



The establishment's war on womanhood

Description

[St Paul's Girls' School](#) no longer has a 'head girl'. 'Girl' was deemed too binary and insufficiently inclusive for this expensive, single-sex establishment. So it's been ditched and replaced by the more gender-neutral title, 'head of school'.

This matters. It sends a message that the word 'girl' is outdated and offensive. When one of the country's top girls' schools, under the guise of being 'progressive' and 'inclusive', can no longer bring itself to name the sex of its pupils, we know that something has gone badly wrong – not just in education, but also at the heart of the British establishment.

Love or loathe them, the whole point of single-sex schools is to provide an educational experience specifically tailored to the needs of either boys or girls. For girls, this might mean opportunities to gain confidence, assume leadership roles, or shine in what might be seen as stereotypically 'male' subjects, like science and maths. Parents of pupils at St Paul's are prepared to pay £26,000 a year for this advantage.

Yet, at a recent training session, staff at the school were taught that there are at least '150 gender identities'. If the school's management team really believes this nonsense then it's not just the title of 'head girl' it needs to ditch, but also the name of the school along with its entry criteria and ethos. A girls' school unable to instil in its pupils pride and confidence in their sex is worse than useless.

A swathe of universities and government departments may have formally severed links with [Stonewall](#) over recent weeks, but the LGBT charity is clearly still influential. Last week it issued advice that teachers should replace 'boys and girls' with 'learners', and hold mixed-sex PE classes. It recommends that trans pupils use the toilets and changing rooms that match their gender identity rather than their sex. Hundreds of primary and secondary schools have signed up as Stonewall School and College Champions – St Paul's is reported to be one of them.

Indeed, earlier this month St Paul's again hit the headlines for having invited a team of American

researchers to talk to pupils about changing sex. Their presentation highlighted the supposedly positive mental-health outcomes for girls who live as boys and vice versa. This is not education, this is transgender propaganda. It promotes a harmful ideology that may take girls down the path of chest-binding or seeking out hormone therapy. It would surely be far better for pupils to celebrate being girls, and for schools to promote the limitless opportunities available to women, rather than ‘transing away’ women and girls altogether.

Sadly, as we have seen time and again, it is not just in schools where ‘female’ is now a dirty word. Just last week the Royal Academy (RA) removed work by textile artist Jess de Wahls from its gift shop, following just eight complaints about de Wahls’ ‘transphobia’. De Wahls is a feminist and her work is a bold celebration of women and their bodies – one exhibition she held was titled *Big Swinging Ovaries*.

It is perfectly possible to defend and celebrate women’s female bodies without being transphobic, but clearly this is a distinction lost on the RA. They simply erased the sinner. Her embroidery was withdrawn from the gift shop and grovelling apologies were offered to the handful of people who claimed to have been offended.

De Wahls’ crime lay not in her artwork, but in her thoughts – she penned a gender-critical blog post in 2019 and has been hounded for it ever since. Today’s artists – especially, it seems, women – must be ideologically pure and not transgress against the Gods of Stonewall and their disciples in our cultural institutions. Putting female artists out of work, leaving women unable to claim ownership of their physical bodies, and destroying creativity is, apparently, a small price to pay in the face of eight complaints. The desire to acquiesce is truly astonishing.

Elite schools, like St Paul’s, are busy turning out the next generation of woke university students who will, in turn, go on to become future academics, curators, publishers and policymakers. They may be well-versed in the language of diversity and inclusion, but the ruthless zeal with which activists pursue their cause has no room for political diversity, intellectual differences or even human empathy.

Sadly, it is women – and feminists in particular – who are most often targeted by these woke warriors. From Jess de Wahls to JK Rowling to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, women who dare to defend sex-based rights repeatedly find themselves under attack. For an elite girls’ school to be lining up behind those prepared to see ‘girl’ and ‘woman’ erased shows us just how deep-rooted transgender ideology – and the cowardice of its enablers – has become.

There has been some welcome pushback against this ideology recently, from public bodies withdrawing from Stonewall to an important legal victory for Maya Forstater to the launch of a new network for gender-critical academics at the Open University. But this barely registers a scratch against the tyranny of woke.

by Joanna Williams

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