

Extremism and brainwashing kids at school – A crime against humanity?

In recent weeks, the issue of extremism and brainwashing in UK schools has once again re-occurred in the media and in parliament. Specifically, education secretary Nicky Morgan announced that there would be certain school reforms following ‘disturbing’ findings in Birmingham schools.

These findings were uncovered by education commissioner Peter Clarke. He was appointed to the role when a letter, detailing what was happening in certain schools in the Midlands, was uncovered. Known as the ‘Operation Trojan Horse’ letter, it showed plans to push a more Islamist doctrine in some schools – ousting any teacher who did not actively follow the same agenda.

The report

In his report, Clarke found that in some Birmingham Schools there was an Islamist ethos that was not only “intolerant” but also “aggressive”. In some cases, sexism, homophobia and hostility to other forms of extremism were being actively promoted.

Clearly, this level of intolerance is not acceptable within our schools, primarily because of the ease with which children are easily led.

How do you solve the brainwashing and extremism problem?

In response to Clarke’s findings, Morgan introduced two new reforms, aimed at helping head teachers to overcome any obstacles in running their schools in the correct manner. She introduced a new education commissioner for Birmingham, where the majority of extremism is in evidence, as well as a new board of head teachers for staff to receive extra support.

These new tiers of oversight were specifically created to support teachers, making sure that extremist views are not influencing their work.

The responsibility placed on the shoulders of a teacher, at both primary and secondary level, is often a heavy burden to carry. And it is important that they are properly supported and regularly assessed, to make sure the curriculum is being taught correctly.

Religious extremism needs to be avoided and an understanding of difference and diversity should be instilled in our school system.

Conclusion – a crime against humanity

The period up until the age of 18, is one of the most important periods in a person’s life. The ability to absorb information will never be better and a child’s ideals are very often moulded at this time.

For this very reason, brainwashing children to extremist views can be seen as a crime against humanity.

Children have the right to have a balanced upbringing, where an innate tolerance and understanding of cultural and religious diversity is a strong platform for the future.

If our children are influenced by extremist versions of religion, humanity will suffer when our society becomes more fractured and intolerant.