a senior Home Office official and the Prime Minister "in acknowledgement of his role" in the row, which saw the Education Secretary's camp and Mrs May's side publicly feuding over the way Islamist extremism was tackled.

The Prime Minister was understood to be "deeply frustrated" at the row and particularly the way it broke on the day of the Queen's Speech.

Foreign Secretary William Hague said the row was a "disciplinary matter within the Government which the Prime Minister has dealt with in a very firm and clear way".

He told BBC1's Andrew Marr Show that the Prime Minister was "making sure there is team discipline in the Government".

Education Secretary Michael Gove has now launched an investigation – one of four – into events in Birmingham schools following a so-called Trojan Horse letter, which claimed to outline a plot by Muslim hardliners to take over Birmingham schools.

His investigation along with those by Ofsted, West Midlands Police and Birmingham City Council are between them looking at 25 schools, with the first of the reports expected to be published tomorrow.

Labour's shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt has accused Mr Gove of "gross negligence" over his handling of the matter.

However, now revelations about Moseley School, where 92 per cent of pupils are Muslim, have turned the spotlight on Labour. Local MP Steve McCabe last night

confirmed he had been told of concerns about the governing body of the school, whose former pupils include Game Of Thrones star Anton Lesser and comedian Jasper Carrott, back in 2008.

He also revealed that he has since passed information to Scotland Yard's former counter-terrorism chief Peter Clarke, who is leading Mr Gove's inquiry. Mr McCabe said he received the information from a prospective governor at the school.

Labour MP Mr McCabe said: "He said that he had sat in some meetings and felt he had witnessed two or three governors trying to undermine the head and other governors and take over the governing body with a view to imposing their will on the school."

The Sunday Express understands those serving on Moseley's governing body at the time included Nasim Awan, who is reportedly serving as a governor at Springfield School, where headteacher Christopher Webb is said to be "under constant attack" by radical governors.

It has been reported that Mr Awan, an Islamic bookshop owner, is also a member of an organised group of teachers, governors and school consultants called "Educational Activists" dedicated to what has been described in leaked messages as an "Islamising agenda" in Birmingham schools.

He is reported to have boasted about the "battles" he had "fought and won" at a "large inner city primary school" which led to its governing body becoming - "polarised on faith grounds".

A prospective governor at Moseley told the Sunday Express that problems began back in 2007 when a new group of governors joined the body, including Awan.

He said: "Previously it had been difficult to recruit governors and suddenly the board was inundated with volunteers.

"There were three governors who were elected who became particularly difficult and who began making unreasonable demands of the head as part of deliberate attempt to undermine his leadership.

"They were demanding religious assemblies and regular time out of class for worship and generally turned the headteacher's life into a nightmare. Their intention was to remove Dave Peck but it is my view that it was their ultimate intention to take over the school and make it a Muslim faith school with a Muslim head."

The old Moseley pupil said he blew the whistle back in 2008 when he reported his concerns about the school to Birmingham City Council.

He added: "There is no doubt in my mind that both the local authority and the Department for Education knew about what was going on at Moseley School."

The DfE said: “There is absolutely no place for extremism in schools and this Government has taken a number of significant steps to combat it.”

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/480996/EXCLUSIVE-Labour-under-fire-over-alleged-Birmingham-school-Islamic-coup>

Annex 3

Ministers 'given Trojan Horse schools warning in 2010'

By Noel Titheradge

BBC News

28 May 2014

The Department for Education was warned in 2010 that Muslim hardliners were trying to take control of Birmingham schools, a head teacher has claimed.

Tim Boyes, head of Queensbridge School, said he warned ministers three years before a letter alleging a "Trojan Horse" plot was sent to the council.

He said he described a "bloodless coup" at one school and "an alliance to destabilise the head" at another.

The DfE said the meeting with Mr Boyes was a "general policy discussion".

The publication in March of the leaked Trojan Horse letter - now widely assumed to be a forgery - led to substantial press interest and political action.

The anonymous and unverified letter claimed that there was a Trojan Horse conspiracy by a group wanting to impose a more hardline Muslim agenda on schools in the city.

Governance worries

The schools watchdog in England, Ofsted, launched inspections of 21 schools and Birmingham City Council announced two inquiries.

The DfE appointed Peter Clarke, the former national head of counter-terrorism, to investigate.

But Mr Boyes - whose school is not being inspected by Ofsted - told BBC News he gave the department a presentation about the same threat in 2010, three years before the Trojan Horse letter was sent to Birmingham City Council.

"Back in 2010, I had a whole series of colleagues, other head teachers, who were reporting concerns about governance and things that weren't going well in their schools.

"Over 20 years... tensions and politics have exploded and as a result head teachers have had nervous breakdowns, they've lost their jobs, schools have been really torn apart," he said.

Slides from the presentation describe "staff and governors in an alliance to destabilise the head" at one secondary school.

"[A] member of staff [was] suspended, having tried to prove the head to be fraudulent."

At another secondary school it was claimed there was a plot to remove the head teacher, Mr Boyes said.

"Two governors with disproportionate impact... want to remove the head to have a Muslim head... [they are] working to undermine him. A known explicit intention the head lives with."

'Intimidating'

At a primary school, a dramatic increase in interest in joining the governing body was described. Previously, it had been "hard to recruit a single parent".

"At the start of a new year four vacancies generate 13 nominations," said Mr Boyes.

"The HT [head teacher] believed four to be from a specific co-ordinated group. Three were elected and the fourth came on as an LA [local authority] governor. This group were highly organised/nationally networked."

"The focal point was collective worship and a parent/public meeting was called. This was aggressive, intimidating... issues spread to swimming, other curriculum areas, meals, uniform."

Mr Boyes, one of about 800 [national leaders of education](#), said he was not surprised the DfE did not act on his concerns.

"What I think the solutions might be are in the absolute opposite direction to government policy. Starting with New Labour, the reform of public services has been about creating markets and giving customers, end-users, choice and freedom.

"Because of the academy programme encouraging schools to opt out of local authority control, you've got increasing numbers of schools acting individually, on their own.

"We have schools that have now become increasingly isolated and segregated."

'Significant steps'

The DfE said in a statement that the meeting did take place but was a "general policy discussion".

It said: "There is absolutely no place for extremism in schools and this government has taken a number of significant steps to combat it.

"This meeting took place at the same time as the department was enhancing our due diligence and counter-extremism capability to make schools more aware of risks and to protect children.

"Since 2010 we have taken a number of steps to strengthen our capability to deal with extremism in schools, including setting up a dedicated counter-extremism unit within the Department for Education.

"We have also worked with Ofsted to strengthen inspectors' capacity to identify and report on extremism in schools."

Tristram Hunt, Labour's shadow education secretary, said this amounted to "gross negligence on the part of ministers".

He said: "Michael Gove refused to listen to the warnings about radical hardliners taking control of schools. His department has sat on these warnings for four years.

"Michael Gove's complacency has given rise to a constant stream of failings in our school system. Failings in the running of schools are not being spotted until it's too late."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27476643>



Department
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