

Religious school leader appointed as Ofsted chairman for first time

The original [Telegraph](#) headline said 'Ofsted Chairman told children to read the Koran' but that was altered overnight.

A religious school leader has been appointed as chairman of Ofsted for what is believed to be the first time.



Sir Hamid Patel will take up the interim role until a successor is found for Dame Christine Ryan at the schools regulator.

He is the chief executive of Star Academies Trust, which runs nearly 40 primaries and secondaries, including [several Islamic schools](#). The trust also runs a Christian school and grammar schools...

He was previously the headteacher of Tauheedul Islam Girls'

High School in Blackpool. While in that role, the school became one of the first in the country to [urge pupils to wear a hijab](#) outside of school. Guidance reportedly told pupils to “recite the Koran at least once a week” and “not bring stationery to school that contains un-Islamic images”, such as pictures of pop stars.

The school was criticised over a visit in 2010 from Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Sudais, a Saudi Arabian cleric who had described Jews as “pigs”.

Sheikh Sudais also prayed for God to “terminate” the Jews and, discussing his visit, Sir Hamid told The Sunday Times in 2013: “The girls wanted to see this guy with 5 million followers. They had seen him on YouTube. He stayed 20 minutes.”

There is no suggestion these remarks were made at the school.

A spokesman for the [Campaign Against Anti-Semitism](#) said: “We hope that in his new role, Hamid Patel will adopt a higher degree of scrutiny than he appeared to in his previous occupation. British Jews will understandably be concerned that an individual who invited a man who allegedly described Jews as ‘pigs’ to speak to children will be responsible for assessing the performance of schools.”

Insiders understand Sir Hamid to be a balanced board member who has not opposed attempts to regulate more hardline religious schools. Although many of the trust’s schools are Islamic, he has also vowed to help white working class boys. “Only one in seven white working class boys will pass their GCSE in English and maths. That is a national disgrace,” he said in 2020. *He’s not wrong – it is a disgrace.*

[Middle East Eye](#) reminds readers that: The new interim chair of Ofsted, the UK’s school regulator, has previously criticised the official narrative around the Birmingham “Trojan Horse” affair, saying the episode left some Muslims worried that expressing their faith would bring about

“establishment suspicion”.

Middle East Eye has reviewed a chapter of a 2022 academic book entitled *The Birmingham Book: Lessons in Urban Education Leadership and Policy from the Trojan Horse Affair*, in which Patel gave his views on the now notorious episode.

The Department for Education and Ofsted became involved, with the latter carrying out emergency investigations into schools and downgrading their status.

In 2022 a podcast investigation revealed that then-education secretary Michael Gove was told by officials that counter-terrorism police had decided the original letter claiming there was a takeover plot was a hoax.

But Gove, it was reported, “used the letter to sanction numerous high-level investigations into potential extremism in Birmingham schools anyway”. *My personal view was tha the whistleblower decided inventing a specific plot was the safest way to get an investigation into the general dawa creep in Birmingham education (and everywhere) and alert the public of the dangers.*

Despite these revelations, there has been no inquiry into the handling of the Trojan Horse affair and senior Conservative politicians, including Gove, have doubled down on the claim that “hard-line activists Islamised state schools in Birmingham”.

The new Ofsted chair takes a dramatically different approach.

Patel’s Star Academies established two free schools in Birmingham after Trojan Horse and refloated another secondary school, Small Heath, which Ofsted had placed under special measures in 2015.

According to the 2022 book’s editor, Colin Diamond, who had been a key figure in a number of the inquiries into Birmingham

schools, "Patel listened carefully to governors from Muslim communities in Birmingham who were alienated by Trojan Horse and felt their motives for engagement with schools were being questioned".

In his chapter Patel denied that there had been a systematic attempt by Muslim governors to takeover Birmingham schools.

That he has been appointed to this post and not one of the very many good heads of Church of England or Roman Catholic schools suggests that the islamisation of education does indeed exist.

My favourite comments, before the comment thread was closed, under the Telegraph article.

- What was the process of selection? Was the post advertised?
- Yes at the Birmingham mosque situation vacant board