

Ministers order takeover of Muslim school after it is branded unsafe

From the [*Sunday Times*](#)

The Government has ordered the takeover of a state-funded Muslim school in Birmingham where a boy died in March. Ofsted visited the Al-Hijrah school after nine-year-old Mohammed Ismaeel Ashraf reportedly suffered an allergic reaction and collapsed at the school. He was taken to hospital, but died shortly afterwards.

An earlier inspection found books in the library that said husbands were allowed to beat their wives and could force them to have sex.

The school is currently embroiled in a long legal battle to allow it to segregate girls and boys. For more than a year the co-educational Islamic school has fought through the courts to try to suppress an earlier critical Ofsted report that said its segregation of girls and boys for all lessons from the age of 5 to 16 was a breach of the Equality Act.



Last week appeal court judges were asked to make a definitive ruling in the case. If Ofsted wins, up to 20 faith schools that teach boys and girls separately will be reinspected and may have to change their arrangements.

Ofsted has spent more than £66,000 on legal fees. Birmingham city council helped to pay Al-Hijrah's legal costs, including at an earlier High Court hearing where the school was successful.