

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

QRO [REDACTED]

1. My name is QRO [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I obtained a BA from [REDACTED] having studied there between 1988 and 1991. [REDACTED]

Employment with the school

3. I was employed by Loretto School from [REDACTED] I taught [REDACTED] to the full age range of pupils. I was involved in [REDACTED] and I [REDACTED] I was appointed [REDACTED] in approximately 2002. This made me responsible for [REDACTED] teaching and partly responsible for the provision of [REDACTED] I was an academic tutor throughout my time at the school. This involved overseeing the academic progress of a group of pupils, communicating with their teachers, pastoral staff and parents about their progress. As a tutor I also contributed to the work of boarding houses. This meant doing one night's duty per week helping the resident house staff to run the house. I worked in several houses during my time at the school, namely School House, Seton House, Balcarres House and Hope House. I do not have a record of dates for each house.
4. The recruitment process was that I was interviewed by the headmaster, director of studies and head of [REDACTED] References were taken up from my previous employer.

The prerequisite for the job was a degree in [REDACTED] General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) registration was not, at that time, a prerequisite.

5. As a [REDACTED] teacher my line manager was the head of [REDACTED] with whom there was frequent liaison, daily on an informal basis and weekly at department meetings. As a [REDACTED] teacher initially my line manager was the head of [REDACTED] and then, when I became [REDACTED] my line manager was the director of studies. There was frequent liaison. As an academic tutor my line manager was latterly the relevant head of year, these positions did not exist when I started and it would then have been the director of studies. Again, there were meetings to liaise. In the boarding houses my line managers were the relevant housemaster or housemistress and again there were frequent opportunities for liaison and discussion. As a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] my line manager was the [REDACTED] or the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
6. Immediately prior to my first term there were days of induction training led by those responsible for the various areas of the school that I was to be involved in. This was followed up by regular in-service training (INSET) at the beginnings of terms. I also undertook reasonably regular academic INSET days arranged by examining boards in my subjects.

Policy

7. I did not have involvement in policy relating to care.

Strategic planning

8. I was not involved in the school's strategic planning.

Other staff

9. In my last 3 years at the school, a teacher of [REDACTED] was employed and, as [REDACTED] I had some responsibility for managing her. Her timetable was [REDACTED] I was responsible for her [REDACTED] teaching, ensuring that courses were being effectively delivered and that her classroom practice was positive and effective.

Recruitment of staff

10. I was involved in interviewing the teacher of [REDACTED] that I mentioned above.
11. I do not recall anything about recruitment policy. Recruitment was, I believe, often undertaken by advertisement in the Times Education Supplement. Shortlists were drawn up by the headmaster and relevant heads of department. Interviews were then undertaken by the headmaster, heads of department, director of studies or other members of management most suitable.
12. I believe that references were obtained. I read one for the [REDACTED] teacher mentioned above. The reference formed part of the printed package of materials about the teacher, which included a CV. I think references were expected to include comments on the teacher's ability as a teacher, reliability, character and fitness to work with pupils. I do not know whether referees were spoken to.

Training of staff

13. I was not involved in the training or personal development of staff.
14. I think that, in relation to pastoral care, resident house staff were encouraged to attend training that was specific to boarding schools. All staff, teaching and other, attended regular INSET on pastoral care and child protection.

Supervision/staff appraisal / staff evaluation

- 15. I was not formally involved in supervision, staff appraisal or staff evaluation. I was asked at my own appraisal to comment on the teaching ability and performance of the [REDACTED] teacher mentioned above.

- 16. Appraisal underwent changes in terms of frequency and format and paperwork under different headmasters. I think that, for the first several years of my time there, it took place every two years. More recently it became every year. Appraisal of me involved the headmaster and another member of the senior management team. It focussed on the different areas in which I worked. Targets would be agreed during an appraisal meeting.

Living arrangements

- 17. During my time at the school, my family and I lived in several different properties owned by the school. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- 18. Other staff at the school lived in a range of proximities to the school and to the children. Housemasters, housemistresses and assistants were resident in boarding houses. The school owned a number of properties in the town which housed staff. As these properties were sold it became more common for staff to live further away in non-school properties.

- 19. Resident house staff would have access to residential areas. Visiting staff who were on duty would tend to operate from the house office.

Culture within Loretto School

20. I think that when I started at the school some aspects of the culture felt quite old fashioned. There was still quite a strong sense of deference from younger pupils towards older ones, perhaps especially among boys. There was also sometimes a lack of respect given by the boys to the girls. I think that this culture changed significantly during subsequent years because it was challenged by staff and increasingly by pupils too.
21. I was never aware of 'fagging' existing as a system, though that is not to say that junior pupils were not asked or told to run errands for senior pupils.

Discipline and punishment

22. When I first arrived there was a system called 'Parade'. Members of staff could place a pupil on 'Parade'. I think that prefects could also put someone on 'Parade'. I think that a pupil undergoing this punishment then had to turn up at an allotted time and carry out either a specific task such as picking up litter, or do some running around the astroturf hockey pitch. This would be supervised by a prefect. This system was meant to be for minor day-to-day infractions of rules, for instance repeated lateness. I am not certain when this form of punishment ended, I think it may have been under Michael Mavor as headmaster. Increasingly a system of detentions took over for those kind of infractions, or to deal with academic matters such as repeatedly late work. More serious disciplinary matters would be dealt with by housemasters, senior managers and the headmaster. Discipline was part of the remit of the Vicegerent, also known as the deputy head.
23. I think there probably was a formal policy on discipline and punishment. I believe that there was a policy published in the red diary, a small book given to all pupils and staff. This contained various policies as well as a list of school rules and guidelines. I think that record keeping became more thorough and systematic over time. Certainly

latterly there were very detailed records kept by the Vicegerent about any disciplinary matter that reached him. And there would be accurate lists of those who had been placed in detention.

24. Senior pupils, prefects, certainly used to be part of the running of some aspects of discipline. I do not know how their behaviour was supervised. Junior pupils would sometimes feel that a particular prefect was harsh or that a particular instance of being placed on 'Parade' was unfair.

Day to day running of the school

25. I would not say that I was involved in the day to day running of the school. However, I was involved in the various areas that I worked in and also carried out some "whole school" duties such as tea duty or lunch duty. I saw children in a range of contexts as they went about their day.
26. I would say that I had some confidence that if a child were being abused that it would come to light at or around the time. I think that colleagues were generally caring and vigilant. Also, I think the children were generally quite good at voicing their concerns about things that were bothering them and that the atmosphere was generally one that was conducive to them feeling OK about sharing concerns.

Concerns about the school

27. I am unaware of the school being the subject of such concern. I would think that communication with parents about such matters would be the responsibility of the headmaster and director of pastoral care.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

28. I believe that children in the school knew that they could speak to an adult of their choice, in terms of who they felt would be most appropriate or comfortable with such as their tutor, a member of house staff or another teacher.
29. The process would be that a member of staff would pass on a complaint or concern to a senior colleague as appropriate to the complaint or concern. With a wellbeing, child protection or pastoral concern that would be passed to the director of pastoral care.
30. In my time at the school I think I received a few complaints from pupils about colleagues' teaching. I passed these on to the relevant heads of department. I do not know how or where complaints were recorded.

Trusted adult/confidante

31. I think that children were encouraged to speak to anyone on the staff with whom they felt able to share concerns. Formally the person most concerned with such issues was the director of pastoral care and the child protection co-ordinator. My understanding during my time at the school was that these were two roles but that they were generally occupied by one person. I believe there was a post of child protection officer when I first started at the school. I do not know how practice changed over time.
32. In my experience children at the school raised a wide range of issues and concerns and tended to speak to a person that they trusted or felt was most appropriate to the nature of their concern, often a member of their house staff team.

Abuse

33. I think the school did have a definition of abuse. There were different categories of abuse; physical, sexual, emotional and neglect were some. I do not recall the detail of the definition but examples of abuse were inappropriate touching, sexual

behaviour, violent behaviour, bullying or undermining behaviour and unreasonable punishment.

34. The definition of abuse was communicated and explained to staff working at the school through regular child protection INSET sessions, often at the start of an academic year, from experts in the field such as Dr Sue Hamilton. I do not recall when the definition of abuse was introduced or if it changed.

Child protection arrangements

35. There were regular INSET sessions which dealt with pastoral care and issues of abuse or mistreatment. The guidance on reports of abuse from children was that we should listen to what the child was telling us and explain that we would need to pass this on to someone equipped to investigate. We were not to investigate such a matter ourselves. The Child Protection Co-ordinator would investigate. I don't believe there was any discretion in terms of how we were to deal with such matters.
36. The child protection arrangements in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment, or inappropriate conduct by staff, or other adults, towards children at the school were INSET days, refreshed and revisited regularly, training in pastoral care such as that run by the Scottish Social Services Council. I cannot say how successfully they worked but I was not aware of abusive treatment of children.

External monitoring

37. I was aware of inspectors visiting the school. We seemed to be inspected quite regularly. These were, I think, described as Care and Welfare Inspections. I do not recall the name of the body carrying out the inspections. I think that they spoke to groups of children. Staff were not present. They did speak to me. I did not receive feedback but was aware that the school received a report and was scored on a range of areas of care and welfare.

Record-keeping

38. I do not know what the school's policy on record keeping was. I would not have been privy to records relating to allegations of abuse or ill-treatment and cannot comment on their quality.
39. I do not know what the policy on record keeping was when I joined the school. As a broad point I certainly felt that record keeping generally became something that was seen as more important and that was carried out in a more detailed and systematic way. For instance, when I arrived there was a folder in the staff common room in which were recorded any 'Special Circumstances' relating to pupils, for instance family problems. This was not a securely kept folder. By the time I left records were more secure and more detailed. There were, for instance, specific forms for reporting different kinds of concern about a pupil, for example there was a Welfare Concern Form.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

40. I was not involved in any investigations on behalf of the school into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of children.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

41. I was not involved in the handling of reports to, or civil claims made against, the school by former pupils, concerning historical abuse

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

42. I did not become aware of police investigations into alleged abuse at the school. I have not given the police or the Crown a statement concerning alleged abuse of

children cared for at the school. I have not given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school.

Convicted abusers

- 43. I do not know if any person who worked at the school was convicted of the abuse of a child or children at the school.

Specific alleged abusers

CRD [redacted]

- 44. I recall CRD [redacted] I am not certain as to which years my employment coincided with his, however, it may have been around 1996 to 1997. I do not know what age he was. He was a [redacted] He had no role in relation to me and I remember very little about him. I cannot say what he was like as I had few memorable interactions with him. I did not know him well at all.

- 45. I only saw him with children during chapel services attended by the whole school. He [redacted] with some authority and presence. I did not see him discipline children. I did not see, or hear of, him abusing children.

CRL [redacted]

- 46. I recall CRL [redacted] I am not certain as to which years my employment coincided with his, [redacted] I do not know his age. He was a [redacted] teacher. He and his [redacted] board. I remember that he was efficient and helpful. He was well organised and always got the job done in a friendly way. I tended to see him and communicate just around [redacted] specific tasks [redacted] so I did not know him well but always said hello in passing.

47. I did not see him with children. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I did not see him discipline children. I did not see, or hear of, him abusing children.

BND [REDACTED]

48. I recall BND [REDACTED] I am not certain as to which years my employment coincided with his. He was employed twice during my time. I do not know his age. He was the [REDACTED] and then housemaster. He had no particular position in relation to me. I remember his humour and his public performances as [REDACTED] He was very bright, very articulate, a committed Christian and confident [REDACTED] I knew him to talk to. He was chatty in the common room.

49. I saw him with children, generally in the context of whole school [REDACTED] He was confident and humorous with children. I did not see him discipline children. I did not see, or hear of, him abusing children.

Specific allegations of abuse made against me for which there has been no criminal investigation and / or conviction.

50. [REDACTED] in 2014 I drank far too much and danced in a wild and boisterous manner with some pupils including girls. I have, and had the next day, little memory of the events because of the alcohol consumed. I was disciplined through the school's disciplinary system which involved some pupils being interviewed by the director of pastoral care. I was also interviewed by the headmaster and the bursar. I was given a written warning.

51. I had an intimate, sexual relationship with a former pupil [REDACTED] which began in the summer holiday of 2011 after she had left school. At this time she was 18 years old. The relationship began with some text messages between [REDACTED] and me after she had left the school. I did not have a relationship with her while she was a pupil. I did not have relationships with, other, pupils.

52. My understanding is that the allegations that were made by [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] were referred to Police Scotland and that they considered the evidence and allegations with which they were presented.
53. When Michael Mavor was headmaster between 2001 and 2008, there was an ongoing difficulty with a parent. A number of leaflets were dropped outside school which alleged abuse by me and some other staff. I never saw the leaflet but was told about it. It was, apparently, anonymous. In a similar vein and during the same period, an unsigned letter was sent to Michael Mavor which falsely alleged that I let or made girls put their hands in my pockets during [REDACTED] lessons. The headmaster spoke to me about both these documents. What other investigation took place, I do not know. There was no outcome to these anonymously made complaints. My response was that I had not committed the acts of abuse that were alleged in these complaints.
54. I have been made aware of an allegation by another pupil, from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] namely 1996 to 2001. I am told that this pupil approached the school and reported that, while she had no direct accusations against me, she thought the behaviour that led to my dismissal was the "tip of the iceberg" and that it was well known amongst her year group that I had consistently targeted one girl per year. I am told that she knew of three girls, aged 16 to 18, who I had approached and who had rebuffed my advances, as well as one, aged 18, whom I had a relationship with, which culminated in sexual intercourse at the [REDACTED]. I am told that she reported that I had been seen or found by pupils having sex in the theatre, the "bunker" (understood to be a music room), as well as Musselburgh golf course. I am also told that in her view my behaviour was unacceptable, an abuse of my position, and was grooming. While female pupils had crushes on teachers, unlike others, I took advantage of this. She suggests, for example, that I deliberately endeared myself to senior female pupils as a cool teacher and "one of us", by way of lax discipline and positive action such as buying drinks for them.
55. My response to this is that the evidence referred to in the statement is not first-hand direct evidence of wrongdoing. The evidence does not include any eye-witness

evidence. It amounts to only rumour and alleged hearsay. The characterisation of me as someone who routinely targeted and groomed teenage girls is denied.

Leaving the school

- 56. In August [redacted] at the start of the academic year, my understanding is that [redacted] [redacted] went to the school to inform the headmaster of our relationship. At that time or during subsequent interviews she also falsely alleged that she had been groomed by me whilst at school. [redacted]
[redacted] I went through the school's disciplinary procedure and was dismissed for misconduct.

- 57. I have not had any reference from the school since leaving it. As I began to apply for some unskilled jobs in order to earn a living, it became clear that the [redacted] had rendered me effectively unemployable by any other company or individual.

Other information

- 58. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..... QRO [redacted]

Dated..... 28 March 2021