Part 2
The evidence from five schools

The evidence below is taken largely from the reports by the Education Funding Agency, Ofsted, Kershaw and Clarke about the five schools at the centre of the Trojan Horse affair: Park View, Golden Hillock, Nansen, Oldknow and Saltley. All five were put into ‘special measures’ by Ofsted. We recognise that the findings which we quote are contested by some associated with these schools, but while there may be grounds for questioning or qualifying some of the evidence in our view the overwhelming balance of it confirms the conclusions that the Kershaw report draws. (There is also independent endorsement from some of the teachers at the schools.) There were serious problems of governance which resulted in the denial of children’s education entitlements and unacceptable practices regarding the treatment of staff. In both of these issues of gender were significant.

Note that the Kershaw report is heavily redacted with words blacked out. We have replaced each redaction with XXX, which, unlike the original, does not correspond to the length of the word or number of words in a phrase redacted (which in some cases may give an indication of the role of the person being referred to).

The Park View Educational Trust

Park View secondary school became an academy in 2012. The Governing Body was chaired by Tahir Alam. In 2012 Park View Academy set up the Park View Educational Trust, which was also chaired by Tahir Alam. Since that time it has grown into a multiacademy trust and is the sponsor of Nansen Primary and Golden Hillock Secondary Schools.

Park View Academy

Curriculum and gender issues

6.4 Mr Alam was the key person determining the policies and activities at Park View School. Most of these appear to be recommendations from the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) report he co-authored in 2007. ... Sex and relationship education is being taught with reference to an Islamic moral framework under which boyfriend/girlfriend relationships as well as homosexual relationships are not acceptable. (Clarke)

51. At Park View School we saw schemes of work for PSHE, Biology, and Sex and Relationship Education that had been restricted to comply with a conservative Islamic teaching. In Biology, GCSE year 11, discussion with pupils indicated that the teacher had briefly delivered the theory of evolution to comply with the syllabus, but had told students that ‘This is not what we believe’. Pupils had been told to read the section in the text book on reproduction at home on their own. Therefore, topics such as body structure, function and the menstrual cycle were not covered in class, although pupils needed to familiarise themselves at home in preparation for the GCSE exam. Students told us that as Muslims they were not allowed to study matters such as reproduction with the opposite sex. They also told us that their teachers gave them seats in which to sit in class by gender to avoid having to mix. Students spoke openly about their belief as Muslims that boys and girls should not study certain materials together. (EFA)

Boys and girls are taught separately in religious education and personal development lessons. In a mixed-sex school, this is a missed opportunity for girls and boys to share opinions and discuss together some important matters that are part of their daily lives. (Ofsted)
...girls who spoke with inspectors say that some staff over-react or actively discourage them from speaking to boys and from participating in extra-curricular activities, both on and off the academy site. (Ofsted)

...sex education classes which purported to quote the Quran as stating that “if a woman said no to sex with her husband then the angels would punish her from dusk till dawn”... (Kershaw)

Minutes of a Governing Body meeting dated 11 July 2013 noted that PE and PSHE are taught in single gender groups. (Kershaw)

XXX raised concerns about discrimination against female pupils and staff; XXX expressed an opinion that “female staff have for a long time felt that they do not have equal rights,” and that “there has been an issue with the equal treatment of girls.” We were informed that:

- female pupils were ordered to return from a tennis coaching programme “because the school policy XXX does not allow girls to have a male coach and to take part in any activity with boys;”
- concerns were raised with XXX who was also provided with a document titled ‘Improving Participation of Muslim Girls in Physical Education and School Sport’, who stated that mixed physical education was not allowed because made the men feel uncomfortable and they “did not want the girls to be seen with their bits jumping up and down.” XXX commented that this suggested “some men were seeing girls like this rather than professional adult educators and the girls as children in their care;”
- XXX was instructed XXX that “girls are under no circumstances ever to take part in any sport when a male is present;”
- a residential netball tournament was cancelled with no consultation with parents because the organisers were not able to guarantee there would be no males present;
- complaints were raised internally about incidents of staff being spoken to disrespectfully, especially regarding female members of staff being treated as inferior.” XXX noted that this “had become common at Park View School and any complaints about male Muslims laughed off and never taken seriously. (Kershaw)

4.14...Park View students speak openly about the fact that boys and girls should not study certain matters together. In biology GCSE, Year 11 students had been told to study the reproduction topic at home. Evolution is mentioned only briefly and students are simply directed to the page in the textbook. A teacher who did this went on to tell students that they were looking at the textbook merely to comply with the syllabus but that ‘that was not what they believed’. (Clarke)

4.17 At Park View Educational Trust academies - Park View, Golden Hillock and Nansen Primary - and at Oldknow Academy, teachers have been told that they may not use images and resources in any subject which show even the slightest intimacy between the sexes. Sex education and discussion concerning sexual orientation have been removed from all lessons. The use of technical words, such as condom, the pill and so forth, has been banned. (Clarke)

4.32 There is witness evidence of intolerance in several schools towards those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT). Park View governors and staff have displayed openly homophobic behaviour, using terms such as ‘the gays’ in meetings. The ‘Park View Brotherhood’ discussion group transcripts also reveal homophobic attitudes going unchallenged by staff members. Senior staff have been shouted at in governing body meetings when they attempted to discuss the LGBT agenda. Male and female staff have reported that they have to hide their sexuality. Students say that their teachers do not talk to them about such matters. (Clarke)
4.48 Girls at Park View complained to staff that their parents are too readily contacted if they are seen speaking to a boy. They also say that conclusions are drawn about conversations which are completely unfounded. They feel that they are being harassed. (Clarke)

4.49 ...In Park View maths lessons, where all the teachers are men, the girls were separated at the sides and back of the classroom, while the boys sat in the centre, towards the front. (Clarke)

4.50 The Park View girls’ tennis team was taken to a local schools’ tournament by PE staff after school. When they arrived they found men present. The teacher had to return the girls to school and was suspended by governors until she had written a letter of apology. When interviewed, Mr Hussain explained to me that the girls had to return to the school because it was tennis ‘coaching’, where there would inevitably be physical contact between the male coaches and the female pupils. (Clarke)

4.24 Staff have said that creationism has been taught as fact in science lessons and in assemblies at Park View School. A member of staff at Park View reported that pupils had said: ‘I’m made of clay [...] There is no evolution. I’m made of clay because that is what Mr Hussain [the acting headteacher] told us in assemblies’. (Clarke)

Golden Hillock

Curriculum and gender issues

54. At Golden Hillock School we were told by senior staff and by 2 heads of department that staff had been given instructions by governors banning discussion with students on any matters regarding sexual orientation and intimacy. Therefore heads of department have had to change schemes of work to ensure they comply with governors’ requests. Such changes mean that they have to restrict their use of resources and the information which is provided for and discussed with students. Such limitations affect the broad and balanced teaching of many subjects including art, English, RE and PSHE. The ban also precludes staff from teaching Sex and Relationships Education honestly and openly. Aspects of Safeguarding and Child Protection related to bullying in and out of school are also jeopardised. (EFA)

The academy does not have an effective programme of personal, social, health, economic and citizenship education. (Ofsted)

4.28 At Golden Hillock, we were informed that boys and girls sat separately for assemblies. After the assembly, boys shook hands with a male teacher and girls with a female when exiting. Staff state that senior leaders checked their classrooms and removed Islamic display materials before the Department for Education visited

Recruitment, curriculum and gender

“A minority of staff, including a number of leaders, expressed serious misgivings about a perceived unfairness and lack of transparency in the recruitment process and the breadth and balance of the curriculum.” “Some female members of staff complained of feeling intimidated” by men. (Ofsted)

Religion

XXX although there was no pressure on students to pray, there was an increased focus on prayer following the involvement with Park View Academy. XXX believes that changes implemented at this
time “had the effect of Islamising the School”. We were also informed that in March 2013, a teacher XXX stated during Friday prayers that “other religions do not exist and there is only one God”. (Kershaw)

XXX reported that during an assembly a teacher told children not to listen to Christians as they were all liars. We understand that this incident was reported to a school-based police officer as a crime inciting religious and racial hatred. We are informed that the police officer escalated the matter to the Counter-Terrorism Unit who subsequently visited the School to discuss content of assemblies XXX referred to a teacher telling children they were lucky to be Muslims and not ignorant like Christians and Jews. (Kershaw)

XXX believe that XXX want the School to be run as an Islamic faith school”. XXX commented that the Park View leadership has an agenda “to get Golden Hillock to be an Islamic school in all but name” (Kershaw)

4.41 Staff at Golden Hillock reported that a teacher leading prayers gave a sermon during which he said that Christians and Jews were ignorant. (Clarke)

Governance

A firm called Continuity Governance was then commissioned by the Governing Body to prepare a report, as recommended by the Ofsted report in January 2013. The report, published in July 2013, was highly critical:

- “...there are significant issues with the systems, practices and behaviours within the Governing Body at Golden Hillock School.”
- “The relationship between the Governing Body and the school can best be described as adversarial, characterised by high levels of challenge and low levels of support.”
- “Governors do not always understand and appreciate the difference between their corporate and personal roles which is characterised through inappropriate behaviours”.
- “…the basic knowledge of some governors to understand the detail of school performance is not sufficiently sound.”

We are told that the Governors did not like the outcome and therefore the issues raised in the report were not addressed, XXX stated that XXX was furious and refused to publish the report. XXX told us that the report was not given to the Governing Body because XXX intended to challenge the report before sending it, XXX. The report was not provided to BCC - we are told that BCC were informed that a copy could not be provided to them.

It is therefore of note that nine months later, following an Ofsted inspection on 30 March – 1 April 2014, Golden Hillock (which was now an academy school under the control of PVET) was placed into special measures. The Ofsted report included the following findings:

- “There are fundamental weaknesses in leadership and management, including governance, which have an adverse impact on students’ well-being, their process and on the quality of provision in the school.”
- “Governance is inadequate ... It [the Governing Body] has played little part in shaping the overall academy development plan or in considering how the academy’s finances should be used to support academy developments.”
- “Academy policies have been given scant consideration. The equalities policy is not fit for purpose.”
- “Development plans do not set out clearly how to use the academy’s resources to address the most pressing areas for improvement.” (Kershaw)
XXX told us that “there has been a steady but concerted effort by the School’s Governors to undermine the management of the School”. (Kershaw)

Several witnesses described how a demonstration outside the school was instigated by a governor XXX demanding the sacking of XXX due to XXX examination results. The demonstration included placards which read “Sack the teachers”, “Lazy staff”. (Kershaw)

8.22 … the Council was very aware from other governors, staff at the school and the headteacher of the adverse behaviour shown over time by a group of Muslim governors towards the headteacher. I have already mentioned the letter sent to the Council by a then governor at the school in February 2013 outlining concerns about a group of Muslim governors, to which the Council did not respond. (Clarke)

Nansen

An Ofsted inspection in April 2014 found that governance, safety, pupils’ cultural development, equal opportunities and teaching of religious education were all inadequate. The report also noted that pupils have a limited knowledge of religious beliefs other than Islam and that subjects such as music had been removed from the timetable. XXX commented that music had been removed from the Year 5 and 6 timetables because the curriculum had been collapsed to focus on exams. (Kershaw)

Curriculum

50. The school curriculum at Nansen Primary School is not broad and balanced at KS2. It follows a secondary model with setting throughout and specialist teaching. The timetable in year 6 does not include any lessons in the humanities, arts, music or PSHE. In year 5 there are three hours of creative curriculum on the timetable where there may be a wider range of study, for example the Ancient Greeks and the Egyptians. Younger children, including those in key stage 1 have a similarly restricted and unbalanced curriculum. Children gave feedback that there are no clubs or out of hours activities other than English and maths intervention which are not optional. (EFA)

The governing body is overly controlling in the day-to-day running of the school. For example, when the teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage wanted pupils to take part in a nativity play, governors insisted on vetting a copy of the script for its suitability and told staff they must not use a doll as the ‘baby Jesus’. (Ofsted)

Pupils do not get a broad education. The governing body has removed some subjects, such as music, from the timetable. (Ofsted)

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 told inspectors that they felt it was unfair that they could not have music lessons. They also told inspectors that there had been a music room where pupils were taught to play a musical instrument before the school became an academy. Since then, this had been taken away. Pupils also said that they would like the opportunity to learn a European language, such as Spanish or French, as they wanted to know more about people from other countries and backgrounds. (Ofsted)

4.11 At Nansen Primary, a secondary model has been introduced and primary teachers have become subject teachers. The curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2, is not broad and balanced. Each week Year 6 children study maths for over seven hours, English for nine hours and science for almost two
hours, from Monday to Thursday. On Friday, they have a carousel of Arabic, RE (Islamic syllabus), ICT, PE and Friday prayers. There are no lessons in the humanities, arts, music or PSHE. The Year 5 balance is similar but also includes three hours of creative curriculum during which there may be a wider range of study, for example, the Greeks and the Egyptians. However, some of this work is studied through the Islamic perspective. Younger children, including those in Key Stage 1, have a similarly restricted and unbalanced curriculum. (Clarke)

4.12 Efforts were made to arrange for whole school activities and wider experiences but these were reported to have been regularly challenged by Tahir Alam and the chair of the governing body, who both tried to force the cancellation of events. Staff expressed concern about the curriculum, its lack of breadth and balance, and the Islamic direction it was taking. They did not think that the imposed secondary model, with subject-only specialist teaching, was appropriate in the primary setting. Parents were reportedly unhappy with these changes. (Clarke)

Recruitment

XXX of Nansen was appointed. Witnesses expressed concern around this appointment on the basis that the individual was appointed despite lack of experience and weak reference, and the interview panel was weighted with representatives from Park View, notwithstanding that the individual was Park View and had connections with Park View. (Kershaw)

Religion

We were informed that after Nansen became an academy, teaching materials were provided by Park View and Christmas and Diwali celebrations no longer took place. XXX said that “there’s a real sense (sic) of if you speak out against it, then you’re speaking out against Islam and you’re a bad Muslim” and that there was a “real climate of fear”. (Kershaw)

Gender issues

Shahid Akmal [Nansen’s chair of governors until he was removed the previous week] told an undercover reporter from Birmingham Mail sister paper the Mirror, that “white women have the least amount of morals”, white children were “lazy” and that British people have “colonial blood”. Akmal claimed that women were “emotionally weaker” than men and that their role was to look after children and the home. He defended jailing or exiling gays and adulterers under Sharia Law as a “moral position to hold”. (Birmingham Mail 22 July 2014.

Clarke quotes extracts from conversations among a group of staff at Park View Educational Trust schools on a social media site:

7.4 The two most prolific contributors are Teacher C, with 469 messages, and Razwan Faraz, with 423 messages. Mr Faraz was formerly a teacher at Park View and Adderley Primary School, has been a chair of governors and governor at two other local schools, and is now the Vice-Principal at Nansen Primary School.

Razwan Faraz 29/05/2013 12:51
Segregating has much more advantages than disadvantages, some of the best private schools are single gender. However it does bring additional challenges and so long as those are handled with care and depth then it should be okz
7.16 In May 2013, Razwan Faraz posted a link to a Guardian article about gay marriage. He preceded the link with a comment, as shown below. The comment went unchallenged by any other members of the discussion group:

Razwan Faraz 26/05/2013 08:57
These animals are going out full force. As teachers we must be aware and counter their satanic ways of influencing young people.

Oldknow

Governance

Leadership and management are inadequate. The chair and other governors exert too much control over operational matters in the academy. (Ofsted)

A small group of governors is making significant changes to the ethos and culture of the academy without full consultation. They are endeavouring to promote a particular and narrow faith-based ideology in what is a maintained and non-faith academy. (Ofsted)

Inspectors found that important decisions are being made by a small number of governors, including the Chair of Governors, rather than by the governing body collectively. Governors, especially the Chair of Governors, exert too much influence in the day-to-day running of the academy. (Ofsted)

4.8 At Oldknow, the headteacher was put under relentless pressure to remove members of her leadership team, although at the time the school was rated outstanding. When the two members of staff resigned, they were immediately successful in securing appointments to senior posts at other schools. The head was asked to take gardening leave. (Clarke)

‘The pressures outlined in the Trojan Horse letter are very real and it mustn’t be allowed to happen again’ (Bhupinder Kondal, headteacher of Oldknow, Birmingham Post 21 August 2014. She resigned in January claiming governors had undermined her authority and driven her out, and has now been reinstated by the new academy trustees).

Religion

We are told that in or around December 2013, a Christmas assembly was held during which statements were made that children should not be sending Christmas cards, that Jesus was not born of Mary and that it was unbelievable that Christians believe in the Christmas story; children were encouraged to chant ‘No, we don’t’ when asked questions such as ‘Do we celebrate or believe in Christmas?’ and whether they believed that Jesus was born on Christmas day. (Kershaw)

The Education Funding Agency’s report dated May 2014 stated that:
- the Academy is increasingly Islamic in its vision, ethos and day-to-day operations, for example,
- removal of music from summer pantomime, cancellation of Easter, Diwali and Christmas performances, removal of summer fair stalls associated with gambling, and staff reports that Christianity had been added to learning only because of EFA’s visit;
- recent changes to the curriculum led to subjects becoming marginalised - PSHE and SRE are not taught; the Academy’s SACRE determination expired in January 2013 and has not been renewed.
4.27 Until this year, Oldknow had a range of annual activities which both staff and children state were very enjoyable and to which everyone looked forward, including parents. These were the pantomime, the annual play, the fair and the Christmas, Eid and Diwali celebrations. The fair was always well attended by parents. During the fair there was a raffle in which parents took part. This year, however, the fair was stopped by the governing body because ‘Muslims do not gamble’. The children and staff had been rehearsing for the annual production, The Wizard of Oz. Late into rehearsals, the children told their teachers that they were not allowed to sing because it was Ramadan. The teachers believed the children had been put under pressure because they had always used music in the past. After much persuasion they performed the play without accompaniment.

4.40 Before Christmas 2013, one of the teachers at Oldknow led two assemblies. These were not held on Friday and were not expected to be Islamic. During the assemblies he made statements such as ‘Jesus wasn’t born in Bethlehem, was he?’, to which the children were expected to reply ‘No’. He allegedly carried on ‘We don’t celebrate Christmas do we?’ Again, the children were expected to reply ‘No’. Staff in attendance stated that the children were looking around at each other, uncertain what to do and reluctant to shout out. Staff, including senior staff, walked out of the assembly, leaving the children.

Curriculum

4.15 The choice of modern language has been restricted to the study of Arabic or Urdu at several schools. At Oldknow, Arabic was implemented following a government initiative to have a modern foreign language on the curriculum, although only 30% of parents responded to the questionnaire about it. The governors put pressure on the headteacher to introduce Arabic so that children could learn the Qur’an. No other language was considered and a teacher was employed to teach the subject across all year groups. As a result, other lessons were either removed or reduced; for instance music, art and design technology. Following the appointment of a new vice-principal, there was increased promotion of Islamic education, with children having to learn the Qur’an by heart.

Saltley

Governance

Leaders have no confidence in the governing body. In protest, some senior leaders refused to take part in a recent review of leadership and governance. Neither leaders nor governors have an accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they are unable to plan and deliver work to improve the school. (Ofsted)

The equality policy is out of date. Although a new policy was written by the assistant headteacher, the governing body has insisted it is not circulated. Some members of staff told Her Majesty’s Inspectors that they are treated unequally because of their beliefs, religion or background. Governors have not addressed this significant concern. (Ofsted)

Many staff have lost faith in the senior leaders’ and governors’ ability to lead the school. They told Her Majesty’s Inspectors that the school is neither well led nor well managed. Particular disquiet was voiced about the governing body. This lack of confidence and breakdown of relationships is preventing the school moving forward. (Ofsted)
Governors and senior leaders provide no agreed vision or direction for the school. As a result there is a lack of clarity about what needs to be done. (Ofsted)

Inspectors judged that the local authority has been slow to react to the school’s decline. Although the local authority is fully aware of the complexities within the school community, it has done little to help the school to improve. Local authority officers have offered advice to leaders and governors but their recommendations have not been acted upon. (Ofsted)

The governing body has spent the school budget unwisely. For example, they have paid private investigators to interrogate the emails of senior staff, spent £55,000 unnecessarily on the services of a private solicitor and paid for meals in restaurants. The £12,000 spent on consultancy services did not have sufficient impact on improving the quality of education. (Ofsted)

There were known to be XXX Governors involved in the “harassment, bullying and intimidation” XXX at Saltley. A number of witnesses described a “hostile” and “challenging” attitude XXX with an “aggressive” tone in XXX meetings and “constant undermining”. XXX whilst XXX saw the governors as being disrespectful and challenging XXX authority, the governors were not trying to be unsupportive but were “just being cautious” in relation to decisions which would bind the school. Increasingly the governors interfered with operational matters and we were told that there started to become a real lack of understanding of the role of governors. We were told XXX “that the Governors should decide what staff do in terms of their roles and responsibilities and queried why XXX was making the decisions on the recruitment of staff”. We were told by another witness that the “Governors could be challenging in quite an intimidating way” and asked questions related to the day-to-day management of the school. (Kershaw)

In February 2013, an external independent investigation was commissioned XXX. On completion of the investigation, a supplementary paper was produced by the investigator which noted remarks and observations made during the investigation process which gave the investigator cause for concern. The concerns raised were that some witnesses interviewed appeared frightened and were reluctant to talk, but comments were made to suggest that:
  o Some members of the Governing Body may use undue influence;
  o Matters were decided by the Governing Body before meetings;
  o There was an atmosphere of distrust and constant criticism of the school by XXX Governors; and
  o There were friends and relatives of staff with connections to XXX Governors.
(Kershaw)

A number of witnesses also described how the Governors commissioned the services of a private investigator to review the emails of the Senior Leadership Team. It was perceived as being a way to try and find a reason for getting rid of key members of staff. We have had sight of an invoice relating to ‘Operation Saltley’ payable to ‘Expert Investigations Limited’. (Kershaw)

There was a Section 8 Ofsted report at the school in November 2013 which was critical of the Governing Body, saying that governors had failed to act upon BCC advice about their roles and responsibilities, and that governors were spending a disproportionate amount of time on routine aspects of school life. The report also noted that relationships between the Governing Body and the Head Teacher were poor and were hindering the development of the school. One witness explained that following the report, a letter was sent to BCC by the Governors placing the blame on the Head Teacher. On 25 November 2013, BCC then wrote a letter to Governors noting its “concerns about the governance of Saltley School”. The letter noted that the Section 8 Ofsted inspection required urgent action and commented that “little if any progress had been made”. The letter also noted that
BCC was “concerned about the Governing Body’s understanding of its role” and advised that the Governing Body should “reflect on its leadership and composition to ensure its members have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to lead the school out of its current fragile situation.” The letter concluded by recommending that the National Governors Association carry out an external review of governance.

The National Governors’ Association did then carry out an external review of governance in the period January to March 2014. The associated report dated 9 April 2014 recommended an overhaul of the Governing Body. Under the heading ‘Key actions to be undertaken’, the report stated “overhaul GB organisation to ensure strategic focus”. This action included: a review of constitution and structure of the Governing Body; a recommendation for skills assessment, training and appraisal systems for governors; development of chairing and clerking; and improvement of ethos, protocols and behaviour in relation to preparation for and conduct during meetings.

Following this, an Ofsted inspection was carried out in April 2014 and put the school into special measures. The inspection report stated that:
- Governors interfered with the day-to-day running of the school and refused to accept that the school is in crisis;
- The Chair of Governors and Vice Chair of Governors were unaware that staff are divided, morale is low and increasing number of staff have decided to leave; and
- That the Senior Leadership Team has no confidence in the Governing Body.

The report also stated that the findings of the National Governors’ Association’s external review had not been shared with BCC or the whole of the Governing Body.

Notwithstanding the series of events above, the Governors remained in position until their collective resignation in June 2014. (Kershaw)