

1 Tuesday, 26 October 2021

2 (10.00 am)

3 LADY SMITH: Good morning and welcome to another week in  
4 which we are hearing evidence in relation to our  
5 boarding schools case study and over the next couple of  
6 days we will continue to hear evidence particularly in  
7 relation to Queen Victoria School.

8 We start today with a witness in person, and I think  
9 the witness is here and ready; is that right, Mr Brown?

10 MR BROWN: Yes, my Lady. It's the witness 'John'.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 'John' (sworn)

13 LADY SMITH: I'm glad to say we've been able to arrange  
14 ample distancing in this building, so I hope you feel  
15 comfortable with that.

16 You've actually got, if that's your statement,  
17 you've got it in the red folder in front of you as well,  
18 and it will come up on screen, but use whichever is  
19 comfortable for you to do.

20 If you have any questions during your evidence,  
21 please ask. If you want a break, let me know. It  
22 matters to me that you're as comfortable as you can be,  
23 so if it works for you, it works for me, all right?

24 A. Yes.

25 LADY SMITH: If you're ready, 'John', I'll then hand over to

1 Mr Brown and he'll take it from there. Is that all  
2 right?

3 A. Yes.

4 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

5 Questions from Mr Brown

6 MR BROWN: My Lady, thank you.

7 Good morning, 'John'. Her Ladyship has just touched  
8 on the statement, and if we could just look to that  
9 briefly; first of all, it has a reference number which  
10 I'll read in for the Inquiry purposes, which is  
11 WIT-1-000000597.

12 This is a statement that, I think, as you see, runs  
13 to 16 pages and which, on the final page, concludes with  
14 the paragraph:

15 "I have no objection to my witness statement being  
16 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.  
17 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are  
18 true."

19 And you signed that document on 30 October 2020; is  
20 that correct?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. And we would understand that, with Covid, this was  
23 a process where I think things were done not face to  
24 face, you were sent questions, you responded, further  
25 questions came in, you responded to those and the

1 statement was drawn up, and then you read it and signed  
2 it when you were happy with it?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. Okay. In terms of the evidence today, obviously the  
5 most important part is that we hear you. I'm softly  
6 spoken, I use the microphone. You're quite softly  
7 spoken too. Can you, if need be, bring the microphone  
8 a little closer just to ensure that we hear. Thank you  
9 very much.

10 As we see going to page 1, you were born in 1952 and  
11 I think you're now 69?

12 A. Correct, yes.

13 Q. And you have a background, plainly, in teaching and of  
14 particular interest to us is the time you spent at  
15 Queen Victoria School, which I think was 1997 to 2012?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And at 2012, you were able to retire?

18 A. That's right.

19 Q. And you've remained away from education since; is that  
20 correct?

21 A. That's correct, yes.

22 Q. You were a [REDACTED] teacher, presumably, to begin with?

23 A. Initially, yes.

24 Q. And we see the history of moving from a number of state  
25 schools, Central Belt, Islands and Highlands, then going

1 up north and then into Queen Victoria School in 1997.  
2 Should we understand you were in the state system  
3 throughout your career?  
4 A. For most of it, yes.  
5 Q. Prior to coming to QVS, which then went into boarding --  
6 A. I was in the state system for all of my time before QVS.  
7 Q. Yes. Starting off as a [REDACTED] teacher, then  
8 progressing to management levels?  
9 A. That's right.  
10 Q. In terms of your teaching career, we see you began in  
11 1983. Presumably at that stage -- and this is a state  
12 school, [REDACTED] -- you were able to belt in theory;  
13 is that correct?  
14 A. In theory, yes. I can't quite remember when corporal  
15 punishment was stopped, but I think it was about 85.  
16 Q. Right.  
17 A. But there was no corporal punishment in the school when  
18 I was there.  
19 Q. Did you have a belt?  
20 A. There was one in my drawer which was left there by  
21 a previous teacher.  
22 Q. Did you ever belt?  
23 A. No, no.  
24 Q. And from your time, obviously, it stopped in the state  
25 sector --

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. -- at some stage in the mid '80s from what you recall?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. But the first school you went to it wasn't used to so  
5 you never actually --

6 A. I never saw it.

7 Q. -- saw it at all, all right. Was the feeling within  
8 that first school and in teaching -- presumably you went  
9 through teacher training shortly before starting in 83,  
10 was the feeling that corporal punishment was something  
11 that should be removed from the equation?

12 A. I can't remember it being talked about very much. And  
13 generally, if you were to take a poll, it would seem  
14 that the teachers wanted rid of it and the pupils  
15 didn't. For some reason a lot of pupils preferred to  
16 get things over and done with rather than a protracted  
17 written punishment or suspension or something. But the  
18 thought amongst teachers was that it had to go.

19 Q. Okay. And I think, just staying on that, when you came  
20 to Queen Victoria School, obviously, it was not used?

21 A. Absolutely not.

22 Q. Was there any discussion of it wistfully from staff who  
23 perhaps had seen it about its demise?

24 A. Not that I can recall, no.

25 Q. You wouldn't have seen these documents but if we could

1           turn briefly to MOD 574, and these are documents from  
2           the 1980s. If we could go, please, to page 83 and if we  
3           go down to halfway down, you'll see item (d) on that  
4           document is corporal punishment. This is from March  
5           1982, you can take my word for that, and it's  
6           interesting that this is a report by the Commandant and  
7           the headmaster to the Commissioners of the school, and  
8           it's making the point that the headmaster would be  
9           grateful for the Commissioners' views regarding the  
10          school's future policy in this matter, most particularly  
11          with regard to parents of new entrants. The following  
12          comments may be helpful:

13                 "The school does not use corporal punishment in the  
14                 classroom or in connection with academic work."

15                 There's reference to loco parentis 24 hours a day,  
16                 7 days a week.

17                 "Corporal punishment is [emphasis] used sparingly  
18                 and any punishment is recorded. Boys and staff are in  
19                 favour of its retention on the grounds it is a salutary  
20                 smack, both preferred and more effective than other  
21                 forms of punishment."

22                 Is that something that reflects the views of pupils  
23                 as you remember it?

24           A. Certainly pupils of that generation I've heard some of  
25           them saying that, yes, older pupils.

1 Q. Because what replaced it was detention, presumably,  
2 broadly?

3 A. The other thing was written exercises, detention,  
4 et cetera, those sort of things.

5 Q. I think if we go, please, to page 16 of the same  
6 document, and this is 1986, and minutes of meetings of  
7 the Commissioners in March of 1986, if we go to 13(a),  
8 which is corporal punishment:

9 "Staff had expressed their concern over current and  
10 future policy. The headmaster outlined current policy  
11 and, whilst accepting that some members of staff may  
12 feel concerned that they had lost a sanction that they  
13 had had for many years, he could not support their  
14 contention that a duty master should be authorised to  
15 act on behalf of the headmaster or housemaster.  
16 Further, he reminded the Commissioners of what the  
17 previous GOC ..."

18 General Officer Commanding; is that right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. " ... had stipulated that if a discipline matter were  
21 not serious it should not require corporal punishment  
22 and if it were a serious matter it would merit referral  
23 and calm consideration. He went on to state that he  
24 considered that discipline in the school had not  
25 deteriorated during the period since the introduction of

1 the referral system at the start of the current session  
2 and that he would regard any suggestion that the school  
3 should revert to the original policy as a most  
4 retrogressive step. This view was strongly supported by  
5 the Commandant."

6 So it would appear that there is certainly a drive  
7 away from it in the mid '80s within the boarding sector  
8 which might have been seen a little differently from the  
9 state sector at that point?

10 A. I'm really -- I can't really comment on this because  
11 I have no -- I have no knowledge of this -- these  
12 documents or the discussions that took place in that  
13 time.

14 Q. No indeed, but they're reflecting, obviously, a period  
15 of teaching that you lived through?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Where there is clearly a great deal of discussion and  
18 review of corporal punishment, but it would seem that,  
19 certainly so far as QVS at the top tier, Commandant and  
20 Commissioners, would you agree was the Board of  
21 Governors in the real sense --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- they are against it and don't view it as something  
24 that should be necessary?

25 A. Correct, yes.



1 Q. And that's going back to the mid '80s, the same time  
2 that you were having the same discussions but in the  
3 state sector?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay, thank you. Why did you go to  
6 Queen Victoria School?

7 A. It's -- I was in the high street in this town where  
8 I was working looking at the TES --

9 Q. The Times Educational Supplement.

10 A. -- in the newsagent without buying it and a chap tapped  
11 me on the shoulder and said, "You should apply to go to  
12 that school", and he was the woodwind instructor in my  
13 school and he'd been a pupil there. And that was it  
14 really.

15 Q. Had you been aware of --

16 A. I'd never heard of the school.

17 Q. So you apply and you were appointed to a management  
18 position; is that correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Was your responsibility primarily for the [REDACTED]  
21 [REDACTED]?

22 A. I would say almost totally for the [REDACTED] side,  
23 yeah.

24 Q. Almost totally. But we've heard mention of a something  
25 management team, which will be, I imagine, a phrase

1 familiar to you?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Was such a team in place when you started in 97?

4 A. Yes, there was a headteacher, a deputy and an assistant  
5 when I started. Three. That was later expanded.

6 Q. That was later expanded. So what was the different --  
7 there is a headmaster, a deputy head and an assistant  
8 headmaster or deputy headmaster -- sorry, I'm just not  
9 clear of the terminology or the pecking order.

10 A. Well, the deputy at our school is -- did what it said.  
11 They deputised for the headmaster when he wasn't there.  
12 I'm saying headmaster because it was a headmaster rather  
13 than headteacher. Whereas the assistant headteacher was  
14 another member layer of the management team.

15 Q. But I think the names changed. The SNR [REDACTED] became  
16 a SNR [REDACTED] in due course and then other people were  
17 SNR [REDACTED] as well but with responsibilities for  
18 different particular areas, for example pastoral?

19 A. Yes. The state system changed its designation and  
20 SNR [REDACTED] were abolished and all management team  
21 became SNR [REDACTED]. So to differentiate within QVS,  
22 there was a SNR [REDACTED] appointed and the SNR [REDACTED]  
23 SNR [REDACTED] were made SNR [REDACTED]. It was really a name  
24 thing.

25 Q. Yeah. When you arrived, I think you worked under the

1           then headmaster, who was Brian Raine?

2           A. Yeah.

3           Q. And then you dealt with his successor, Wendy Bellars --

4           A. Yes.

5           Q. -- from 2008 to 2012 --

6           A. 2012.

7           Q. -- when you retired, so it's just those two. Coming

8           into Queen Victoria School, did you have any sense of

9           previous difficulties within the school? Is that

10          something that was shared with you? What I'm thinking

11          about, obviously, is we have heard already there was

12          a period in the very early '90s when a teacher went to

13          the press and I think subsequently, and you may have

14          read these reports, was seen in the press every so often

15          thereafter.

16          A. Yeah, I'd never heard anything, really, about the school

17          before I applied and I'd never heard of the teacher

18          you're talking about --

19          Q. This is Glenn Harrison.

20          A. -- until I got to the school.

21          Q. Do you remember -- presumably there were some staff who

22          had been around at the time.

23          A. There was quite a few staff that had been there when

24          he'd been there and every now and again, I gather, he

25          made -- he either wrote to the papers, I think it was,

1           and his allegations would resurface. And that would set  
2           up a little bit of chat in the school amongst teachers  
3           that knew him. And any time I asked them about what he  
4           was saying, the general consensus among the staff -- and  
5           I mean even the staff who were not totally gung ho with  
6           the school -- their view was that it was nonsense.

7           Q. All right.

8           A. That was the impression that was given to me about what  
9           he was saying by the staff.

10          Q. Okay. Were there any pupils who had been --

11          A. Not really. I can't really remember a specific pupil  
12          saying that.

13          Q. All right.

14          A. Because they were -- they all had left quite a time  
15          before that.

16          Q. We know that Old Victorians, as they're called, would  
17          come back to the school. Was there ever discussion with  
18          them that you remember, pupils who had been there at the  
19          time?

20          A. I can't remember specifics, but I think among certain  
21          ones I remember something along the line of, "Oh,  
22          Harrison's at it again" or something like that.

23          Q. That was the tone?

24          A. Yeah, the sort of tenor of it.

25          Q. Okay, thank you. In terms of your experience at

1 previous day schools in the state sector, what  
2 difference did -- obviously it's a boarding school so  
3 there are pastoral responsibilities, but in terms of the  
4 school itself just in the round, did you consider it  
5 very different from your previous ones?

6 A. Well, I suppose the main difference was the clientele.  
7 The clientele was from one group rather than the diverse  
8 group that you would get in a state school. That was  
9 the main difference. But as far as teaching was  
10 concerned, I didn't think it was much different. Except  
11 the pupils were very well-behaved, but I didn't see  
12 a huge amount of difference as far as the teaching was  
13 concerned. But the life was that the day was longer.  
14 It was broken up quite a bit with other things apart  
15 from academic, like the pipe band or games or -- and  
16 things like that.

17 Q. It was obviously an effort to keep the clientele, as you  
18 described them, busy?

19 A. Well, I think I suppose that was part of it. Make them  
20 tired so they'll go to sleep. But also it was part of  
21 the life that they enjoyed and a lot of the staff  
22 enjoyed, was that element of extracurricular.

23 Q. You said that they were different from your previous  
24 school because they came from one source. Now, this is  
25 obviously they're all sons of soldiers, sailors, airmen.

1           Did that have an impact in the classroom? You seem to  
2           suggest it did.

3           A. I think it may have created an extra layer of control,  
4           ie their parents would have been much more willing to  
5           ensure that they behaved in the classroom. I think that  
6           was part of it. But -- can you just repeat that,  
7           please?

8           Q. Well, did you notice a difference between the pupils in  
9           QVS when you started teaching there and the pupils, for  
10          example, at your previous school in the sense of  
11          behaviour, approach to work, things like that?

12          A. I would say by and large no.

13          Q. By and large no?

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. From a teaching point of view, were they easier to  
16          handle because they were better behaved I suppose is the  
17          bottom --

18          A. Yeah.

19          Q. Right, so in that regard they are different?

20          A. From that point of view, you didn't -- you had very few  
21          discipline problems or low-level discipline problems,  
22          which is the bane of a state school teacher's life,  
23          probably. You didn't have that.

24          Q. In that regard, it's been suggested, though, and I'm  
25          interested in your take on this, that misbehaviour would

1           be perceived by pupils as potentially having an impact  
2           on a parent's military career. Was that something or is  
3           that something you recognise?

4       A. I think it may have done in the past, whereas, because  
5           the person who was in charge of the school was not  
6           a headteacher but a school commandant, I think he was  
7           called, and he was a recently retired military officer,  
8           usually a brigadier or a colonel, and they had an easy  
9           pathway to parents, as it were, so that was seen as  
10          a bit of a -- not a threat, but --

11       Q. Was there a perception there was potentially a stick?

12       A. Yes, I think there was -- before I joined, this was,  
13          before I joined the school when it was a school  
14          commandant, there was that feeling.

15       Q. But when you were there from 1997 onwards, obviously  
16          we've moved away from that and are you saying that  
17          wasn't present?

18       A. I wouldn't have thought so, no.

19       Q. Were the staff any different from your previous  
20          experiences of the state sector?

21       A. Not really, but most of the staff were state school  
22          staff.

23       Q. All right.

24       A. There were very few staff who had had a career in the  
25          independent sector. So most of them were just ordinary

1 state school teachers. They may have been at QVS a long  
2 time, but they were state school teachers.

3 Q. Did this distinction you've accepted was present because  
4 there was, to use your words, a lot less of the  
5 lower-level trouble, which, to quote, was the bane of  
6 a state school teacher's life, did that impact on the  
7 life of the teachers? Presumably it did. Was it  
8 easier?

9 A. It would make it easier, yes.

10 Q. So being at QVS from a teacher's point of view in terms  
11 of teaching was an easier job than elsewhere in your  
12 experience?

13 A. I thought it was.

14 Q. Did that have any impact on the way the staff behaved?

15 A. In what way?

16 Q. Well, I'm just interested. You said vis-a-vis Harrison,  
17 even teachers who weren't particularly pro the school,  
18 they didn't use it as an excuse to hit the school, from  
19 what you're saying. Were there tensions for and against  
20 the school within the staffroom?

21 A. Oh, there was always certain staff who had a beef about  
22 something at one time or another. I can't think of  
23 specifics, but there was always some that seemed  
24 slightly discontented.

25 Q. Was the staffroom -- again we've heard suggestions about



1           this -- perhaps rather more bitchy than previous  
2           staffrooms you'd worked in, with a great deal of rumour,  
3           counter-rumour, tittle-tattle?

4        A. It could be at times, yeah. At certain times when I was  
5           there, it was worse than others.

6        Q. Right.

7        A. But I didn't use the staffroom a lot. My office was  
8           right next door to it so I didn't use it. Because that  
9           was a time when I saw pupils and things like that, so  
10          I didn't tend to go to the staffroom during breaks.

11       Q. But you're obviously living in the school?

12       A. Yeah, but it might be that teachers might moan or grump  
13          to other teachers but might not necessarily say the same  
14          to me.

15       Q. But would you agree it's a pretty small --

16       A. Oh yes.

17       Q. -- bubble you're living in and you'll get a sense of the  
18          mood?

19       A. Yeah. In answer to your question in short, there were  
20          tensions at times in the school, yes.

21       Q. Was that different or at a different level from your  
22          previous schools?

23       A. No.

24       Q. No? Okay. Is that just part and parcel of a small  
25          society?

1 A. Yes, it's a school staffroom, that, yeah.

2 Q. Obviously the big difference is this is a boarding  
3 school and we are aware that some staff had pastoral  
4 duties in the sense that they were housemasters or  
5 housemistresses or assistants thereto. Your experience  
6 was you lived on campus?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. There was accommodation provided, but you were not  
9 holding either of those roles; is that correct?

10 A. That's correct, but all of the SMT had a school house  
11 and they were required to live on campus.

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. As part of their contract.

14 Q. Which house were you responsible for?

15 A. Initially one of the houses [REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED] and then latterly [REDACTED]  
17 It used to be on the campus, but --

18 Q. So what were the names of these two?

19 A. One was called -- oh, one was called [REDACTED] and the  
20 other was called [REDACTED].

21 Q. [REDACTED]? Was that within one of the --

22 A. That was just over a slip road, out the back gates and  
23 just over a slip road.

24 Q. All right. And in terms of [REDACTED], what year of  
25 pupil did that cover, or which years?

1 A. 1997 to maybe 2002, possibly something like that.

2 Q. And who was living in [REDACTED]? That was my point?

3 A. Oh, I was living there at that time.

4 Q. Oh, that's your house?

5 A. No, that was a school house in the school grounds.

6 Q. Yes, what I'm talking about your pastoral duties, you

7 were allocated --

8 A. Oh, sorry, yes, I was working in the junior house.

9 Q. Which was still Wavell or --

10 A. Trenchard.

11 Q. That had become Trenchard?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And then after that, was it always Trenchard that you

14 were connected to?

15 A. Always, yeah.

16 Q. I'm with you. How much duty did you have to perform?

17 A. One evening a week and -- hard to remember, actually.

18 I think it was one or -- one weekend a term. I think it

19 was.

20 Q. So not too onerous, but presumably to give the

21 housemaster/housemistress and their assistants a break?

22 A. That's right, yeah.

23 Q. Do we understand at this stage that there were tutor

24 groups and it would be the tutors who would come in as

25 well to cover --

1       A. No, the -- on duty in a house there would be a member of  
2       staff from end of school and the housemaster or deputy  
3       housemaster until tea to cover that, you know, finish of  
4       school and going to tea. The housemaster or deputy  
5       would then go away and another member of staff would  
6       join and there would be two members of staff with a GAP  
7       student, and they would cover the rest of the evening,  
8       and that would include prep and possibly going to the  
9       pool, swimming pool or the sports hall to play football  
10      or something. And then one teacher would go away  
11      slightly earlier and the other one would stay on until  
12      finish when the housemaster would come on again.

13      Q. And from your recollection of doing cover at Trenchard,  
14      how open were the pupils to coming to talk to you?

15      A. Very open, yeah. Yeah, they would come and tell you --  
16      by and large they would come and tell you about  
17      something on their minds.

18      Q. What about you seeking problems out?

19      A. Well, I suppose if you saw someone who looked  
20      particularly upset about something, you would obviously  
21      go and speak to them. And they were generally quite  
22      open about telling what was wrong. It was usually  
23      something to do with their father or --

24      LADY SMITH: Sorry. Can you give me an example of something  
25      a child would come and tell you?

1 A. Well, if they were looking upset, for instance, you  
2 might say, "What's wrong?" and I suppose, like most  
3 children, their immediate answer is, "Nothing", and then  
4 you might find out that their father had just been  
5 posted to Afghanistan for six months or something like  
6 that and they'd say, "I'm not going to see my dad for  
7 six months", something like that, you know?

8 LADY SMITH: That's an example of you prompting them to tell  
9 you what it was that was worrying them. Do you have  
10 an example of a child coming to you unprompted to talk  
11 about a concern?

12 A. I'm sure they did, but offhand I just can't think of  
13 one. Sorry.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 Mr Brown?

16 MR BROWN: Just to be clear, Trenchard, in terms of  
17 boys/girls, was it boys only when you were there or was  
18 it a mix?

19 A. It was junior mixed.

20 Q. Junior mixed.

21 A. P7 and S1.

22 Q. Did that change over time? Did it, do you remember?

23 A. It was the newest house built in the school, it was  
24 built for that reason.

25 Q. Okay. I think at page 6 of your statement you talk

1 about the culture of the school, starting at  
2 paragraph 23, and you say:

3 "Even during my time the culture within the school  
4 changed. It had only recently started to take in girls  
5 [which I think we understand was the year before in  
6 1996] when I arrived and the school was very male  
7 dominated. The Pipe Band, rugby and the CCF were seen  
8 as the important areas, even to the extent of inclusion  
9 in the timetable."

10 Again thinking back to you starting in '97, we know,  
11 obviously, it had been an all-male environment. You  
12 come in a year later. What did you observe about the  
13 impact on the ethos of the school of having girls?

14 A. I think it was definitely my impression that the girls  
15 came to the school and they knew they had to hit the  
16 ground running, you know, to sort of -- because there  
17 were so few of them at -- because they obviously were  
18 trickle fed originally, you know, to make room, and then  
19 eventually it evened out, the numbers.

20 LADY SMITH: Initially were the girls only in the senior  
21 years, in sixth year?

22 A. Yes, they took them from the sixth years and then  
23 gradually fed in from the bottom. But it took a few  
24 years before it evened out.

25 MR BROWN: Were there tensions between the boys and the

1 girls at that point because obviously the world was  
2 changing from the boys' perspective significantly.

3 A. I would say so. I think the boys always saw it as their  
4 school, you know, because it had been a boys' school for  
5 such a long time. But to say "tension", I think there  
6 was -- I'm not sure what the word is. You know, there  
7 would be certainly banter about it. I don't know --  
8 I don't know about -- yes, tension. There was tension.

9 Q. All right. You go on to say at paragraph 24:

10 "Over time and as new staff and more female staff  
11 were employed the emphasis did change more to academic."

12 A. (Witness nods).

13 Q. Was the academic side less pushed when you started than  
14 it became?

15 A. I think yes. I don't think there -- well, in my  
16 opinion, I don't think there was as much emphasis put on  
17 academic work as there should have been.

18 Q. Throughout? Or just at the beginning?

19 A. No, when I arrived, I didn't think so. I did say that,  
20 you know, things like CCF and pipe band were put in the  
21 timetable, quite a lot of time, and when I arrived I cut  
22 a lot of that time out and transferred it over to  
23 academic subjects.

24 Q. Was there resistance to that?

25 A. A little bit.

1 Q. From whom?

2 A. Mainly the CCF people, I think.

3 Q. All right. No, we've heard some former pupils say that,  
4 really, QVS as it perhaps originally was was essentially  
5 a feeder to the Forces?

6 A. It was, yeah.

7 Q. Was that something you recognised?

8 A. (Witness nods).

9 Q. Was that mentality still somewhat resident instant when  
10 you started in 1997?

11 A. Yes, not quite as bad as it was in the original days  
12 where they almost prepared them for specific trades in  
13 the Forces rather than the Forces themselves, but  
14 certainly -- there just wasn't as much emphasis as  
15 I thought there should have been.

16 Q. But as we see, I think that changed in paragraph 25:  
17 "In the time I was there the culture changed very  
18 much to a pupil-centred one. Speaking to parents they  
19 told me the reason they sent their child to the school  
20 was to get a good all-round education and to take  
21 advantage of all there was to offer in the Scottish  
22 tradition."  
23 And your results were good, we read.  
24 In terms of the culture changing to a pupil-centred  
25 one, what were you thinking of by that?



1 A. Sorry?

2 Q. You say:

3 "In the time I was there, the culture changed very  
4 much to a pupil-centred one."

5 When you arrived, what was not pupil-centred, if  
6 that's easier?

7 A. I think it's probably true to say that there had been  
8 a lot of staff who had been there a long time in the  
9 school and hadn't -- how can I say this? Hadn't taught  
10 in a modern school, as it were, a modern state school.  
11 And I don't think they were probably any different from  
12 older teachers anywhere else, but when I arrived, it  
13 coincided with a lot of those teachers retiring, natural  
14 wastage, and new young teachers came in and they were  
15 from the state system and they brought those ideas and  
16 that ethos into the school.

17 Q. Okay. In terms of punishment within the school, we've  
18 talked a little bit about corporal punishment, but we've  
19 heard a great deal about discipline being delegated in  
20 the past to pupils to run, particularly in the boarding  
21 houses. Was that something that you saw when you  
22 arrived in 1997 or had that stopped?

23 A. By and large, when I was there it was the senior  
24 management that dealt mainly with the discipline  
25 problems -- the discipline punishments. And that came

1 from recommendations from other staff. You know,  
2 a normal teacher might be able to give a low-level  
3 punishment, like a punishment exercise or even  
4 a detention or something like that, but if it went any  
5 further than that, they could recommend that and that  
6 would go to the management team.

7 Q. But I think we know that pupils, for example, could give  
8 days, which essentially meant doing chores.

9 A. Yes. The prefects or the monitors, as they were called,  
10 they could give out a day, which meant that the kids  
11 helped to clear up the dining tables at the end of the  
12 meal session. But latterly, I think, that changed  
13 because of the Care Commission and the pupils were only  
14 allowed to recommend that and it was handed to a duty  
15 staff member who then said yes, no, yes, no, yes, no.

16 Q. So there was some chain where a staff member could  
17 affirm or refuse a proposed punishment?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Prior to that, though, when pupils could give days, from  
20 what you remember, was there sort of staff involvement  
21 in that? Was there staff involvement or awareness of  
22 days being issued?

23 A. Yes, a sheet was given to whoever was on duty in the  
24 dining hall.

25 Q. So there were records kept?

1 A. Yeah, there was a record kept of it.

2 Q. But there wasn't the oversight saying "yes" or "no"?

3 A. Not originally, no.

4 Q. Okay. Moving on to child protection particularly, and  
5 I think we see your comments about this on page 10 of  
6 the statement, if it's of assistance, you'd obviously  
7 come from the state sector after ten plus years there.  
8 Was child protection, again thinking back to your  
9 pre-QVS time, something that loomed large from your  
10 perspective?

11 A. I think, like QVS, it was beginning to come in as a sort  
12 of major element of training within staff in that time,  
13 but I wouldn't have said even in the state sector that  
14 it was mainline at that time.

15 Q. Presumably, of course, at QVS, because you were looking  
16 after a child 24/7, child protection might be seen to be  
17 something of considerably greater emphasis anyway?

18 A. (Witness nods). It was because we had the extra --  
19 I use the word "burden", I don't mean it like that -- of  
20 having to look after the children after school was  
21 finished, whereas a state system only looked after them  
22 during the school day. So you had to really look to --  
23 you know, you really had to watch out for the child  
24 protection, it was important.

25 Q. I think we've seen, for example 1996, the first set of

1 child protection guidelines were produced by a lady  
2 called Alice Hainey, who I take it you'll remember?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You will have been issued with a copy of those?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Was that new to you or was that something you had seen  
7 in previous schools?

8 A. I can't remember about having seen a child protection  
9 policy in another school.

10 Q. But it was certainly something that was in place and  
11 I think you talk about, in paragraph 46, guidance and  
12 instruction on how children in the care of the school  
13 should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse  
14 was covered during in-service sessions at the beginning  
15 of each term, and you go on to say:

16 "This started with teaching staff and was later  
17 expanded to all staff. This move was greatly valued by  
18 the non-teaching staff."

19 Can you explain that a little more fully?

20 A. Well, at the beginning of every term we had  
21 an in-service day and there was always a child  
22 protection slot. Now, it could have been the deputy  
23 head (pastoral) talking about one particular thing or it  
24 could have been social work or it could have been the  
25 police came in to talk about drugs or something like

1           that. We started just with teaching staff and then we  
2           brought in the school secretaries, the matrons, and  
3           virtually any staff, all the other auxiliary staff or  
4           admin staff came to it and they really enjoyed it. They  
5           saw real benefit to it, and it gave them a different  
6           view of the school and of the pupils. But the feedback  
7           from them was very positive.

8           Q. In terms of the pastoral care that was required out of  
9           the school day, did you feel you'd been taught in,  
10          presumably, the 1980s how to teach before you start going  
11          into the classroom. Did you feel able, when you came to  
12          a wholly new environment in 1997 and had pastoral  
13          responsibilities perhaps one night a week, a couple of  
14          weekends, did you feel trained to cover that sort of  
15          pastoral role?

16          A. It felt strange at first but you were able to look to  
17          the advice of housemasters or other pastoral staff who  
18          had been in the job quite a long time and they were more  
19          than happy to pass on tips.

20          Q. But it was learning on the job?

21          A. Initially it was learning on the job, but then, when  
22          courses were available, staff were encouraged to do  
23          them.

24          Q. Were those courses -- I think did you have to approve  
25          them? I think we read that courses were something that

1           were under your remit?

2           A. Yeah.

3           Q. And were you happy to fund courses for pastoral matters?

4           A. I can't remember offhand refusing a staff member

5           a training course.

6           Q. Who was leading on that, though? Was it deputy head

7           (pastoral) saying, "We should do courses"?

8           A. Yes, he might say that these specific courses need to be

9           done by certain people. For instance, the matrons were

10          all -- they all had to do Scotvec modules on childcare.

11          That came in as a recommendation of the Care Commission

12          and that was -- so that -- that was -- knowledge was

13          given to me and I immediately said we would fund that.

14          Q. Okay. But in terms of working in the houses,

15          essentially some people might say this is teachers whose

16          day job is to teach suddenly being foisted upon children

17          without any particular skills for the pastoral role.

18          Did you find it difficult to begin with?

19          A. I didn't find it difficult. It took a little while to

20          separate your classroom face from your boarding house

21          face. That took a wee bit of time.

22          Q. And, forgive me, it may be obvious: what was the

23          difference?

24          A. Well, once you went into the boarding school, you had to

25          realise that these kids were far from home, they were

1 missing their parents. Their father or mother may have  
2 been in a very difficult physical situation, ie Iraq or  
3 Afghanistan. You had to be aware of those things. So  
4 you had to take allowances for that if people were a wee  
5 bit -- I don't know, a bit surly or a bit stroppy at  
6 times. You had to think to yourself is this them or is  
7 this what's happening at home because they've just heard  
8 news? So you had to weigh these things up. So you had  
9 to have a different hat on when you were in the boarding  
10 house.

11 Q. Being aware of such nuances, obviously you've said you  
12 might see a child looking unhappy and you'd say what's  
13 wrong, was there, thinking back -- and I appreciate you  
14 were there for 15 years, so this is a question which  
15 covers that span, but do you remember there being in  
16 place a reporting system where you might get fed  
17 concerns about a particular pupil in the house from day  
18 staff or other teachers so you'd know to look for it?

19 A. There was a system of tutor groups, so every member of  
20 the teaching staff was allocated about eight or ten  
21 pupils. And they met with them once a week in the  
22 morning and they would discuss a topic which was usually  
23 designated by the deputy head (pastoral), and they were  
24 encouraged to form some sort of better relationship or  
25 closer relationship with their pupils and that -- the

1           tutor would be the first port of call for the pupil. So  
2           if they had something, they would see their tutor. And  
3           the tutor then would pass it on to the deputy head, who  
4           would then make a decision of what was going to happen  
5           about it.

6           Q. But thinking about you on the nights you're covering  
7           Trenchard, were you being given information about  
8           particular pupils to look out for this or that?

9           A. Yeah, the housemaster would generally speak at the  
10          beginning of a shift, as it were --

11          Q. So there was a handover?

12          A. -- if there was anything specific -- a handover, yeah.

13          Q. And presumably after your duty, you would do a handover  
14          note for the next person --

15          A. That's right.

16          Q. -- to update. But was there a formal -- that sounds  
17          ad hoc just doing it because that's an obvious thing to  
18          do.

19          A. Yes.

20          Q. But I'm thinking more in terms of the school as a whole,  
21          information-gathering and then sharing out as necessary  
22          to people who are going to be dealing with a particular  
23          child.

24          A. It would normally be done in the houses by the  
25          housemaster and then a feedback from him to the member



1 of staff and at the end of the shift the feedback from  
2 the staff back to the housemaster.

3 Q. All right.

4 A. These incidents would be recorded in a house log.

5 Q. Sure. But what wouldn't happen, for example, it would  
6 then be passed on to teaching staff so they could keep  
7 an eye on a particular child or if a teacher has  
8 a particular experience with a child, would he or she be  
9 able to share it with the house team?

10 A. It seems an obvious thing, I'm sure that did happen, but  
11 I can't actually think of the mechanism of when it did.  
12 But I'm sure it must have.

13 Q. Okay. You obviously talk about external monitoring at  
14 the foot of the page we're on and onto page 11:

15 "There were inspections carried out at the school.  
16 The inspections were carried out by HMIE, SCE, Care  
17 Commission, Investors in People ... In addition our HM  
18 Commissioners (Board of Governors) ... kept a keen  
19 interest in the school."

20 Just starting with that last point, in terms of  
21 governance, we know there's a Board of Commissioners,  
22 they tended to be -- Bart McGettrick was  
23 an educationalist, obviously, who was chair at the time  
24 you're recalling. Am I right in saying many were  
25 military top brass?

1 A. At one time I think they were virtually all military top  
2 brass, but then that gradually changed when people with  
3 special interests were appointed to the board, and that  
4 could have been financial, you know, to help with the  
5 school fund, or we had two ex HMIs, Her Majesty's  
6 Inspectors, on the board. We had an ex senior  
7 management from Mary Erskine's, and then we had Bart,  
8 of course.

9 Q. So was that something that changes over your 15 years?

10 A. That changed over years, when rather than have the  
11 military, we would bring out people specifically with  
12 a view of helping the school in the areas that were  
13 important.

14 Q. And from the teaching staff's perspective, was that  
15 welcomed or was it really noticed at all?

16 A. Well, I don't know how much it was noticed by the  
17 teaching staff. Certainly it was appreciated by the SMT  
18 because we tended to have more face-to-face with them,  
19 whereas the staff didn't really see an awful lot of  
20 the Commissioners face to face.

21 Q. But we know there was a visiting Commissioner every  
22 term?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Was that something that was viewed in the same way as  
25 an inspection by HMIE that could be important?

1 A. Important in what way?

2 Q. In the sense of the impact on the school. You might get  
3 a bad report from a visiting Commissioner saying, "I'm  
4 not happy about this or that or the next thing". Were  
5 those visiting Commissioner's visits taken seriously by  
6 the SMT?

7 A. I think they were taken seriously, but I don't think  
8 they were taken as seriously as an HMI visit or a Care  
9 Commission visit.

10 LADY SMITH: Was there or were there, I should say, any ex  
11 officio Commissioners? For example, I think I'm right  
12 in saying for many years, maybe still, there's a judge  
13 who's a Commissioner because of the judicial role, is  
14 that not right?

15 A. I've forgotten his name.

16 LADY SMITH: Lord Cullen.

17 A. Yes.

18 LADY SMITH: Who you would have come across in your time.  
19 I think that the Lord Justice Clerk at the Court of  
20 Session for many years --

21 A. And Elish Angiolini was on the board.

22 LADY SMITH: When she was Lord Advocate.

23 A. Yeah, that's correct.

24 MR BROWN: And Lord Gill, perhaps?

25 A. Lord Gill. I didn't know Lord Gill, but I remember his

1 name being written in documents. But certainly Elish  
2 and Lord Cullen, yeah, they were, definitely.

3 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

4 MR BROWN: And a local sheriff, I think at one point?

5 A. Can you remind me of the name?

6 Q. Sheriff Waldron, or was that after your time?

7 A. It may have been after my time. I don't recognise the  
8 name.

9 Q. All right, but there were people with judicial office on  
10 the Board of Commissioners?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. But you can confirm there were visiting Commissioners  
13 every term?

14 A. As far as I remember -- I'm not quite -- I don't know if  
15 it was every term, but --

16 Q. I think we have records to suggest --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- there were reports aplenty about what we found.

19 A. Mm.

20 Q. In terms of HMIE, though, and then the increasing  
21 involvement of the Care Commission, what was the impact  
22 on the school? They were mostly unannounced, I think?

23 A. They were so unannounced that once they came during the  
24 school holidays.

25 Q. And presumably decided it was time to come back another

1 day?

2 A. Yes. The HMI gave you warning, I think it was two weeks  
3 you got with them, but the Care Commission gave no  
4 warning whatsoever, they just appeared on the doorstep.

5 Q. Did you welcome inspection?

6 A. I'm not quite sure "welcome" is the word, but I think we  
7 saw the value of them, that was for sure, because when  
8 you're not in the state system properly, you can feel  
9 isolated, slightly isolated, and you wonder whether what  
10 you're doing is right. And it was a way of somebody  
11 saying yes it is or that could be done better or that  
12 could be done differently.

13 Q. I think QVS, though, had -- and please confirm if this  
14 is right -- links with the Local Authority; is that  
15 correct?

16 A. We started having links where we could -- the  
17 headteacher, Brian Raine at the time, attended  
18 headteachers meetings in Stirling, with the Stirling  
19 schools, and we also used their supply system for supply  
20 teachers and we could tap into in-service as well. So  
21 we tried to use as much of their facilities as we could.

22 Q. Do you remember why there was a desire to use their  
23 facilities?

24 A. Well, I think it's like I said, that you can feel  
25 isolated, you know, so -- and we wanted to see that we

1           were doing what everywhere else was doing, as it were.  
2           Especially at that time there were so many initiatives  
3           coming in that we were trying to keep on top of them.

4           Q. I'll come back to initiatives and change in a moment,  
5           but I think if we can go to another document, which is  
6           MOD 101, and if we go to the third page, please, and if  
7           we can turn it on its side and see the other side of  
8           that page, this is an HMIE report from 2005 and I think,  
9           just for present purposes, we see there's various  
10          ratings, and presumably a school wanted to get as good  
11          as ratings as it could and there would be a great deal  
12          of concern if they weren't as good as a school hoped.  
13          Is that a short but fair summary?

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. We see in terms of the ratings there's very good, good,  
16          fair and unsatisfactory. I think fair is -- the print  
17          is small, but I can read it:

18                        "Some important weaknesses."

19          A. (Witness nods).

20          Q. Could we then move, please, to page 8 and 9. This is  
21          obviously a report, and if we can zoom in on the  
22          left-hand page, the paragraph in the centre which  
23          begins:

24                        "The school had an inclusive approach in giving  
25          priority for admission to vulnerable pupils:

1 Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds were well  
2 integrated. However, there was an important weakness in  
3 the school's approaches to promoting equality and  
4 fairness. Pupils were concerned about the fairness with  
5 which house rules and sanctions were applied and  
6 implemented in one boarding house. These restrictions  
7 had an adverse effect on the daily lives of  
8 a considerable number of pupils. There were appropriate  
9 daily opportunities for religious observance."

10 Then if we move over to the other side, in the  
11 second paragraph down, which begins:

12 "The headmaster's job was complex and demanding."

13 Because not only was he headmaster, we see he was  
14 Chief Executive of an agency of the MoD. Would you  
15 agree that the headmaster's job -- do you remember that  
16 being a demanding aspect that he had two hats?

17 A. Yes, when he was Chief Executive, it was.

18 Q. But I think the tone of that, as we can read, is broadly  
19 positive. But then it goes on in the paragraph below to  
20 pick up on the same subject as we touched on on the  
21 left-hand page:

22 "There were important weaknesses in the school's  
23 procedures for self-evaluation. A number of audits have  
24 been undertaken. The headmaster carried out annual  
25 reviews of all teaching staff."

1           And it goes on about learning action and teaching,  
2 but then further down at the bottom:

3           "The responsibilities of the assistant headteacher  
4 [this is pastoral] related mainly to the care and  
5 welfare of the pupils in the boarding houses. With  
6 regard to educational provision there were major  
7 weaknesses in her management of the programme for  
8 personal and social development. Almost all principal  
9 teachers on a staff in charge of key areas made  
10 an effective and enthusiastic contribution to the  
11 school. Many wanted the school to adopt more systematic  
12 approaches to quality assurance and planning for  
13 improvement."

14           Is this beginning to take you back to 2005?

15           A. It is, yes.

16           Q. And then if we go over the page, please, to page 10 if  
17 we go to the left in the box:

18           "The school, the Board of HM Commissioners and the  
19 Adjutant General should take appropriate action to  
20 address the weaknesses in relationships amongst members  
21 of the Senior Management Team, revise the job of the  
22 more senior promoted staff."

23           And then the bottom bullet point:

24           "Improve the teaching of Personal and Social  
25 Education."



1           Then on the right-hand side we see under what is  
2 very good, what is good and then what is fair, if we  
3 look at fair, there's a concern about:

4           "Overall quality of attainment P7 to S2, pastoral  
5 and social development, pastoral care, equality and  
6 fairness, self-evaluation, effectiveness and deployment  
7 of staff with additional responsibilities."

8           Presumably this sort of report would cause real  
9 concern to the Senior Management Team?

10          A. Yes, it did.

11          Q. I think we know, this came out in 2005, that two  
12 teachers had in fact been suspended prior to the report  
13 coming out in 2005, in late 2004, and that was the  
14 deputy head (pastoral), Ms Smith, and the housemistress  
15 of one of the houses, Ms QRS Do you remember  
16 them?

17          A. I do, yes.

18          Q. Did the comments in this report surprise you?

19          A. No. I thought the report was fair overall, but I think  
20 there were -- it was a bit harsh in some of the areas,  
21 but overall it was fair. I don't mean it was fair as in  
22 their categories --

23          Q. Yes. What was the problem that you recall with those  
24 two teachers? Thinking in terms of the relationships  
25 between senior management?

1 A. There was a lack of trust in the senior management.

2 Q. As between?

3 A. Between the individual in charge of personal and social  
4 development and her relationship with the boarding --  
5 [REDACTED] She was seen to have  
6 a biased -- a bias against [REDACTED] and the  
7 other houses and many staff felt that she was there to  
8 do the bidding of the housemistress. And this caused  
9 a great deal of tension in the senior management.

10 Q. Over what period?

11 A. It's hard to remember back now, but I think it probably  
12 was almost from the minute she arrived.

13 Q. I think she took over in 2002, perhaps?

14 A. 2002, yeah, so two years, two sessions, yeah.

15 Q. You were in the Senior Management Team?

16 A. I was.

17 Q. And was this a problem where it became polarised on one  
18 side to the other?

19 A. It became such that there were certain things we were  
20 reluctant to discuss at senior management meetings  
21 because we felt it was going to be passed back to other  
22 individuals.

23 Q. Do you mean by that the housemistress?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What was the concern about that?

1 A. It would require going back, giving a wee bit of  
2 background --

3 Q. Please do --

4 A. -- to how the issues started.

5 Q. -- if you can.

6 A. [REDACTED] was admitted to the  
7 school as a pupil, and shouldn't have been, on many  
8 people's views, including my own, and she was told under  
9 no circumstances was [REDACTED] going to be allowed to  
10 live outwith the boarding house, because that would just  
11 drive a coach and horses through everything if that  
12 happened for one person. And that was accepted. But  
13 from then on, Ms QRS [REDACTED] never stopped trying to get  
14 [REDACTED] to live with her. And she was aided and  
15 abetted by the deputy head.

16 Q. I think if we go to MOD 66, please, and I think this is  
17 a letter, we go up the page, to the housemistress [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED] -- sorry, no, it's the original document --

19 Page 1, the top, please. I think it should be able  
20 to go up further. Go up. This is to the housemistress,  
21 we understand, and it's from the secretary and treasurer  
22 to the HMC. Is that the Commissioners, Her Majesty's  
23 Comissioners?

24 A. Yeah, that's the bursar.

25 Q. "I refer to your letter of 29 January 2004 concerning

1 the boarding arrangements for [REDACTED] which has  
2 been passed through the capacity of secretary and the  
3 treasurer to the Board of Her Majesty's Commissioners.  
4 You will understand ..."

5 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown, can you just slow down a little.

6 MR BROWN: Sorry, I do beg your pardon. I quite take your  
7 point.

8 "You will understand that the conditions of  
9 attendance at Queen Victoria School are enshrined in the  
10 school's constitution and are the preserve of  
11 the Commissioners. As such, they are not within the  
12 gift of the headmaster, although it is clear that he has  
13 already gone to considerable lengths to assist [the  
14 boy's] original case for acceptance as a pupil. It now  
15 falls to me to reply to you on behalf of Her Majesty's  
16 Commissioners.

17 The position is unchanged."

18 And this is about admitting day pupils. And put  
19 short, the Commissioners are not interested in  
20 changing --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- the way the school operates to accommodate one child.

23 A. (Witness nods).

24 Q. And it concludes:

25 "I would be grateful if you would note that the

1 above represents the firm and final position of Her  
2 Majesty's Commissioners on this matter of day pupils and  
3 children of non-serving permanent staff, at least for  
4 the immediate future."

5 Is that what you're talking about, this --

6 A. Yes. There was a -- I'm not sure if that was -- I think  
7 there was more than one request from Ms QRS to the  
8 school about this.

9 Q. And I think if we go to page 12 of the same document,  
10 that first letter was dated 6 February 2004 and I think  
11 you're right that this had been going on, obviously,  
12 before that, but this is a letter dated 31 May and it's  
13 from the housemaster of Cunningham House, which is where  
14 the boy lived; is that correct?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And the tenor of the letter, reading matters short, is  
17 he is concerned about the boy who is distressed and  
18 debating the ongoing matter of staying with [REDACTED] on  
19 a full-time basis and attending the school as a day  
20 pupil. So notwithstanding the letter from the  
21 Commissioners, this is still going on?

22 A. It was an ongoing thing. It was huge pressure being put  
23 upon -- well, by and large Brian, I suppose, as the  
24 headteacher, to change his mind about letting this boy  
25 stay with [REDACTED]

1 Q. But the housemaster goes on in the second paragraph:

2 "The details highlight [the boy's] apparent need to  
3 spend each evening and as much time as possible in the  
4 company of [REDACTED] After much consideration and  
5 deliberation over [the boy] and his well-being, I feel  
6 I must again stress my concern for this pupil.  
7 I believe it is unusual for a teenage boy to wish to  
8 spend so much with a relative from another generation  
9 and be so dependent on her presence. In my six years  
10 experience as a housemaster, I have never met a boy who  
11 would want to do this so frequently with relatives in  
12 close proximity to the school. [He] is missing  
13 opportunities to interact on a social basis with his  
14 peers and this without doubt is affecting him greatly in  
15 the house environment."

16 And it goes on to say that the housemaster has been  
17 discussing matters informally with others because he's  
18 worried and goes on in the penultimate paragraph:

19 "As housemaster I have a duty of care to [him] and  
20 I would be negligent if I did not raise these concerns."

21 Do you remember that anxiety that we're seeing in  
22 the letter being felt more widely?

23 A. Yeah. I think that how it manifested itself in the  
24 house as well was that the boy would come back to the  
25 house and he would have sweeties and, you know, comics

1 and things like that, and this used to upset the other  
2 boys who didn't have any opportunity to go and see their  
3 [REDACTED] every night and get special treats,  
4 as it were. So the whole thing became a bit of a real  
5 hot issue.

6 Q. And one that never went away?

7 A. And never went away. It was constant. I mean,

8 Ms [REDACTED] just would not give up.

9 Q. And in relation to the pastoral deputy head, who seemed  
10 to have a relationship with Ms [REDACTED] that was close?

11 A. Yes, they had a very close relationship, yes.

12 Q. Was that then being taken to the Senior Management Team  
13 by the deputy head (pastoral) who, from what you're  
14 saying, was arguing her friend's corner?

15 A. Yeah. She was totally on [REDACTED]'s side and  
16 tended to support her in everything that she said and  
17 did. In other words, there was a lot of tension because  
18 [REDACTED] wanted the other three houses in the school to be  
19 run the way her house was run and she was using Ms Smith  
20 as a sort of weapon to do that.

21 Q. But the way her house was run was the one house that  
22 was --

23 A. Was the one house that was criticised in the inspection,  
24 yeah. That was the one house we would have rather was  
25 run on the same lines as the other houses rather than

1 the other way around.

2 Q. From what you said, this seemed to go on for the tenure,  
3 certainly, of Ms Smith. Did that impact on the  
4 operation of the school and the responsibility that you  
5 all had to children, do you think?

6 A. I think it probably did, but I think in the situation we  
7 were in, I mean you do tend to get on with it, you just  
8 get on with your job and just do it, but it certainly --  
9 it certainly caused tension in so much that I'm not sure  
10 staff would have used Ms Smith as a sounding board in  
11 the same way that they would have used her predecessor  
12 and her successor.

13 Q. If they had concerns about a pupil?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So the impact of what you're talking about from what  
16 you've just said would seem to suggest that childcare  
17 and protection might diminish because of the tensions?

18 A. It could have done but I'm not sure that it did. But it  
19 could have done. It was a danger.

20 Q. Was that a danger that you, the rest of the Senior  
21 Management Team, were concerned about or were you too  
22 focused on the difficulties, do you think, to be able to  
23 reflect on that as you're reflecting now?

24 A. Well, we knew it was a difficulty, but at the time we  
25 were in a very difficult position, you know. It was



1 very difficult to hold meetings and to discuss things  
2 when that was happening. And that's why -- we saw that  
3 because as a result -- when they were doing interviews  
4 during the inspection, a lot of this came out from  
5 staff. I think they told the inspectors. And at the  
6 same time I think -- and you'll be able to correct me on  
7 this because my chronology sometimes gets slightly  
8 confused -- is we were having Investors in People  
9 meetings as well, which involved the chap from Investors  
10 in People talking to individual staff members about  
11 this, that and the next thing, and the concerns about  
12 Lyn Smith and <sup>QRS</sup> [REDACTED] came up in both those  
13 forums.

14 Q. I think, as we see from the inspector's report, it was  
15 coming up from pupils too?

16 A. Yeah, from the -- yeah.

17 Q. You do recall, I take it, though, that there were  
18 allegations of abuse of [REDACTED] within the house?

19 A. (Witness nods).

20 Q. Which led to police involvement?

21 A. Yeah. When I made my statement, I couldn't remember the  
22 police part of it, but I now have a sort of vague  
23 recollection, because I didn't deal with it at all and  
24 I didn't see any documentation about it, but I think the  
25 CID were called in to question some of the boys that

1           were accused and the boy himself. Their view was that  
2           there was no case whatsoever to answer. That was the  
3           impression I got.

4       Q. That's the impression, there was no prosecution?

5       A. There was no -- yeah.

6       Q. But in terms of the treatment of the boy, were you aware  
7           of if he was treated differently by the other pupils?

8       A. I think he probably was treated differently because he  
9           behaved differently, I think. Maybe that was the  
10          reason.

11      Q. In what way do you mean by behaving differently?

12      A. Well, I'll give you a small example. He would quote the  
13          Bible to the other boys. Now, I'm not saying there's  
14          anything wrong with the Bible, I'm not saying that, but  
15          for a young 13- or 14-year-old boy to try and turn  
16          around and say to people, "You'll burn in hell, don't do  
17          that", you know, it didn't go down well. But I don't  
18          think there was any -- I don't know -- well, one,  
19          I don't know what abuse was alleged. I have no  
20          knowledge of that, the specific allegations. But he  
21          probably did get treated slightly differently because of  
22          the way he behaved towards them. And I know that the  
23          boys said that he used to show off about the stuff he  
24          used to bring back from [REDACTED]'s when he was staying  
25          there.

1 Q. But as we see, the housemaster seems to have been,  
2 certainly, to use a neutral word, very aware of the  
3 concerns?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay. Very briefly if we can look, please, at MOD 563,  
6 this is a document produced by the school and I think  
7 from the sticky tab you'll see it's 2001 to 2014. What  
8 this relates to is reams of correspondence from parents  
9 complaining about things. When I say reams, it  
10 obviously manages to go into one folder for 14 years so  
11 it's not colossal but I think you can take it from me  
12 that from pages 22 to 40 of the document which we have  
13 summarised, there are letters from parents complaining  
14 about the police involvement in relation to the  
15 allegations against [REDACTED]

16 If we could go, please, to page 33, this is a parent  
17 who is writing over the space of two and a half pages to  
18 complain. Reading it:

19 "It is with regret that I must make an official  
20 complaint regarding the inappropriate conduct and lack  
21 of professionalism exhibited by a member of your staff  
22 concerning the incident involving my son last term, and  
23 which has unfortunately become an ongoing worry this  
24 term. As you will know, one or another of my children  
25 has attended Queen Victoria School for the last nine

1 years without incident or cause for complaint, quite the  
2 reverse in fact, as I have been full of admiration for  
3 the school.

4 The basis for my complaint is the complete lack of  
5 impartiality shown by your assistant head, Ms Smith,  
6 regarding the incident. The alleged victim of this  
7 event was [REDACTED] a child well known to Ms Smith,  
8 and to whom she showed what I would consider  
9 inappropriate preference."

10 And then there's reference to apparent holidays with  
11 Ms Smith and the housemistress?

12 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown, a few moments ago you referred to  
13 police involvement in relation to the allegations  
14 against the --

15 MR BROWN: I'm sorry, about, yes.

16 LADY SMITH: -- [REDACTED], I think you meant about; is that  
17 right? Just to get the transcript right, thank you.

18 MR BROWN: Thank you, my Lady.

19 And then moving on, we detail in the next  
20 paragraph telephone conversations:

21 "My first dealings with Ms Smith occurred when she  
22 telephoned me one Sunday evening three weeks ago to  
23 inform me that the [boy's] family had decided during the  
24 summer holidays that they were not satisfied with the  
25 way the school had dealt with the matter and that they

1           were going to pursue it through child protection  
2           legislation. I was really shocked as I had thought that  
3           the matter had been adequately dealt with and that the  
4           perpetrators were extremely unlikely to re-offend  
5           knowing what the consequences would be. What amazed me  
6           was the triumph so evident in her voice - it seemed to  
7           me that it had become a personal crusade to pursue the  
8           matter."

9           Does the language of the parent echo with what you  
10          recollect?

11         A. I haven't seen this letter before --

12         Q. No, of course you haven't.

13         A. -- but that's a fairly accurate summation of the  
14          environment, yeah.

15         Q. Then the last two lines:

16                 "I was told to make myself available on the Tuesday  
17                 or Wednesday to attend an interview with a policeman and  
18                 a social worker or to send along a representative.  
19                 I explained that I had just started a new job and  
20                 I would find it difficult to get any time off, but her  
21                 response was curt to the point of rudeness and  
22                 I determined not to have any dealings with her in the  
23                 future."

24                 And then weeks seem to elapse, reading the next  
25                 paragraph, then third paragraph on that page:

1            "I then had a telephone call on Saturday the 11th  
2            from Ms Smith to inform me that a meeting would probably  
3            take place on Friday, 17 September at 13.00 and would  
4            involve a policeman and a social worker. If I could not  
5            make it the social worker would act for my child, or  
6            I could nominate a member of staff not involved in the  
7            initial investigation to act in loco parentis. Again  
8            I found the woman to be quite offhand, something the  
9            situation certainly did not warrant."

10           And then:

11           "The meeting at the school was a complete fiasco  
12           with all five parents turning up at 13.00 although we  
13           were not seen until 16.15. There was no social worker  
14           attending, as had been Ms Smith's story, and the  
15           policemen were very aggressive. I was relieved I had  
16           been able to attend or my son would have been  
17           slaughtered. Suddenly the matter was one of criminal  
18           investigation not the child protection matter Ms Smith  
19           had led me to believe. I was upset to hear that the  
20           police had been handed the boys' accounts of the  
21           incident which they were forced to write without  
22           parental authority or even knowledge of the event. One  
23           policeman said to me that this was a severe case of  
24           institutional bullying and would put money on children  
25           at the school crying themselves to sleep at night.

1           None of the parents was at all satisfied with the  
2 way the matter had been handled. All spoke to me of  
3 their disgust at the way Ms Smith had spoken to them,  
4 the complete lack of transparency in her dealings and  
5 all brought out more examples of the preferential  
6 treatment [the boy, ██████████] had experienced at his  
7 time at QV."

8           Final page:

9           "I feel Ms Smith has her own agenda in this matter,  
10 without wishing to be a conspiracy theorist would  
11 suggest that she is hoping to destabilise the management  
12 of the school, the school itself or both. She has not  
13 at any time acted in the best interests of the school,  
14 the boys concerned or the parents."

15           What are your views, from what you saw, of her  
16 sentiments?

17       A. As I said, I think that's very accurate although I'm not  
18 aware of those specific incidents about the meeting with  
19 the --

20       Q. No.

21       A. -- the police and such like, but it does ring true.

22       Q. I think we know that both teachers were suspended and  
23 later left the school.

24       A. (Witness nods).

25       Q. Can you remember have you a sense of the Senior

1 Management Team once they had departed?

2 A. Oh, great relief. Enormous relief.

3 LADY SMITH: Can you remind me how long each of them had  
4 been at the school, roughly.

5 A. I think Ms Smith had been two years or going on two  
6 years. Ms QRS probably longer, but the trouble  
7 with Ms QRS didn't start until Ms Smith came, so  
8 it was not apparent, this. She'd never -- I don't think  
9 she was raising the issue forcefully until she thought  
10 she had an ally.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 MR BROWN: Thank you. My Lady, there's a little way to go,  
13 but it may be that --

14 LADY SMITH: Maybe pause at that stage for the morning  
15 break?

16 'John', I usually take a break in the middle of the  
17 morning some time around now. If that would work for  
18 you, I'll take it now and sit again in 15 minutes or so.

19 (11.25 am)

20 (A short break)

21 (11.45 am)

22 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

23 MR BROWN: My Lady, there is one matter which if I could  
24 just address now, in the first chapter of the evidence  
25 the reference was made to an individual teacher by name.



1           This is my fault entirely, I should have made the point  
2           that that teacher should be known as 'Elsie' rather than  
3           her proper name. Certainly it would be appropriate to  
4           remind those present.

5           LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. That's the woman who was  
6           the head of the house we've been discussing. We've been  
7           referring to her as 'Elsie'.

8           A. I'm sorry, I didn't know that.

9           LADY SMITH: She is entitled to have anonymity and chose to  
10          do so. People in the hearing room do know that this  
11          happens from time to time. The name just can't be  
12          repeated outside this room.

13                 Yes, Mr Brown.

14          MR BROWN: Thank you very much.

15                 'John', that was entirely my fault, don't worry.

16                 In terms of that period, you touch in your statement  
17          at page 15, paragraph 75 on an anonymous letter that was  
18          received -- we don't need to see the letter because  
19          I think you summarise the relevant parts -- suggesting  
20          that, I think, two teachers were involved with pupils  
21          and passing reference to you stating that one of the  
22          pupils involved had been seen having intercourse with  
23          you whilst at a nightclub in Edinburgh, which is  
24          an interesting image, obviously, and one that must have  
25          come as a profound shock to you.

1 A. It certainly did.

2 Q. This was at the same period that the deputy head  
3 (pastoral) was the lady we were talking about before the  
4 break?

5 A. The letter was -- she brought the letter to the SMT and  
6 said it had been put under her door.

7 Q. Okay, although I think it was addressed to the  
8 headmaster?

9 A. I think it was addressed to the headmaster, but it was  
10 put under her door.

11 Q. Again you talk over the page at paragraph 77 about in  
12 due course discovering, as you understand it, who was  
13 the author and you would understand it had been written  
14 by pupils who were angry at having been gated?

15 A. That's right, yeah. Two boys who -- I think something  
16 was going on, there was going to be a party or something  
17 at somebody's house and they had been gated for the  
18 weekend and this was a revenge.

19 Q. That's as you understand it?

20 A. That's what I've been told, yeah.

21 Q. So certainly you may understand that from other  
22 information we do understand it was a pupil who wrote  
23 the letter. At the time, out of interest, who was  
24 thought to have written the letter?

25 A. The general feeling was they thought it might have been

1           Lyn Smith that wrote it herself.

2           Q. Is this another example of the tensions that were at  
3           play?

4           A. Yeah.

5           Q. All right. But in relation to the allegation against  
6           you, I think we can take this short, there was  
7           an internal investigation within the school, presumably?

8           A. Yes.

9           Q. I think the pupil was spoken to, you were spoken to, and  
10          obviously you deny it?

11          A. I certainly did.

12          Q. She denied it, but more to the point, and I think we  
13          know this from other sources, you were indeed in  
14          Edinburgh after a rugby match?

15          A. I was at Murrayfield with another teacher and his  
16          brothers and his son.

17          Q. Yes. And pupils?

18          A. No. My recollection is we met some pupils, they were in  
19          the beer tent, after the match.

20          Q. That's the point, you met some pupils?

21          A. Yeah.

22          Q. But I think it could be vouched from other adults that  
23          there had been that passing connection but then you --

24          A. It was just a passing meeting there and I think it was  
25          one of the pupils' birthdays and they were going off to

1           the town and I came back with the teacher involved and  
2           his son and his brothers and was picked up by his wife  
3           and I stayed the night in his house.

4        Q.   Okay.  But from your perspective, as we see in  
5           paragraph 76, you were spoken to by an external MoD  
6           group, so we should understand that being an MoD school,  
7           the MoD side came into play too?

8        A.   Yeah, the MoD -- they -- I think they spoke to the girl  
9           involved as well and spoke to me and I obviously denied  
10          it and so did the girl.

11       Q.   Okay.  There were obviously, in the letter, more  
12          specific allegations about relationships between  
13          teachers and pupils.

14       A.   (Witness nods).

15       Q.   If we can just touch on that a little, you've made  
16          comments in your statement about the two teachers  
17          involved.  We can read that without going into it.  From  
18          your perspective I think you thought both were good  
19          teachers and were liked by the pupils, is that  
20          a summary?

21       A.   Yes.  I knew one teacher better than the other, but they  
22          were both well thought of by the staff.  Am I using  
23          a different name, sorry, for these teachers?

24       Q.   No, you're not for these ones.

25       A.   I can use their names?

1 Q. Yes, but if there's mention of the pupils, please don't.

2 A. The [REDACTED] teacher, Mr YNT [REDACTED] I didn't know  
3 particularly well. I don't know why, I just never  
4 particularly connected with him.

5 LADY SMITH: Oh, sorry, if it's that teacher you're talking  
6 about could you use the name 'Mark'? We know him as  
7 'Mark'. Thank you.

8 MR BROWN: And if you could just refer to the other teacher,  
9 just in case.

10 A. I refer to both as 'Mark'?

11 Q. No, the teacher you just mentioned as 'Mark'?

12 LADY SMITH: And there's another teacher, 'Mark' and 'the  
13 other teacher'.

14 A. Oh, 'the other teacher', okay.

15 LADY SMITH: Rather than the name, thank you.

16 A. I didn't particularly know 'Mark' very well and I'm not  
17 sure why that should be, but I didn't know him  
18 particularly well. But he was a good classroom teacher,  
19 he did his job well, he was popular with the pupils,  
20 especially the senior boys he was very popular with --  
21 you know, he had a rugby background, he was [REDACTED]  
22 I'm not sure whether that should be anything, but -- he  
23 [REDACTED] and things like that, so he was  
24 a popular guy.

25 MR BROWN: I'm sorry to perhaps dismiss you, but was he

1 cool?

2 A. Probably, yeah.

3 Q. In a way that you might not have been?

4 A. In a way that I certainly wasn't, that's for sure, yeah.

5 LADY SMITH: He would be a good bit younger than you, would  
6 that be right? I'm just trying to remember.

7 A. Yes, he was younger and he was a very handsome young  
8 man, you know.

9 MR BROWN: What I'm coming onto is obviously he had  
10 a greater pastoral role than you, we would understand.

11 A. (Witness nods).

12 Q. And it's been suggested that at this time relations as  
13 between staff, house staff and pupils, particularly  
14 senior girls, was more casual than it should have been.  
15 Do you recognise that?

16 A. I think if that was said by members of staff or whoever,  
17 I think that may have been more a reflection of the way  
18 the senior girls were treated in the senior girls' house  
19 as to the reality.

20 Q. Why?

21 A. Well, because the senior girls in the senior girls'  
22 house were treated very, very strictly and they had more  
23 leeway in the junior boarding house because they were  
24 there to act as not quite member of staff, but, you  
25 know, they were additional support.

1 Q. So, to understand, senior girls would be in a different  
2 house but might come to the junior house to help out?  
3 A. No, they stayed in the junior house.  
4 Q. Oh, they stayed in the junior house, just to be clear?  
5 A. Not all of them. I think there was four -- I think it  
6 was four.  
7 Q. I see. So there were too many senior girls for the  
8 senior house by the sounds of it?  
9 A. Well, there was, actually, yes. And also because it was  
10 P7s and S1s in the junior house, it was felt it would be  
11 beneficial to them to have some senior people down there  
12 to help out and be a sounding board, et cetera.  
13 Q. And did any alarms ring about the prospect of having  
14 senior girls in that more relaxed environment of the  
15 junior house with supporting staff and it being a rather  
16 more relaxed, informal atmosphere?  
17 A. Not until the allegations against 'Mark' were made.  
18 Q. And at that point, what happened?  
19 A. It was -- it was investigated by the housemaster at the  
20 time, who spoke to both people involved, spoke to the  
21 girl's parents and explained what had happened, or what  
22 had been alleged, went to the people who started the  
23 allegations, asked them where did they hear it from.  
24 "Oh, I didn't hear it, it was so-and-so who heard it and  
25 they told me." Went to that person, "Oh, it wasn't me

1           that heard it, it was somebody else", so went it -- so  
2           it was one of those things that went right back until in  
3           the end I don't think he got to the bottom of who  
4           actually made the allegation.

5           Q. All right. So there was an investigation carried out by  
6           the housemaster?

7           A. Yeah.

8           Q. Was it then brought up to the Senior Management Team?

9           A. It was, yeah.

10          Q. What happened at that, if you can remember?

11          A. I think -- I'm a bit hazy on this one, you know, because  
12          it was quite a long time ago.

13          Q. Sure.

14          A. I think it was -- I think the rumour didn't go away and  
15          I think it was investigated again, I think by the MoD  
16          this time. As a result of that, I think the teacher was  
17          suspended pending investigation.

18          Q. And I think, as we know, ultimately, before that process  
19          finished, he resigned?

20          A. He resigned, yeah.

21          Q. There was also a police investigation, we should  
22          understand. Were you aware of that?

23          A. I wasn't aware of the police one, no. I was aware of  
24          a GTC one.

25          Q. Somewhat later?



1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Which resulted in him, as we know, being struck off?

3 A. I didn't know that. I didn't know the outcome of that.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. We were never told the outcome of it.

6 Q. But you were aware that GTCS were pursuing him?

7 A. Yes, because I think a member of staff was called to the  
8 hearing.

9 Q. All right. Was this regarded as a matter of concern by  
10 the school management team, the suggestion that there  
11 had been relationships between teacher and pupil?

12 A. Yeah, definitely.

13 Q. Did it change -- did it result in practical change  
14 immediately once this --

15 A. Well, there was -- I think the staff were told that you  
16 will on no accounts be alone with any pupil, don't be in  
17 a place that you shouldn't be with another pupil, and  
18 that was stressed very heavily, especially the staff in  
19 that particular house.

20 Q. Looking back, was there a recognition that perhaps  
21 things had been too lax or is that unkind?

22 A. No, I don't think that that was the thought, that it was  
23 because of the system that caused it. I don't think  
24 that was the reason. I don't know what the reason was,  
25 but I don't think it was because of the system because

1           it happened -- it had worked well before that and has  
2           worked well after that, you know.

3           Q. Although the matter merited a reminder and a forceful  
4           reminder, from what you're saying?

5           A. Yeah, but, you know, if you have something like that,  
6           your duty-bound to make that forceful reminder.

7           Q. Okay. I think in relation to the other teacher, similar  
8           processes happened, including a GTCS hearing, but that  
9           teacher remained at the school?

10          A. The teacher was initially suspended.

11          Q. Yes.

12          A. And once again there was an MoD investigation, which  
13          a lot of staff were called to speak at, and then there  
14          was a GTCS investigation, a result of which he came back  
15          to school. Now, we didn't -- I didn't hear the outcome  
16          of that. We were just told that that teacher is coming  
17          back to work on such-and-such -- because I had to  
18          arrange, you know, finishing the cover and all that sort  
19          of thing that we had.

20          Q. Okay.

21          A. So we deemed, therefore, that he was seen fit to teach  
22          by the GTCS and by the Commissioners.

23          Q. So were any further steps taken, given the background,  
24          in relation to that teacher or was it just he was  
25          cleared to return to work and that was that?

1       A. I can't be absolutely certain of this, but I know he was  
2       spoken to by Brian Raine quite, you know, fully.  
3       I don't know -- I don't know what was said.  
4       Q. But you were aware the headmaster --  
5       A. That he was warned.  
6       Q. Yes. Was he watched?  
7       A. He was watched in the way that we would watch other  
8       teachers, but we weren't sort of looking in on his  
9       classroom every two minutes or following him around the  
10      school or anything like that.  
11      Q. But presumably the background being known might have led  
12      to greater watch being made?  
13      A. Well, it was difficult to keep a greater watch in so  
14      much that he was so high profile within the school  
15      because he dealt with whole-school issues that, you  
16      know, he was -- we were able to see that he was doing  
17      his job perfectly well.  
18      Q. Okay. Did he have pastoral responsibilities over and  
19      above his day job?  
20      A. In the boys' house, yeah, in the boys' intermediate  
21      house.  
22      Q. Right. Before and after the letter? Or just after the  
23      letter?  
24      A. Before and after.  
25      Q. Before and after, okay.

1 A. I'd like to say that the allegation came as a huge shock  
2 to everyone because the teacher involved was  
3 an excellent teacher.

4 Q. In relation to 'Mark', did you understand that he went  
5 on to teach?

6 A. Well, I'm only going by something I heard. I am -- but  
7 I don't know the chronology of it. I don't know whether  
8 that was before the GTCS meeting because I think that  
9 was actually much later than the actual -- after -- much  
10 later after he'd left the school. But someone told that  
11 when he left our school, that he taught in an Alloa  
12 school for a short time.

13 Q. Did that surprise you, can you remember?

14 A. I only heard that long after the event. It wasn't at  
15 the time. But when I heard it, I thought, well,  
16 that's -- perhaps it was -- the chronology that he  
17 hadn't been in front of the GTS so therefore he hadn't  
18 been struck off. So strictly speaking, I suppose, he  
19 still had GTCS registration. But we wouldn't have  
20 written him a reference, so I don't know how he got the  
21 job.

22 Q. Right. Were you surprised to hear, regardless, that he  
23 was teaching given the background?

24 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

25 Q. A couple of specific things. You mentioned the use of

1           GAP students.  These are 18/19-year-olds?

2           A.  Usually about 19, sometimes it was as old as 20.  And  
3           they were from -- usually the big boarding schools in  
4           New Zealand and Australia, mainly, Marist College,  
5           places like that.

6           Q.  Did you have any concerns about the way they were  
7           appointed?  Was any check done, in other words?

8           A.  They were checked on -- they were brought in --  
9           Brian Raine had lots of contacts in Australia because  
10          he'd done a lot of visits to Australia, and he had  
11          personal contacts in those schools and they were by and  
12          large recommended through that.

13          Q.  So it was really on a word of mouth recommendation from  
14          a contact?

15          A.  Yeah, but latterly we did get them through the GAP  
16          organisation and they were vetted by the actual GAP  
17          organisation.

18          Q.  So that was a process that became formalised over time?

19          A.  Yes.

20          Q.  Do you remember, had there been concern at all about the  
21          backgrounds to these young men and women?

22          A.  I can't remember being particularly concerned about any  
23          of the gap students.  Sometimes it could be -- sometimes  
24          the boys were a bit boisterous on the rugby field, you  
25          know, but -- didn't know their own strength, maybe

1           that's what it was. And because they were young, they  
2           needed a wee bit of guidance. You know, "You can't say  
3           that to people, you can't do this, you can't do that",  
4           but they were very closely watched by the housemaster.

5       Q. Okay. I think you confirmed that you were there with  
6           two headmasters, Brian Raine, who retired in -- was it  
7           2008?

8       A. 2008, yes.

9       Q. And he was replaced by Wendy Bellars?

10      A. Yeah.

11      Q. From 2008 on, is it fair to say that schools became ever  
12           more regulated in terms of Scottish Executive Government  
13           policies to try and improve education?

14      A. Definitely. It was nothing but paperwork. You know,  
15           the Curriculum for Excellence was coming out. There  
16           were more and more Care Commission things to do. So it  
17           was very documentation heavy in those years.

18      Q. I think one of the things that you refer to in  
19           particular is How Good Is Our School?

20      A. Yes. Constant audits. Audits all the time.

21      Q. Did you find that helpful or unhelpful?

22      A. It was helpful in so much that on occasions it could  
23           throw up something that you weren't entirely aware of.

24      Q. Such as?

25      A. Well, maybe, you know, pupils would like more maths or

1 something like that. You know, you would think who  
2 wants more maths? Things like that. But by and large,  
3 the time taken to do them almost outweighed their  
4 usefulness.

5 Q. Was this one of the reasons you decided to retire?

6 A. Well, I had come to retirement age and I thought maybe  
7 it's time to finish. I didn't want to spend the rest --  
8 I could have obviously stayed on, but I didn't want to  
9 continue teaching just having to do audits all the time,  
10 so.

11 Q. You, on one view, were a generation of teachers who  
12 weren't used to such things?

13 A. No, I wouldn't say that at all. I think I was quite  
14 a modern-thinking teacher, but modern-thinking doesn't  
15 necessarily mean that you take everything on board.  
16 Sometimes things are not right. And I think that the  
17 Curriculum for Excellence created such an amount of  
18 paperwork that it was almost counter -- in fact I would  
19 say it was counter-productive. So I didn't want to  
20 spend the next few years doing that.

21 Q. Was that resistance shared by your contemporaries in the  
22 school?

23 A. I would say almost universally, yeah. I think that was  
24 in the state system too.

25 Q. Yes.

1 A. They didn't like it.

2 Q. Did anyone warm to it?

3 A. There were certain schools that seemed to do well and  
4 they were seen as pilot schools in it, but putting my  
5 cynical hat on, you were never quite sure whether that  
6 was because they agreed with it or they saw an avenue  
7 for promotion through it.

8 Q. And within QVS, were there any champions of ...

9 A. I can't think of anyone.

10 Q. So from the head down, there was frustration?

11 A. (Witness nods). There was frustration.

12 Q. One particular issue that we may have seen is the  
13 language used in the many documents. Does that ring any  
14 bells with you, the language is perhaps sometimes not  
15 the simplest of English?

16 A. In the documents --

17 Q. Generated for these policies?

18 A. I think people just got fed up with reading the same  
19 introduction to everything. You know, instead of just  
20 getting to the point, you had to go through all this,  
21 you know, preamble and it was the same preamble over and  
22 over again instead of just saying, "These are the points  
23 you want to do, one, two, three, four", and it just put  
24 you off reading them, actually.

25 Q. So it's not so much language, just verbiage?



1 A. Verbiage, yeah.

2 Q. One final specific before we come to your thoughts as to  
3 how the Inquiry might think of things to improve the  
4 situation more broadly. I think we will hear about  
5 a particular teacher at QVS who I think departed the  
6 school after you left, Gerard Buchanan. Who was he?

7 A. He was the head of modern languages.

8 Q. In terms of him coming to the school, do you remember  
9 where he came from?

10 A. Stirling High School, I think. I think it was Stirling  
11 High School.

12 Q. Did he have some association with QVS?

13 A. Yeah, when we were doing interviews for staff, we felt,  
14 because of our relationship with the Local Authority in  
15 Stirling, we felt it was an idea to bring in -- if it  
16 was a principal teacher's job, we would bring in  
17 a principal teacher from Stirling to sit on the board  
18 and help out and use their expertise, and Gerry had been  
19 used several times and he was very good at it. He was  
20 quite incisive when he was doing the interviews. And he  
21 could -- because he was in the state system, he was much  
22 more aware of a lot of the things that were going on  
23 than maybe we were. So he was a great help to the  
24 interview panel. So he'd done about three -- certainly  
25 three that I could remember.

1 Q. When was this? Do you remember when he joined the  
2 school?

3 A. I can't, actually. I think he was there in Brian's  
4 time, so it was before 2008.

5 Q. All right. But he would obviously then be there under  
6 his successor, Wendy Bellars?

7 A. He was there then, yes.

8 Q. Can I just ask, what was his relationship like with  
9 Wendy Bellars?

10 A. It was good. I got the impression that she liked him.

11 Q. I take it from that there may have been teachers you  
12 thought perhaps she wasn't so keen on?

13 A. Oh yeah, I think there were. It was difficult to tell  
14 which ones were which, sometimes.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. But certainly she seemed to favour Gerry.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 A. But mind you, he was a very good classroom teacher.  
19 I have to say that.

20 Q. Yes. If we go to the final page of your statement,  
21 page 16, paragraph 78, under the broad heading, "Helping  
22 the Inquiry", as you say:

23 "... I think the following should be considered and  
24 taken into account: careful selection of appropriately  
25 qualified staff; very clear guidelines on child

1 protection; encourage an environment of openness,  
2 establish close links with outside agencies ... set up  
3 tutor systems and 'buddy' systems among the pupils;  
4 foster a 'look out for people' attitude; establish clear  
5 lines of reporting; have all the appropriate policies in  
6 place, make sure they are read and that they are updated  
7 as and when required; keep close contacts with parents;  
8 always have multiple members of staff on duty in the  
9 boarding houses; always have a 'go-to' person in charge  
10 of pastoral matters, and when in doubt refer it on. The  
11 minimum live-in staff after lights out were:  
12 housemaster, deputy matron. In the girls' house this  
13 included either a GAP student or/and assistant  
14 housemistress."

15 That's a list of factors that you think should be  
16 present. What was missing when you were at QVS?

17 A. I think we had all of those, actually. It's probably  
18 fair to say that we had them all, but with differing  
19 levels of effectiveness because they were being bedded  
20 in. Because some of them were more recent than others.

21 Q. That's what I wondered, because in a sense you're  
22 repeating some of the comments earlier on in your  
23 statement which suggest that things were there already.

24 A. Yeah, but you can have -- you can have these things in  
25 place but policies take quite a long time to get

1 embedded. It's very difficult just to say there's  
2 a policy on bullying and the next week it's done and  
3 everyone's bought into it and everyone follows it and  
4 it's totally effective. It doesn't work like that. You  
5 put the things in place, some of them work, some of them  
6 don't work, some of them have to be amended, some of  
7 them have to be updated, some of them have to be changed  
8 and then maybe eventually it will all work.

9 Q. Maybe?

10 A. Maybe. You can't guarantee it. I would like to think  
11 it's as near foolproof as possible, but you can't  
12 guarantee anything.

13 Q. The environment of openness is perhaps of interest. Was  
14 that environment of openness present, do you think,  
15 sufficiently?

16 A. It wasn't for a certain period of time in the school,  
17 which we've already discussed. I think that people  
18 wouldn't have gone to 'Elsie'.

19 LADY SMITH: When you referred to the need for  
20 an environment of openness, what is it you have in mind  
21 so far as openness is concerned?

22 A. Well, that pupils, staff or parents have no worries  
23 about going to someone and saying, "I think this is  
24 happening", and it won't reflect on them. You know,  
25 they're not going to -- you've got to feel that if you

1 bring something to -- especially if it's someone more  
2 senior than you, that you're not going to be blamed and  
3 that your word is going to be accepted and it's going to  
4 be looked at. It might not be the outcome that you  
5 want, but it would be looked at.

6 LADY SMITH: And I suppose, in the case of a parent, the  
7 parent needs to be confident that their child will not  
8 suffer because they are raising a concern.

9 A. Absolutely.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11 MR BROWN: Is there anything else you would wish to add?

12 A. No.

13 MR BROWN: 'John', thank you very much indeed.

14 A. Thank you.

15 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
16 questions for 'John'?

17 'John', that completes all the questions we have for  
18 you. Thank you very much for your engagement with the  
19 Inquiry, which of course, as has been alluded to, took  
20 place initially during all the challenges of lockdown.

21 I'm conscious that we have also asked you to go  
22 further than you did in your written statement in the  
23 questions that have been put to you today, but it's been  
24 so helpful to hear your answer so I'm really grateful to  
25 you for that. Thank you.

1 A. Thank you.

2 LADY SMITH: I'm now able to let you go.

3 A. Thank you.

4 (The witness withdrew)

5 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

6 MR BROWN: My Lady, the next live witness is at 2 o'clock  
7 but before lunch I think there should be a number of  
8 read-ins which should take us to 1 o'clock. With  
9 Your Ladyship's leave, I will just go and speak to  
10 'John' to say thank you.

11 LADY SMITH: Ms Bennie, you can take over. That will be  
12 really helpful. Thank you.

13 Graeme Beattie (read)

14 MS BENNIE: My Lady, the first read-in bears the reference  
15 WIT-1-000000498.

16 "My name is Graeme Beattie. My year of birth is  
17 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.  
18 I have been employed at Queen Victoria School since  
19 1 September 1984 and as a primary teacher and I am  
20 currently a principal teacher of pupil support in the  
21 school.

22 I began at Queen Victoria School on 1 September 1984  
23 as a primary teacher. I taught P6 and P7 primary  
24 classes. I also carried out boarding school duties in  
25 Wavell House, the junior boarding boys' house one day

1 a week and at weekends as scheduled by the housemaster.

2 From 1 April 1986 I was assistant housemaster of  
3 Wavell House. This involved extra duties to assist the  
4 housemaster. Some of those duties involved wakening the  
5 pupils for breakfast, supervising meals, prep and  
6 evening routine and help with organising house  
7 activities, especially at the weekend.

8 The weekend duties covered activities such as table  
9 tennis competitions, birthday celebrations, various  
10 games events such as five-a-side football, rugby.  
11 I also was responsible for the house library and giving  
12 out pocket money.

13 From the 19 August 1987 through to 31 August 1990  
14 I was made deputy housemaster of Wavell House. I would  
15 deputise for the housemaster on the days I was on duty.

16 On 25 August 1993, for almost a year until 23 August  
17 1994 I was assistant housemaster of Cunningham House.  
18 This house was for the intermediate boys in a boarding  
19 house in years S1 to S3. My role was to assist the  
20 housemaster with house activities, morning meals and  
21 evening routines once a week. I was also on duty at the  
22 weekends as per rota. This did not include weekend  
23 morning duties.

24 From 24 August 1994 until August 2012 I was the  
25 assistant housemaster for Haig House. Initially this

1 was a senior boys' boarding house for years S4 to S6.  
2 It then became a house for boys in years S1 to S6. My  
3 duties were the same as the Cunningham assistant  
4 housemaster. I was also a tutor for pupils within the  
5 house. I cannot remember the exact date when the school  
6 developed the role of tutor and pastoral care.

7 After giving up my promoted post in the boarding  
8 school, my next appointment was from August 2012 until  
9 today. I was a tutor for a group of pupils in  
10 Haig House. As a tutor, I am responsible for six pupils  
11 and meet them at tutor period once per week."

12 LADY SMITH: Just to pause for a moment. When he says  
13 "today", that would be up until November 2020 when his  
14 statement was signed?

15 MS BENNIE: Yes, my Lady, it's dated 6 November 2020.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 MS BENNIE: "We have a programme of Personal and Social  
18 Education/support provided by the deputy head (pastoral)  
19 and guidance. At the moment we have a recovery  
20 curriculum to help with the transition to school after  
21 lockdown. I am their go-to person and point of contact  
22 for them should they need help or support.

23 As a tutor I am part of the school's pastoral  
24 care/GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) process  
25 and notified through the school information system or



1           emailed when a child or young person in my tutor group  
2           is having difficulties, family issues, parent if  
3           deployed, bereavement or he has been achieving success  
4           in the school. I can represent the pupil at any meeting  
5           and have done so when a pupil is being interviewed by  
6           the headteacher for a prefect role in the school.  
7           I advise pupils on any issue they raise. I check on  
8           them every evening when on duty in the boarding house.  
9           There is a schedule of tutor activities for the whole  
10          year and includes such things as going over school  
11          reports, pupil passport, tutor outings as a group, for  
12          example to the cinema, or ice skating.

13                 From 24 August 1994 along with my other roles in the  
14          school I was appointed as assistant principal teacher  
15          development for 5 to 14. One of the responsibilities  
16          was the development of the school curriculum based on  
17          the Scottish 5 to 14 guidelines. This changed in 1999  
18          to assistant principal teacher learning support. The  
19          learning support role meant that I had the  
20          responsibility for pupils with learning needs. This  
21          includes personalised support, creating individual  
22          education programmes and communicating with teachers the  
23          additional support needs of pupils.

24                 From 1 April 2002 I was promoted to principal  
25          teacher of learning support and still carry out this

1 role to date. This role has developed from just  
2 learning support to principal teacher of pupil support  
3 and a few years ago I set up a whole school pupil  
4 support standard. My responsibilities include:  
5 identifying, observing, assessing, planning appropriate  
6 interventions, and recording and reviewing those  
7 interventions as part of the schools Getting It Right  
8 For Every Child approach. I have responsibility as  
9 an active member of the intervention planning meetings  
10 and creating the child and young person's plan. I am  
11 a member of the school's GIRFEC maintenance and  
12 development team. This team includes two deputy  
13 headteachers and we are involved in maintaining and  
14 developing the school's GIRFEC policy. In 1984, when  
15 I was interviewed for the position of primary teacher,  
16 I was vetted in line with MoD procedures and was on  
17 probation for a year as a civil servant. I was also  
18 a probationary teacher for two years and the headteacher  
19 at the time asked for reports from the head of primary.  
20 I became a fully GTC-registered teacher in 1986.  
21 I completed a personal review and development plan for  
22 the school and the GTC. I am also registered with the  
23 GTC for teaching pupils with additional support needs.  
24 My registration date for this was 2 February 2015.

25 At the beginning, monitoring and appraisal was

1 informal, such as a chat about how I was getting on.  
2 However, for a number of years now my line manager will  
3 meet with me and discuss my personal review and  
4 development plan. This was recorded with targets set  
5 for next session. This is a formal process and the  
6 school has a policy for this along with correct  
7 protocols to follow and continues to happen today.

8 When I first started in the school there was no  
9 induction pack. I have had a lot of training since  
10 provided by the school. I qualified with a postgraduate  
11 certificate and diploma in Support for Learning from  
12 Strathclyde University prior to taking up my role as  
13 a Support for Learning pupil support teacher. I have  
14 also completed a Masters in education to help me with my  
15 role as assistant principal teacher curriculum  
16 development.

17 I have attended and attend many in-service training  
18 programmes online and in person. I am also trained in  
19 emotional literacy support assistant.

20 In my current position I am the line manager for two  
21 classroom assistants and a pupil support teacher.  
22 I have not been trained in the MoD recruitment  
23 procedures and therefore cannot be part of the interview  
24 recruitment process. My knowledge of the school's  
25 recruitment policy is only that it's based on the civil

1 service MoD procedures and competencies.

2 I am involved in some training and personal  
3 development of staff. I have presented in-house  
4 training related to pupils with additional support  
5 needs.

6 I am involved in the supervision, appraisal and  
7 evaluation of three members of staff: the two classroom  
8 assistants and one pupil support teacher. I set targets  
9 based on the Civil Service competencies. I complete  
10 performance review and development for the teacher, that  
11 is the pupil support teacher, linked to the GTC's  
12 standards.

13 Over the years I have lived in different areas  
14 within and outwith the school, depending on my role at  
15 the school. Only authorised staff and parents/carers  
16 are permitted in the children's residential areas after  
17 reporting to the staff at the reception or in the  
18 boarding house.

19 Culture within Queen Victoria School.

20 During my time at the school the culture has been  
21 one of caring. Staff want the best for the children  
22 under their care. Initially when I started as a young  
23 teacher, I would describe the school as strict, with the  
24 school traditions seen as very important. It was also  
25 very sanctions based. There was little pupil voice or

1 consultation in any decisions about the way the school  
2 was run. There was no restorative practices to address  
3 managing behaviour or behaviour seen as a form of  
4 communication.

5 Over the years this has changed and there is a lot  
6 of pupil input and pupil voice. There are house and  
7 school councils with pupil representatives on them.  
8 Pupil surveys are now used to gauge the thoughts of the  
9 pupil population. I remember when I first arrived at  
10 the school there was little communication with parents  
11 and this has dramatically changed over the years. The  
12 school now has a different culture which is more centred  
13 with personal, social and health education being taught  
14 in the school.

15 The culture of the school has always been one of  
16 physical activity (rugby, cross-country running and  
17 hockey), traditions (drill, piping, drumming and  
18 dancing), old-fashioned manners and school uniform. The  
19 ceremonial aspect was a very important part of the  
20 culture when I started and this continues to be so with  
21 school parades and the pipe band and dancers  
22 representing the school at outside events.

23 There is more of an inclusive culture within the  
24 school than when I first arrived. Learning support  
25 staff were not allowed into classes to support pupils.

1 This now happens. The school has a more diverse  
2 population than it has ever had and this has changed the  
3 culture of the school.

4 To my knowledge, fagging did not exist during the  
5 time I have been at Queen Victoria School.

6 Discipline and punishment.

7 Over the years, discipline has moved away from  
8 punishment to one of restorative practices. Discipline  
9 has always been the role of teachers and house staff.

10 Since 1986, if my memory is correct, the school has  
11 not used corporal punishment. Punishment has taken the  
12 form of sanctions such as talks with children, loss of  
13 privileges, department and school detentions, room  
14 tidying, reporting to staff at certain times of the day,  
15 restorative conversations and writing reflective  
16 comments on how behaviour can affect others.

17 The school seeks advice from external agencies such  
18 as educational psychologists for advice and strategies  
19 to help with behaviour, for example our link  
20 psychologist presented a course on managing behaviour  
21 rather than using discipline and punishment approaches.

22 In my early years at the school, I do not remember  
23 a formal policy in relation to discipline and  
24 punishment. The school now has a behaviour management  
25 policy. This has been developed over the years and the

1 school now has a behaviour management group promoting  
2 positive behaviour strategies. This group has  
3 promoted the policy through a guide to boarding  
4 school life document and different reward events  
5 throughout the year. Records are kept throughout the  
6 school's information management system and boarding  
7 school logs.

8 The prefects and senior pupils are not responsible  
9 for discipline. They have leadership roles in the house  
10 and school set by the housemaster or housemistress and  
11 the senior leadership team. In the past, my  
12 recollection is that senior pupils were involved in  
13 supervising prep for the senior school, but not  
14 discipline. This is not the case any more.

15 Concerns about the school.

16 I remember an HMI report that was critical of the  
17 school but I am unsure of the exact date. I think it  
18 was linked to bullying in the senior houses. I think  
19 the appointment of a deputy head (pastoral) and guidance  
20 was one of the responses. I believe the Senior  
21 Management Team would have responsibility for reporting  
22 to parents.

23 If a child in the school or other person on their  
24 behalf wished to make a complaint, the only procedure  
25 I am aware of is the procedure we use at the moment. We

1 have an anonymous complaints procedure and also have  
2 a child protection officer who is the deputy headteacher  
3 pastoral and guidance. Our present complaints  
4 procedures are logged on the school information  
5 management system.

6 With regard to any worries that a child may have,  
7 the boarding staff were always available to pupils to  
8 talk to. At the beginning of my career, there wasn't  
9 a specific person they could talk to. The school now  
10 has a tutor system with each child having their own  
11 tutor who's seen as the trusted adult.

12 Over time, the pastoral guidance became more  
13 proactive with specific appointments made at senior  
14 leadership team level to develop procedures and ways  
15 that pupils can talk about their worries and concerns.  
16 Each tutor has a small group of pupils. The pupils are  
17 timetabled to meet their tutor every week for  
18 30 minutes. There is also a programme of topics and  
19 resources that the tutor is given by the senior school  
20 leadership team to go over with the pupils at tutor  
21 time. They see their tutor as a member of the house  
22 team while on duty on a weekly basis and at the weekends  
23 as scheduled.

24 I know that as a tutor, pupils raised issues every  
25 week and they will come to me if something is worrying



1           them. It tends to be low-level concerns such as  
2           parent's deployment, losing their mobile phone and  
3           worried they might get into trouble. The pupils can  
4           also talk with their matron, housemaster or  
5           housemistress, deputy and assistant housemaster or  
6           housemistress. The senior leadership team are also  
7           always available. The pupils can also talk with the  
8           health and well-being centre staff, who are qualified  
9           nurses.

10           Abuse.

11           In my early years at the school there wasn't  
12           a definition of abuse but there is now. The definition  
13           used by the school is the term child abuse which was  
14           first used in Britain in 1988. The process of  
15           definition has been refined through experience and by  
16           1988 there were five official categories of abuse;  
17           namely physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual  
18           abuse and nonorganic failure to thrive. These  
19           definitions are now expanded on within the policy  
20           document. The child protection officer meets staff  
21           every year at in-service and reinforces the procedures  
22           and definition.

23           All new staff have to meet with the deputy head  
24           pastoral and guidance who goes through all of this  
25           individually and then signs their induction pack. The

1 school's child protection policy is also published on  
2 the school website.

3 I think it was introduced when the school appointed  
4 the deputy headteacher pastoral and guidance in the  
5 '90s. I am sure it has changed over time to reflect the  
6 changing circumstances in society, such as online and  
7 social media.

8 Child protection arrangements.

9 In relation to guidance to staff there was nothing  
10 formal at the beginning of my career. This is now part  
11 of the school's policies and procedures. This can be  
12 found on the school website for children, parents and  
13 staff to refer to. Staff, through the policy, know each  
14 step on how to handle and respond to reports of abuse or  
15 ill-treatment.

16 At the beginning of my career I don't know how much  
17 autonomy or discretion was given to staff. I always  
18 believed that any concerns were raised by staff to the  
19 management and this was dealt with. There is no  
20 autonomy or discretion for staff now. Staff must follow  
21 the procedures and the steps that are set out in the  
22 policy.

23 At the beginning of my career there was nothing  
24 formal in place regarding abuse. The school now has  
25 protocols and policies in place to reduce the likelihood

1 of abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate conduct by  
2 staff or other adults towards children at the school.

3 Through our school information management system  
4 there are protocols for staff to log a child protection  
5 issue. This is sent directly to the deputy headteacher  
6 pastoral and guidance. Staff are also encouraged, once  
7 we have done this, to contact the child protection  
8 officer to notify him or her personally of the concern.

9 I know that he investigates each issue raised and  
10 seeks advice from external agencies where required. We  
11 have been advised that if there are any complaints made  
12 against staff by a pupil or staff member, then this is  
13 to be taken seriously. The staff member may be  
14 suspended pending investigation. I know of one staff  
15 member who has been suspended and reported to the  
16 police. I don't know any details of the case.

17 External monitoring.

18 I was aware of inspectors visiting the school.  
19 There were annual Care Inspectorate visitors, HMI and  
20 DCYP quality assurance inspections. The inspectors were  
21 able to speak to the children either individually or in  
22 a group setting. To my knowledge, none of the staff  
23 were present whilst the children were being spoken to.  
24 When they visited the school, they spoke to me and  
25 provided the school feedback.

1 I do not remember much record-keeping at the  
2 beginning of my career at Queen Victoria School. There  
3 is now a very robust system and we use an electronic  
4 information management system to report and record all  
5 concerns raised, including child protection.

6 Police investigations and criminal proceedings.  
7 I am aware of an incident that was reported to the  
8 police but I was not involved. The headteacher informed  
9 the whole staff that there was an investigation about  
10 [a member of staff] and that there were allegations of  
11 inappropriate behaviour towards senior girls in the  
12 school. No details were given. I was and am totally  
13 shocked. As staff we have always been informed that  
14 [the member of staff] was suspended [awaiting the court  
15 case]. This came as a surprise, given the safeguards  
16 that we have in place.

17 Specific alleged abusers.

18 I remember Ben Philip from my time at  
19 Queen Victoria School. My employment coincided with his  
20 from 1984 until his death in 1994. I think Ben was in  
21 his 30s. Ben was a primary teacher/deputy housemaster  
22 and then housemaster. He was also a teacher in the same  
23 primary department and the junior boarding house for  
24 four years until he became housemaster of the senior  
25 boys. I found him to be a very caring and a good

1 teacher. He was a dedicated and kind man. His life was  
2 Queen Victoria School.

3 I knew Ben well at the beginning of my career some  
4 30-odd years ago. During my time I did see him with  
5 children both in class and in the boarding house. He  
6 had a lot of patience and time for his pupils. I must  
7 have seen him discipline children but it was such a long  
8 time ago I can't remember. I never saw or heard of him  
9 abuse any children.

10 'Grant'.

11 I remember 'Grant' and he is still a member of  
12 staff. I think my employment with 'Grant' coincided  
13 from the late 1990s until the present day. I'm a little  
14 unsure of the exact dates.

15 When we started at the school I think he would have  
16 been in his late 20s or early 30s. At the school,  
17 'Grant' was a teacher and I sometimes would go into his  
18 classroom. I don't think I have worked in the same  
19 boarding house as him.

20 In my opinion, 'Grant' is a very good, professional  
21 and dedicated teacher. I always found him to be  
22 friendly, quiet and a patient person.

23 I know him very well as a teacher and as  
24 a colleague. I did see him in his classroom and found  
25 him to be very well organised, professional, patient and

1 positive with pupils. The only time I remember 'Grant'  
2 disciplining children was when I was in his class and  
3 this was a gentle reminder to get them back on task.  
4 I remember that 'Grant' was suspended and returned to  
5 teach after the suspension. I do not remember the  
6 details about his suspension. I have never seen or  
7 heard of him abusing children.

8 'Mark'.

9 I do remember 'Mark' and I think he was employed at  
10 the school in the '90s. I think he was in his late 20s  
11 or early 30s. 'Mark's' role was as a class teacher.  
12 I didn't work in the same boarding house as him.  
13 I didn't really know him well except through being in  
14 his classroom and he was very professional and very  
15 friendly. When I saw him in the classroom, which wasn't  
16 often, he was always professional with the children.  
17 I don't think I ever saw him disciplining the children  
18 other than what befits class intervention. I remember  
19 that 'Mark' was suspended and that he did not return to  
20 the school. I do not remember the details for his  
21 suspension. I never saw him abusing or heard of him  
22 abusing any children.

23 Helping the Inquiry.

24 I can only reflect on the changes that I have seen  
25 at Queen Victoria School over the years. I think it is

1 important to teach children what their rights are, what  
2 behaviours they should expect from adults and fellow  
3 pupils, make sure that children are safe and that their  
4 voices are heard. School policies should be constantly  
5 reviewed and promoted.

6 A school should have staff that are aware of how to  
7 protect children and what the behaviours are expected of  
8 staff. They should also be aware what the school's  
9 definition of abuse is and who to go to if they have  
10 concerns. I think it is important to train staff about  
11 what behaviour tells us and how to help pupils. This  
12 will enable schools to understand the reason behind  
13 behaviour and protect children in the future.

14 The school should have a child protection officer  
15 who is trained and everyone in the school community  
16 knows and trusts. The school protocols and practices  
17 should be evaluated annually by the school and regularly  
18 checked by external agencies.

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

22 My Lady, this statement is signed and it's dated  
23 6 November 2020.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

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Steve Laing (read)

MS BENNIE: The next statement bears the reference MOD  
000000068.

"My name is Steve Laing. I spent 35 years at  
Queen Victoria School until I retired in 2019. My wife  
is employed as deputy head of Queen Victoria School and  
therefore I still live on the campus. I taught  
technical studies.

I started at Queen Victoria School at the end  
of August 1984. Within a year of starting, I was  
promoted to principal teacher of tech. From 1985 I was  
the assistant housemaster at Haig House. I was  
assistant housemaster until December 1993, when  
Ben Philip, the housemaster, tragically died in  
an accident. At that stage I took over as interim  
housemaster and then I became housemaster in August  
1994. I always kept a line in my interaction with the  
pupils. When I first started, a colleague told me to be  
firm, fair and friendly, and I have never stepped over  
that line.

Apart from my teaching job, I helped to coach  
cross-country athletics and in general committed myself  
to the boarding life.

During my time at QVS education underwent some  
significant changes. It was unusual for me to be both



1 a housemaster and a principal teacher, and I believe  
2 I was the first person to do so. Generally speaking,  
3 staff wouldn't be expected to do both, and I ended up  
4 doing it by default rather than design. Haig was the  
5 senior boys' house when I started. In 1996 the school  
6 became co-educational and girls attended too.

7 When I started as assistant housemaster, there were  
8 about 70 boys between S4 and S6 in Haig House. There  
9 were gradual changes to the house system during my time  
10 imposed, mainly due to the school becoming  
11 co-educational. There was quite a lot of discussion  
12 over a number of years about girls coming into the  
13 school and the school becoming co-educational, but to be  
14 honest, it only really happened when there became  
15 a shortage of applicants around 1992 to 1995.

16 In 1996, 41 girls joined the school. They were  
17 mostly in the younger years but there was one or two in  
18 S5 and S6. It was a reasonably smooth integration for  
19 the girls joining, not entirely without its  
20 difficulties, especially with boys becoming interested  
21 in seeking girlfriends.

22 When I became housemaster, I had a small team of  
23 around six teachers who I had to manage. Each had duty  
24 days or nights at the house. My assistant at the time  
25 was Graeme Beattie and he had started in that role

1 around the same time as I became housemaster. There was  
2 also the matron and assistant matron. Myself and Graeme  
3 did the bulk of the weekend duties with the weekdays  
4 shared between teachers. My main job was making sure  
5 the children were looked after and their needs catered  
6 for and other pastoral care role work.

7 Some of this involved waking the children, making  
8 sure they were showered, dressed, fed and got to and  
9 from their classes. I also had to make sure they  
10 occupied their free time and their bedtime routine.

11 Weekends were a bit more relaxed. Pupils could go  
12 out for the day. If they were to stay away overnight,  
13 they needed permission, usually in writing from their  
14 parents.

15 If you stayed in the housemaster role for ten years,  
16 then your salary was conserved at that height so you  
17 were still paid as a housemaster even if you stepped  
18 down. I did ten years as a housemaster and then stepped  
19 down to be an assistant housemaster again for about  
20 three years and eventually retired from housemaster  
21 duties in March 2004.

22 It changed quite a bit over the ten years I was  
23 doing the role. There was much more paperwork involved  
24 latterly. I really preferred interacting with the  
25 children rather than the bureaucracy I had to deal with.

1           It was quite an arduous job as housemaster. I had my  
2           own family too and lived in the flat for the housemaster  
3           in Haig House. I had a young child during the time and  
4           often the doorbell to the flat would ring during her  
5           bedtime stories. I would often be unable to finish  
6           bedtime story as by the time I got back from dealing  
7           with whatever needed dealing, my child would be asleep.  
8           I think the pupils liked that I had a family as well and  
9           was a family person. My door was always open to the  
10          pupils.

11                 We were always aware that pupils needed their own  
12          personal space, so if we were to speak to them in their  
13          rooms we would always knock on the door and wait for  
14          them to respond before entering their room. The pupils  
15          needed to be given their privacy. I don't think that is  
16          something that ever changed over the years. Maybe we  
17          are just more aware of the need for that now.

18                 All of the staff on the house rota would be on duty  
19          at certain times. This mostly involved supervising the  
20          pupils during prep and getting the younger ones off to  
21          bed. The housemaster takes over for the night at about  
22          10 pm. We had a logbook where we kept a note of  
23          anything that occurred which required my attention.  
24          I did often feel that I was on duty all of the time  
25          while as a housemaster. We tried to make the pupils

1 feel they could speak to any of the staff and some of  
2 them may speak to me or the matron or other teachers  
3 that were on the rota. The staff for the house also had  
4 tutor groups. I can't remember how that was arranged,  
5 but the tutors were frequently the first point of  
6 contact for pupils within that tutor group. The  
7 housemaster was always available and there would always  
8 be someone on duty in the house for the pupils to speak  
9 to. Matron, who also lived in, was also a common  
10 sounding board. The sixth year students and the fifth  
11 year students would always have their own private rooms,  
12 given the need for them to study.

13 The layout of the living arrangements for the houses  
14 changed over the time I was there. I think the  
15 significant changes were in the late 1980s to 1990s.  
16 When I first started the house layout was like a large  
17 hospital ward dorm with 20 beds but over the years it  
18 was divided into one- and two-man rooms depending on  
19 their age. I can't remember exactly when it changed but  
20 it went from the large dorms to individual rooms during  
21 my period at the school, from about 1988 onwards.

22 Discipline.

23 As principal teacher of the technical studies  
24 I would deal with discipline at a classroom level. If  
25 the behaviour was outside the usual low-level poor

1           behaviour, then I would report that higher up to the  
2           senior leadership team within the school. For low-level  
3           poor behaviour within the house, the staff on duty would  
4           generally deal with most things. Sometimes incidents  
5           would be reported to me if it was more serious, for  
6           example if a pupil came back to school intoxicated. In  
7           that situation, I would have to contact the parents and  
8           also report it to senior management.

9           For discipline within the house, trivial matters  
10          such as an untidy room would initially result in  
11          a verbal warning. If that persisted, then the pupil may  
12          be gated and that would mean they wouldn't be allowed  
13          out of the school to go to the local shop. There were  
14          no physical measures. The belt was still in place when  
15          I joined the school. I'd come from a school in  
16          Edinburgh which had already banned the belt so I never  
17          belted pupils at all as a teacher. Other discipline  
18          measures may include litter picking around the school,  
19          this was called being put on days. Days meant having to  
20          get up 15 minutes earlier than others and doing menial  
21          tasks such as litter picking.

22          Prefects could give out minor sanctions to younger  
23          pupils. For example, if they had left their dining  
24          place untidy then a prefect could ask a younger pupil to  
25          clean it up, but if they were to give any sort of

1 sanction then that had to be checked with a member of  
2 staff.

3 At Haig House I would be in charge of the senior  
4 monitor, who was the head boy, and a team of prefects.  
5 They could give out minor sanctions, but as housemaster  
6 I had to check all sanctions given. Any sanctions given  
7 out by pupils had to be approved first by a teacher.

8 Safeguarding and bullying.

9 I think bullying at QVS and how it was dealt with  
10 came to the fore at some point before I became  
11 a housemaster, so that would be probably some time in  
12 the early 1990s. It became clear there was an issue,  
13 which was reported in the press, and this initiated  
14 a response from the school. A pastoral support role was  
15 created. At state schools this would be called  
16 guidance. Whether the new post was created because of  
17 this or to bring QVS in line with other schools, I am  
18 not sure. Alice Hainey was appointed to address, in  
19 particular, bullying. She came from a state school  
20 background. I think she was there around the early  
21 1990s. I would liaise with the assistant headteacher  
22 pastoral about any bullying complaints and would pass  
23 them on to her. Bullying was always dealt with as  
24 a very serious matter.

25 If pupils wished to complain about another person in

1 the school, I would expect that they would probably  
2 speak to whomever they felt most comfortable with. That  
3 might be their housemaster, it would be a confidential  
4 meeting. The pupil would be made aware that some things  
5 need to be passed on to other staff members, for example  
6 if this complaint was about a teacher, in which case it  
7 would have to be passed on to the headmaster.

8 Over the years I received quite a lot of training  
9 on child protection and safeguarding. Many of our  
10 in-service days involved the safeguarding of pupils,  
11 which would have included how to deal with bullying. We  
12 would often get scenarios to work through and how to  
13 deal with situations. I have never had to deal with any  
14 allegations of abuse at my time at Queen Victoria School  
15 and I am always saddened to hear of any allegations but  
16 I was never privy to any allegations being made.

17 I can't think of any measures I would recommend  
18 being put in place. The senior leadership team work  
19 very hard to deal with any issues that come up.  
20 I imagine wee things will always crop up but in general  
21 the school has dealt with any issues very well. There  
22 is probably more staff and teachers involved in looking  
23 after the children now and generally more people around  
24 to deal with the issues that arise.

25 The culture of the school has changed a little over

1           the time I worked there. When I first started, it was  
2           a school of all boys, mostly from army backgrounds, some  
3           of them with officer parents. There were some RAF and  
4           Navy children, but generally it was mostly Army. It was  
5           a fairly similar background that they came from. It's  
6           changed over the years, especially when we became  
7           co-educational. The girls altered the environment  
8           somewhat. The hard edges were knocked off the boys and  
9           it is a more pleasant place to be. I think bullying, if  
10          anything, has become less prevalent. Nowadays children  
11          come from parents who have much more varied background.  
12          We have children whose parents are in the Gurkhas so  
13          there are different cultures within the school. In the  
14          past, a fair number of parents were stationed in  
15          England, Ireland or Germany. In the early days of QVS,  
16          there were children who were effectively orphaned.  
17          There was one boy that I looked after in my early years  
18          as a housemaster whose dad died in the Falklands in  
19          1982. I have very fond memories of the QVS pupils. My  
20          own children have fond memories of the place and of  
21          growing up there."

22                 My Lady, this statement is signed and I'll ensure  
23                 that the certificate is made available to my Lady.

24         LADY SMITH: Thank you very much indeed.

25         MS BENNIE: My Lady, that concludes the read-ins.



1 LADY SMITH: Thank you. It's now getting close to 1 o'clock  
2 so I will stop and sit again at 2.00. Thank you very  
3 much.

4 (12.52 pm)

5 (The luncheon adjournment)

6 (2.00 pm)

7 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

8 MR BROWN: My Lady, before we call the next witness, one  
9 thing from the read-ins. I think the last read-in did  
10 not have a date.

11 LADY SMITH: No, it didn't.

12 MR BROWN: Just to confirm to you, the date is in fact  
13 13 October 2020 for Your Ladyship's records.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 MR BROWN: And now could we have Ms Wendy Bellars.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 Wendy Bellars (affirmed)

18 LADY SMITH: First of all, help me with this. How would you  
19 like to be addressed? Ms Bellars or Wendy?

20 A. Wendy.

21 LADY SMITH: Is Wendy all right?

22 A. Wendy is, my Lady.

23 LADY SMITH: You'll see there's a folder in front of you.  
24 It has your statement in it. Your statement will also  
25 come up on screen, so do use either or neither, whatever

1 feels comfortable for you.

2 Otherwise, if you have any queries during your  
3 evidence, don't hesitate to ask. If you want a break,  
4 let me know. Anything that would make you more  
5 comfortable than you are already, I hope, I do want to  
6 know that because if it works for you, it works for me,  
7 all right?

8 A. Thank you.

9 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown, when you're ready.

10 Questions from Mr Brown

11 MR BROWN: My Lady, thank you.

12 Wendy, good afternoon. You've got the statement, as  
13 you've just heard, in front of you and on the screen as  
14 well. For form's sake I have to read in the reference  
15 number, which is WIT-1-000000592. The statement, for  
16 which thanks because it's a very thorough statement,  
17 runs to 51 pages. If we can go to the last page,  
18 page 51, we see that the last numbered paragraph, 188,  
19 says:

20 "I have no objection to my witness statement being  
21 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.  
22 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are  
23 true."

24 And you've signed and dated that 23 December last  
25 year; is that correct?

1 A. I don't remember when I signed it, but I'm sure that  
2 must be true, yes.

3 Q. Just so we understand the process, it was done during  
4 the long periods of lockdown. Were you answering  
5 questions which were then followed up by further  
6 questions and drafts were prepared and exchanged by  
7 email and ultimately you came to a final form you were  
8 content with and you signed?

9 A. Yes, that's correct.

10 Q. And I think you also attached a large number of  
11 documents to try and assist the Inquiry, which have been  
12 taken note of.

13 A. Originally I did, yes.

14 Q. Yes. In relation to that last statement, "I believe  
15 that the facts stated in this witness statement are  
16 true", is there anything you wish to review?

17 A. No, except when I read it through, I realised that some  
18 things I had misremembered, but only, I think, minor  
19 things such as dates.

20 Q. All right. Could we look, please, at page 2 and the  
21 foot of paragraph 4. I think you end that paragraph by  
22 saying:

23 "... I took early retirement in 2016."  
24 Is that accurate?

25 A. Yes, that's right.

1 Q. Were you not removed from your post?

2 A. I was, yes, and I was careful in my final editing of  
3 this document to change what had originally been  
4 written, which suggested that I decided to take early  
5 retirement and left Queen Victoria School to make sure  
6 that these were two essentially separate statements.  
7 I took early retirement in 2016 because I could find no  
8 work after being dismissed by the Ministry of Defence.

9 Q. So you left Queen Victoria School Dunblane, having been  
10 dismissed --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- for gross misconduct; is that correct?

13 A. Sorry, what was the last bit?

14 Q. For gross misconduct?

15 A. Yes, that's right.

16 Q. Would you agree, "taking early retirement" paints  
17 a slightly different picture?

18 A. It is true.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you. You set out on the previous page your  
20 background, an obviously impressive academic career,  
21 going on to Jordanhill Teacher Training College, where  
22 you did well again, and then you commenced a teaching  
23 career which you set out at paragraph 4 of page 1,  
24 beginning, I take it, with Renfrew High School state  
25 system?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And then moving on from there to be a teacher and  
3 assistant housemistress at Gordonstoun between 85 and  
4 88?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And then on to a variety of other privates, is that  
7 essentially the picture, private boarding schools?

8 A. Yes, apart from my time at the Open University.

9 Q. Yes. And then finally you are appointed to the headship  
10 at Queen Victoria School Dunblane in January 2007, so  
11 you spent nine years there?

12 A. Yes, nearly ten, in fact.

13 Q. Yes. We'll come onto Queen Victoria School, obviously,  
14 in due course because that is of particular interest to  
15 this chapter, but given your experience at  
16 Gordonstoun -- and we've covered Gordonstoun, if I may,  
17 I'll start with a few questions about Gordonstoun.

18 A. (Witness nods).

19 Q. We see that you've set out the background from pages 2  
20 to 5. You're an English teacher. Had you had any  
21 training when you started at Gordonstoun and started the  
22 assistant housemistress role, did you have any training  
23 or was it just on the job?

24 A. It was on the job.

25 Q. Did that concern you at all?

1 A. No, I think that was normal in those days. I was  
2 a relatively young teacher fairly near the beginning of  
3 my career. It wouldn't have been expected in those days  
4 to have training before you took up that sort of post.

5 Q. It was just part and parcel. You obviously knew about  
6 it when you went for the job?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Why did you want to go to Gordonstoun, having started  
9 state sector?

10 A. I realised during my two years at Renfrew High School  
11 that there was a lot that I was doing that wasn't  
12 teaching English and actually a lot of it wasn't  
13 teaching children. A lot of it was discipline work and  
14 training children to pass exams, and I wanted to share  
15 my subject a lot more and I wanted to be more involved  
16 with the lives of the children, which of course boarding  
17 school allows because both the pupils and the teachers  
18 are there 24/7 during term time.

19 Q. One point of detail, paragraph 8, page 3, you say:

20 "I didn't have any role or involvement with Aberlour  
21 House. Aberlour was part of the same organisation but  
22 it was located on a separate campus quite a few miles  
23 away."

24 Obviously you know that Aberlour in due course moved  
25 onto the same campus. It's just the line "part of the

1 same organisation". How did you view Aberlour when you  
2 were teaching at Gordonstoun?

3 A. All my contemporaries and I viewed Aberlour as the prep  
4 school for Gordonstoun. I think we thought they were  
5 owned by -- well, not owned, they're independent  
6 institutions, but that possibly they had the same board  
7 of governors. Occasionally teachers from Gordonstoun  
8 would go and visited Aberlour, sharing, in my case,  
9 English teaching activities. As I say, we just thought  
10 of it as a prep school for Gordonstoun.

11 Q. Thank you. Presumably Gordonstoun was, as compared with  
12 Renfrew High, a very different culture?

13 A. Entirely, yes.

14 Q. Entirely. From suburban state you were now on the  
15 estate that is Gordonstoun buildings in different parts,  
16 some 20, 25 minutes apart from each other on foot, we  
17 understand?

18 A. That would be only one of them. That was Duffus House,  
19 which was furthest away. The others were much closest  
20 together.

21 Q. Yes. My point is to walk from one side to the other  
22 would take quite a long time if you did it?

23 A. Indeed.

24 Q. They were physically separate?

25 A. Yes, but the main difference was in the relationship

1           between the pupils and the teachers.

2           Q. You were obviously, from what you tell us, responsible

3           for girls, of course?

4           A. Yes.

5           Q. A girls' house and I think you were initially, as you

6           say, in Gordonstoun House and then Plewlands.

7           A. (Witness nods).

8           Q. And in terms of the time that you spent as an assistant

9           housemistress, would you agree that the tone of those

10          two houses really depended fundamentally on the

11          character of the housemistress?

12          A. I hadn't thought of it like that, but I think that's

13          probably true, and it was also influenced by the

14          physical structure of the house, I think I said that

15          Gordonstoun House was on the top floor of G-House, as we

16          called it, whereas Plewlands was an entirely separate

17          purpose-built boarding house.

18          Q. Yes. But in terms of interference -- and I use that not

19          in the pejorative sense, but there was little

20          interference, going back to the 1980s, perhaps from

21          school management. The houses were just left to get on

22          by themselves. Is that fair?

23          A. Yes, I think that's fair.

24          Q. Did that ever trouble you?

25          A. On the whole it didn't, because I had no other



1           experience to compare it with. I felt -- I felt the  
2           responsibility very heavily of when I was on my own, for  
3           example, on my evening on duty. The only time I felt  
4           awkward was when one or two of the girls came to me and  
5           said they felt awkward about the housemistress' husband  
6           being around the house when they were walking around in  
7           their towels and I passed that on to her and she thanked  
8           me and made sure that her husband wasn't around the  
9           house.

10          Q. Okay. You make the point, I think in paragraph 11, that  
11           the staff/student ratio was much lower in Gordonstoun  
12           than as compared with QVS, so in other words, you would  
13           find yourself on your own --

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. -- of an evening, you were it?

16          A. Indeed.

17          Q. Did that have any negative impacts in terms of the  
18           houses you were in?

19          A. Not that I can think of. We were aware that there were,  
20           however many houses there were, five, or something like  
21           that, and we could always phone up our counterparts in  
22           another house. If, for example, a girl had gone to  
23           visit one of the boys' houses officially and wasn't back  
24           at the time she was supposed to be, I could phone up my  
25           counterpart and say, "Have you got X? Please would you

1           send her back". So we didn't feel isolated. I felt  
2           quite supported in that respect.

3           Q. We've heard that in the period you were there, mid to  
4           late '80s, that the boys' houses were perhaps not the  
5           gentle oases that you might remember for the girls'  
6           houses. Were you aware of concerns about behaviour in  
7           boys' houses?

8           A. No. No, I wasn't. I would say the atmosphere was  
9           different in the boys' houses, but that's what one would  
10          expect anyway, with all-boys and all-girls houses.

11          Q. Okay. Obviously you were asked about Andrew Keir, and  
12          I think you confirm at paragraph 14 on page 4 that you  
13          have remained friends since you were at Gordonstoun --

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. -- at the same time?

16          A. Yes.

17          Q. As you say, he was there before you arrived and he  
18          carried on after you left, is that fair?

19          A. (Witness nods).

20          Q. But obviously, as well as being an excellent physics  
21          teacher, you talk about his background and your fondness  
22          for him. And you talk about the background and  
23          a childlike quality about him. Obviously we are aware,  
24          as you are, that he was prosecuted for conduct in the  
25          last five/six years, or five years, and you say that you

1           gave evidence on his behalf?

2           A. I was a character witness, yes.

3           Q. Did you actually speak to the sheriff or was it just in  
4           the written form?

5           A. No, I did appear in person at Elgin Sheriff Court.

6           Q. And can we take it you were giving evidence along the  
7           lines of, "I never saw anything untoward and my  
8           experience of him was positive"? Is that the essence of  
9           it?

10          A. Yes. Yes, it was a very short session in front of the  
11          sheriff. I don't know that it achieved a great deal.  
12          But yes, you're right in summary, that was it.

13          Q. Okay. Are you still in touch with him?

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. And do you hold the same views?

16          A. I do, yes.

17          Q. Okay, thank you.

18                 You then moved on, after three years at Gordonstoun,  
19          to the schools mentioned in the summary. Did you notice  
20          differences -- obviously you're going to different  
21          establishments, but were there differences in those  
22          establishments that you saw and thought: actually,  
23          they're doing things better in terms of child  
24          protection?

25          A. I mean, just reflecting on the different schools, that's

1 quite a difficult one to answer because some of the  
2 schools were not boarding schools. For example, the one  
3 I went to immediately after Gordonstoun was King's  
4 Chester, that was an all-boys day school, so the child  
5 protection issues are not the same.

6 Q. Bishop's Stortford?

7 A. By the time I got to Bishop's Stortford, which was part  
8 day, part boarding, the general awareness of child  
9 protection issues, I would say, in the UK was -- the  
10 level had been raised, so the practice, for example, of  
11 knocking on a child's door and waiting to hear, "Come  
12 in", or, "Just a minute", was the norm, whereas when  
13 I was at Gordonstoun, I was specifically advised never  
14 to wait before I went into a girl's room. I would knock  
15 on the door and I would go straight in and that was one  
16 of the first things that I was told. And I think the  
17 idea behind that was that there should be no secrets  
18 kept from the staff.

19 So, yes, the awareness was being raised.

20 And during my time at QVS, there was a tremendous  
21 focus on child protection. This is the time of GIRFEC,  
22 obviously, Getting It Right For Every Child.

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. The possibility of the named person, which in the end  
25 didn't come to anything. So yes, a very intense focus

1           in a way that I don't think anyone would have dreamt of  
2           during my time at Gordonstoun.

3       Q. No, you lived through a really fundamental transition?

4       A. Yes.

5       Q. And you should be aware that the Inquiry has heard just  
6           in terms of the way government approached things, it  
7           seems to be in the mid '90s the penny drops, being loose  
8           about it, that there's more to schools than just  
9           education, for example in terms of inspection.

10      A. Yes. I think the boarding schools have always been  
11       aware of that. Indeed, I think the independent -- the  
12       fee-paying schools would say that they have always said  
13       that there is more to education than just the academic.  
14       But in terms of government checking up on the  
15       non-academic, yes, you're right, in the mid '90s things  
16       became much more tightly focussed.

17      Q. And formalised?

18      A. Yes. I was an inspector with the HMC, the headmasters  
19       and headmistresses conference when they introduced their  
20       inspection system in 1991, I think it was, and it too  
21       evolved from a much more informal set-up when I was --  
22       I was on one of the very first inspection teams. The  
23       way we did things then was much more informal than the  
24       way it became, say, six, seven years later.

25      Q. But the idea is taking root and then flowers into

1           perhaps greater formality as the years pass?

2           A. Yes.

3           Q. The only additional thing in relation to the pre-QVS,  
4           obviously you were working both south and north of the  
5           border --

6           A. (Witness nods).

7           Q. -- in terms of you go to St Leonard's but then you go  
8           down to Cheltenham Ladies' College. Did you ever at any  
9           stage see any difference in step or speed of approach as  
10          between Scotland and England or vice versa?

11          A. No, I think because I was -- you know, I was reading The  
12          Times Ed Scotland at the same time that I was reading  
13          The Times Ed every week. I had one posted to me and the  
14          other I bought depending on where I was. I could see  
15          that the developments were more or less in parallel.  
16          The Scottish system and Scottish teachers were very  
17          keen, I think, to make clear that what they were doing  
18          was quite separate from what was happening in England,  
19          so Getting It Right For Every Child was the parallel of  
20          the child at the centre or Every Child Matters south of  
21          the border, but there was never any admission that  
22          actually both nations were doing the same thing.

23                 But my perception is that, yes, in fact, they were.

24          Q. All right. There seems to be governmental pride to do  
25          things --

1       A. Probably, probably, yes.

2       Q. Have you ever seen that in practice where you think one  
3       government's being foolish in not following the other's  
4       lead?

5       A. I wouldn't say I've seen any examples, but I think  
6       probably a lot more can be achieved working together  
7       than ploughing one's separate albeit parallel furrow.

8       Q. Thank you. You then go to QVS. First question: what  
9       attracted you to QVS?

10      A. Well, I was working for the Open University when  
11      I applied and I was delighted to work for the Open  
12      University in Scotland, it's a wonderful institution, it  
13      does exactly what it says on the tin: it helps people  
14      who hadn't the opportunity when they were at school to  
15      achieve their academic ambitions. But I missed being  
16      with young people. So when the position was advertised  
17      at QVS, because I was still getting The Times Ed every  
18      week, I applied for that and it brought together two  
19      things that I really cared about, which is the education  
20      in the broader sense of young people and the Armed  
21      Forces because my by then sadly ex husband -- not, not  
22      when I applied, but my now ex husband was an Air Force  
23      Officer for much of our marriage and I had met him  
24      through being a VRT officer, as they were called in  
25      those days. I was commissioned to work with cadets.

1           That's how we met. So I cared a lot about Armed Forces  
2           families and QVS of course brings the two together.

3       Q. Yes. In terms of your appointment, you set out -- and  
4       we needn't go into the detail -- that you weren't  
5       brought in to achieve particular purposes, as we might  
6       understand happens in other jobs. This was just  
7       a straightforward: we're looking for a head, and you  
8       were chosen?

9       A. I think so.

10      Q. When you arrived, had you any sense of QVS as  
11      an operation, other than, I suppose, just a broad  
12      awareness of it?

13      A. I knew of the school because Julian Hankinson, who was  
14      my predecessor but one, was a family friend, and so  
15      I had visited the school for his final Grand Day.  
16      You're probably aware of what Grand Day involves. He  
17      had invited myself and my mother as guests, so I'd seen  
18      the big parade. I hadn't visited the school. I was  
19      aware of it because -- through SCIS, Scottish Council of  
20      Independent Schools, one is aware of the other schools  
21      that are in membership, but that was about it.

22      Q. Well, you mention SCIS. SCIS, I take it, is a body that  
23      you have relied upon over the years?

24      A. Yes, yes.

25      Q. A worthwhile body?



1 A. Very much so.

2 Q. Okay. Is there more, do you think, they could do than  
3 you have experience of them doing?

4 A. I haven't been in touch with SCIS now for just over five  
5 years. I think the last time I was in touch with them  
6 was to tell them about the teacher who was removed from  
7 the school because of the cyber police coming to visit.  
8 So that was quite some time ago.

9 SCIS, I think I've said in my statement, has  
10 changed. It's a different organisation now under its  
11 current director. Both John Edward and his predecessor,  
12 Judith, were excellent, but they were very different --  
13 they are very different people. So SCIS is a less  
14 personal organisation now. It's more policy and  
15 practice focused. But is still hugely valuable,  
16 particularly in terms of its dealings with the Scottish  
17 government and so on.

18 Q. You mentioned Julian Hankinson, a family friend. You  
19 had been to Grand Day as a guest. Did you have any  
20 sense of the background at QVS in terms of its change  
21 from an all-boys school into a mixed school?

22 A. No, because at that time when Julian retired it wasn't,  
23 it was still single sex.

24 Q. Yes, it was under Brian Raine that I think it became --

25 A. That's right, 1996 the first girls were admitted, but

1           Julian was of the view subsequently that he had laid the  
2           groundwork for it becoming co-ed.

3       Q. Did Julian talk about difficulties with the school that  
4           you remember?

5       A. No, not while he was there. I think I visited him once  
6           or twice, he and his wife in retirement, and he did  
7           latterly say after I had been dismissed from QVS that it  
8           was a strange place, but he didn't elaborate on that.

9       Q. I think one of the things that you will have been aware  
10          of from your time at QVS is every now or again the press  
11          would run stories involving a former teacher,  
12          Mr Harrison.

13      A. Yes.

14      Q. And we have speeches you gave to the pupils when that  
15          arose. Did that cause you problems when the press --

16      A. It's always sad to see the school that you lead have  
17          aspersions cast upon it publicly, but it did give me the  
18          opportunity to remind the children again that nothing  
19          was more important than their safety and that there were  
20          people -- there were lots of people to whom they could  
21          talk and it was important that they chose a person with  
22          whom they felt comfortable and didn't stay quiet.

23                 So, no, I wouldn't say it caused difficulties. It  
24          caused unhappiness, but I turned it into an opportunity,  
25          I hope.

1 Q. And in terms of the difficulties that we understand that  
2 were prevalent when Mr Harrison left and first went to  
3 the press, going back to the early 1990s, was that  
4 something that you ever discussed with members of staff  
5 who -- when you were in position -- had been around at  
6 the same time?

7 A. I did ask Tom Shannon, whom I mention in my statement,  
8 if he had any memories of Mr Harrison. And again,  
9 I think it's in my statement, he said that he was  
10 a rather odd character who indulged in, as far as Tom  
11 remembered, some very strange behaviour one Grand Day by  
12 capering around outside the windows of the library while  
13 the Commissioners were having their lunch inside, but  
14 that's the extent of it.

15 Q. We do understand, moving perhaps on to the Commissioners  
16 and the supervision, which I understand changed to some  
17 degree because there were still Commissioners, that's  
18 the position?

19 A. As I understand it, yes.

20 Q. The Commissioners when you began your tenure as head,  
21 had there been transition so far as you were aware in  
22 terms of who were appointed? We know there were ex  
23 officios like the Lord Justice Clerk and certain senior  
24 military officers, but in terms of the Commissioners who  
25 was in place in 2007/8, were you already seeing

1           appointment was rather more concerned with who could  
2           assist the school because of their own particular skills  
3           or is that something that happened over your tenure?

4           A. I think it was beginning to happen before I was  
5           appointed. Again, I think it's in my statement, the  
6           interview panel was mixed. It was led by a military  
7           chap, there was also a civilian Chairman of  
8           Commissioners and there was an external who was  
9           an education specialist and there were Commissioners who  
10          were civilians who were in the world of education or  
11          law. No, I think that was a fairly steady -- a steady  
12          state, if you like. There were civilians, who, as you  
13          say, could bring their expertise to the school, and  
14          there were key posts that were occupied by the military  
15          or high-powered figures in Scotland.

16          Q. And we know the Commissioners visited, as you say at  
17          paragraph 40, at least once a term.

18          A. When they could, yes. Occasionally there was a backlog,  
19          but yes, when they could.

20          Q. Was that, from your perspective, helpful?

21          A. Oh yes.

22          Q. Why?

23          A. There's no better indication of how the school is going  
24          than meeting the pupils, and because the Commissioners  
25          have such an important role in relation to the school,

1           what could be more important than for them to get to  
2           know the pupils? And the staff, but particularly the  
3           pupils. So actually having them there on the ground, if  
4           you like, and taking part in a day and an evening of QVS  
5           school life, what more could a head want?

6           Q. Was the approach that you found at QVS any different  
7           from governance input in previous schools? I mean, did  
8           it stand out?

9           A. Yes, I wasn't aware of seeing the governors, as they  
10          would have been in these other schools, anything like as  
11          much as the staff at QVS must have seen  
12          the Commissioners.

13          Q. Did you understand that the visiting termly had been  
14          a tradition for some length of time?

15          A. I'm not sure, I'm not sure.

16          Q. Okay. That's obviously Commissioners talking to pupils  
17          and the benefits you've spoken of. Equally we know and  
18          have seen the relevant reports, you were being inspected  
19          by HMIE, Care Commission, Care Inspectorate, depending  
20          on the label.

21          A. Mm.

22          Q. From your perspective as head, were those visits welcome  
23          too?

24          A. I think one has mixed feelings about those visits. And  
25          I say one, because I don't just mean me personally, but

1 I think heads have mixed feelings about it. Yes, we  
2 want to know that the school is doing as well as  
3 possible, and if there is a problem we want to know  
4 about it so we can get it sorted, but goodness, it's  
5 a stressful experience. Not least getting all the  
6 paperwork assembled so that the inspectors can see it  
7 all. But it's worth doing. It's worth all the hassle.  
8 It's worth the stress. Because you get an external  
9 specialist's view of what's going on in the school.

10 Q. Just given your enthusiasm for the Commissioners coming,  
11 I just wondered if that transferred across, the same  
12 enthusiasm, because this is an opportunity for a school  
13 to take stock and perhaps see what it can't see  
14 day-to-day. Is that fair?

15 A. Well, I hope we did see what the inspectors saw  
16 day-to-day. There's always a possibility that we  
17 didn't, and yes, it's useful if they turn up things that  
18 we didn't see.

19 With the Commissioners, the relationship was much  
20 closer. We saw them far more often. A lot of them were  
21 local. They understood, to a greater or lesser extent  
22 depending upon the Commissioner, how the school worked  
23 and what the ethos was.

24 The inspectors who came from HMIE or SSSC or, as you  
25 say, the Care Inspectorate, very often came from very

1 different backgrounds and it was difficult sometimes  
2 for, say, an inspector who had a background in  
3 childcare, in foster care, in social work or the state  
4 sector, thinking of HMIE, to understand that things were  
5 just a bit different in QVS, and even more so I think in  
6 the other independent schools.

7 Q. Did that change at all? Did you see subspecialisation,  
8 if you like, within the inspectorates?

9 A. I wasn't aware of any. It may have happened but  
10 I wasn't aware of it. What I would say is that QVS was  
11 a much more natural fit with these particularly SSC  
12 inspections because being an MoD establishment we had  
13 lots and lots of paperwork, which is what the Care  
14 Inspectorate were pleased to see.

15 Q. All right. I was coming on to both those aspects so  
16 perhaps we can take it now. Obviously  
17 Queen Victoria School is an MoD establishment and  
18 I think, as head, you had two roles. One was as head in  
19 the ordinary sense and the other was you were head of  
20 establishment; is that correct?

21 A. Yes, that's correct.

22 Q. And you have Commissioners which might equate to  
23 governors, but equally you have managers from the MoD?

24 A. Yes, and the difference -- again, I think it's in my  
25 statement, the main difference I think from

1           the Commissioners' point of view is they don't control  
2           the budget.

3       Q.   Yes.

4       A.   Which governors would normally.

5       Q.   Indeed.  The money's coming from central government?

6       A.   Yes.

7       Q.   So the control of that is with civil servants  
8           essentially; is that right?

9       A.   Yes, that's right.

10      Q.   And paper is loved by civil servants?

11      A.   I'll take your view on that, yes.

12      Q.   I was asking.

13      A.   Oh, I see.  My impression is that it's very important if  
14           you work as a civil servant for the Ministry of Defence  
15           to have lots of paperwork to back up what you say.

16      Q.   So were there more processes in place at QVS just in  
17           terms of general administration to record everything as  
18           compared with other private or boarding schools that  
19           you'd worked at?

20      A.   Yes.  In my experience, yes.

21      Q.   Was that a help or a hindrance?

22      A.   It was certainly a help when it came to inspections  
23           because we could show -- again I think I've said this in  
24           the statement -- not only could we say we're doing this,  
25           but we've got the paperwork to back up the fact that



1           we're doing this because it's all logged. There were  
2           times when it was immensely frustrating to have to fill  
3           in all sorts of forms and not quite produce things in  
4           triplicate but to make sure that so-and-so had a copy of  
5           whatever it happened to be. But every job has its  
6           downside and there were advantages to the paperwork at  
7           times.

8           Q. So it was a routine, presumably, you just learned to  
9           follow?

10          A. Yes, yes.

11          Q. At the same time as you were the head, I think as we've  
12          heard from many sources, obviously in terms of  
13          paperwork, paperwork was being generated by Scottish  
14          government in terms of GIRFEC, SHANARRI, How Good Is Our  
15          School, a plethora of policies, would you agree with  
16          that?

17          A. And guidance yes.

18          Q. And guidance. Was that helpful from your perspective?

19          A. Yes. Yes, it was, because clearly these things were  
20          going to be -- either were or were going to become  
21          compulsory, for example the registration of teachers, so  
22          the more guidance we had the better.

23          Q. But presumably the same generation of large amounts of  
24          paper, we've seen the policy documents --

25          A. Yes.

1 Q. -- they are not light reads.

2 A. No, and the language of the Scottish government when it  
3 comes to publishing education guidance in particular is  
4 very unreadable. It's not easy to take in. It's almost  
5 as if somebody has put down keywords that he or she  
6 thinks are important and then publish them rather than  
7 being a description of what might actually happen on the  
8 ground or what a teacher might want to know.

9 Q. And from a head's perspective, did that have practical  
10 impact when you're trying to introduce policies into  
11 your school?

12 A. Only in terms of the time that it took to digest these  
13 documents. Not just on my part, but the deputy head  
14 (pupil support), for example, spent a long, long time  
15 digesting these documents. And SCIS was a tremendous  
16 help as well because they would meet with the writers of  
17 the documents, they would produce guidance, much more  
18 compact, concise guidance, they would hold training  
19 meetings on each of them. So on the whole it was  
20 helpful.

21 Q. But from what you're saying, the language used is not  
22 necessarily helpful, so were you and SCIS and other  
23 staff being given these documents, essentially having to  
24 translate them into everyday English to actually operate  
25 them?

1       A. I don't know -- I don't think "translate" is right, but  
2       we did have to take an awfully long time working out  
3       what they meant.

4       Q. Which, I suppose, might divert you from your principal  
5       job?

6       A. Yes, yes. And also a lot of time spent with people  
7       from, as it became, the Directorate of Children and  
8       Young People who were only used to dealing with the  
9       English equivalents and had to have a lot of time spent  
10      with them explaining that things were different in  
11      Scotland and trying to work out what the equivalents  
12      were and, again I think it's in my statement, explaining  
13      that we don't have a national curriculum in Scotland and  
14      we don't have SATS, standard achievement tests, and key  
15      stages and all that sort of thing. It takes a long  
16      time.

17      Q. We know that MoD, obviously, there was a sister school  
18      in Kent; is that right?

19      A. Yes, that's right.

20      Q. And so being MoD government, at one level presumably  
21      their focus, because they're based south of the border,  
22      was to look at the English equivalent?

23      A. Also because there are schools overseas, for example in  
24      Germany, although they're all primary schools, I think  
25      it's fair to say, they were all run on the English

1 system.

2 Q. They were all?

3 A. They were all run on the English system although they  
4 were located outside the UK.

5 Q. Yes, so QVS was an outlier?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And that caused you practical difficulties?

8 A. It caused managerial difficulties. I don't think it  
9 impacted on the children at all.

10 Q. Okay, but another layer for you to deal with?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. One of the subjects that the Inquiry has been interested  
13 in is recruitment, and I think, from what you say, there  
14 the MoD aspect impacted significantly; if you were  
15 trying to employ someone, there were MoD process to go  
16 through --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- over and above anything the school might want? Is  
19 that fair?

20 A. Yes, yes, that's the best way of putting it.

21 Q. I think, if we look at paragraphs 50 and 51 on page 15,  
22 you confirm that you did have an input in the process of  
23 selecting the preferred candidate for roles at the  
24 school:

25 "I was directly involved in appointing teaching

1 staff and other key individuals such as the School  
2 Sergeant Major, Drumming Instructor, Estates Manager and  
3 so on. If the consensus on a preferred candidate did  
4 not come round to my way of thinking I would speak out  
5 and highlight particular considerations that needed to  
6 be taken into account. I would never have allowed  
7 an appointment to have gone ahead if I had not agreed  
8 with the person being appointed."

9 So do we understand that you have the potential to  
10 stop an application in its tracks because you don't want  
11 it?

12 A. At that stage, yes.

13 Q. Yes. Did that change?

14 A. No. When I say "at that stage", I mean that there were  
15 sift processes whereby the initial applications,  
16 especially latterly in my time at the school, would be  
17 assessed by MoD people -- I don't know who -- to see  
18 whether they met certain criteria and then we would see  
19 the ones that got through that sift.

20 LADY SMITH: From what you say, I think you're telling me  
21 you would never be involved in the sift; is that right?

22 A. I was involved in the sift immediately prior to  
23 interview, but I don't know what sort of criteria were  
24 applied before I got to see the applications which we  
25 then sifted as a team to see who we wanted to invite to

1 interview.

2 LADY SMITH: Am I to take it that by the time you saw them,  
3 though, some people may have been pruned out, sifted  
4 out?

5 A. That's my understanding. As I say, I was never told, so  
6 I don't know, but I think it's possible.

7 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

8 MR BROWN: Just at the foot of paragraph 50 you say:

9 "I can only really think of two mistakes in terms of  
10 individuals we appointed. Both of those were situations  
11 where I went with the majority opinion of the rest of  
12 the appointees on the board. The mistakes weren't ones  
13 that were anything major."

14 And naturally that leaves open what were the  
15 mistakes?

16 A. One was a very arrogant young man who nevertheless was  
17 a very good teacher, but he only stayed a year and then  
18 he left of his own accord. He didn't find QVS conducive  
19 to his way of teaching. And the other one was  
20 a relatively young female teacher who had very, very, as  
21 it turned out, continuing and severe discipline problems  
22 in the classroom. She was still there when I left, but  
23 she needed a lot of intervention and support.

24 LADY SMITH: Going back to the young man who you describe as  
25 very arrogant and not finding QVS conducive to his way

1 of teaching, what was his way of teaching?

2 A. He -- he had come from a state school where he had  
3 carried out his probation year, and in fact if  
4 I remember rightly, he went back to that same school  
5 after a year when a permanent post became available, and  
6 I think he very much wanted to follow the state school  
7 way of doing things, which by definition in Scotland is  
8 a day school way of doing things so it's not the same as  
9 the QVS way. And he had a very good opinion of himself.  
10 So if people didn't listen to him -- I don't mean  
11 children particularly, but members of staff. I think he  
12 possibly didn't have a great deal of patience with some  
13 of the members of staff.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 MR BROWN: He didn't fit?

16 A. So it would seem. I mean, it was his decision to leave,  
17 so I presume that was his --

18 Q. Paragraph 51 reads:

19 "All references were taken up by the MoD HR staff.  
20 I was not allowed to see them."

21 A. Mm.

22 Q. "I gather they were only taken up after a proposed  
23 appointment (the 'preferred candidate') had been decided  
24 upon. I cannot say whether referees were ever spoken  
25 to."

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Are you saying that for appointments to QVS in the time  
3 you were there, you never saw a reference?

4 A. That's right.

5 Q. For anyone?

6 A. Yes, that's right.

7 LADY SMITH: Did you ever ask to see them?

8 A. I think I did once, quite early on, and it was explained  
9 to me that the school business manager, as he then was,  
10 and the HR manager would deal with that sort of thing  
11 and they would tell me if there were any problems.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

13 MR BROWN: And you left it at that?

14 A. Yes. I would say on the whole my confidence in that  
15 was -- well, appeared to be justified. There was one  
16 element of the teacher who was subsequently charged with  
17 child pornography offences, something in his  
18 references -- actually, probably in his security  
19 clearance, come to think of it, was thought to be  
20 significant by the school business manager and he passed  
21 that on to me before the decision to appoint was made,  
22 so I hope, had there been anything else that he thought  
23 was significant in the references, he would have passed  
24 that on as well.

25 Q. Sorry, this is Mr Buchanan?



1 A. It is, yes.

2 Q. So from your recollection, you appointed him?

3 A. I did.

4 Q. The business manager flagged up something to you?

5 A. Beforehand, yes.

6 Q. Beforehand.

7 A. And to the other members of the interview panel.

8 Q. Do you remember what it was?

9 A. Yes, it said that he was living with another man.

10 Q. I see. When was he appointed?

11 A. Gosh. Fairly early on in my time but I couldn't be  
12 sure. It might be in my statement. I would guess it  
13 would be 2008, 2009, maybe?

14 LADY SMITH: 2008 or 2009?

15 A. I think so, but it's a long time ago. But the MoD will  
16 have records.

17 MR BROWN: When you got to QVS, what did you think of what  
18 you'd taken over in terms of child protection and  
19 pastoral care?

20 A. I thought that there was an uncouth atmosphere about the  
21 school, but I was impressed by how much my two  
22 longstanding deputy heads knew about the children and  
23 obviously cared about them. I thought there needed to  
24 be some greater comforts of home introduced into the  
25 boarding houses. I was very quickly impressed by the

1 most recently appointed of the deputy heads, who'd only  
2 been there two terms longer than I had, and she very  
3 clearly had her finger on the pulse and she wouldn't let  
4 anything stand in her way when it came to rooting out  
5 problems with children's behaviour.

6 So I thought there was work to be done, but  
7 I thought we were starting from a fairly positive place.

8 Q. Why did you think the atmosphere uncouth?

9 A. The senior boys, the boys generally but particularly the  
10 senior boys, were very loud and sort of, you know,  
11 charging around the place and it seemed to me quite  
12 dominant. The noise level in the dining room, for  
13 example, in what's called central hall, which is where  
14 the children wait to go in for meals, and in chapel  
15 before a service started was just -- it made me very  
16 uneasy. I thought it was uncivilised. So we did a lot  
17 of work on that and it worked, I'm pleased to say. Took  
18 a long time, but it worked.

19 Q. At paragraph 78 you talk about speaking -- this is  
20 page 22 -- you talk about speaking to former pupils at  
21 the school and obviously it was even more robust in  
22 terms of the stories you were told about pupils being  
23 hung out of windows and the like.

24 A. From what they said, but as I think I've said, you know,  
25 who knows how former pupils might like to exaggerate

1           what happened to them in their time. I really don't  
2           know. And I did check up with the deputy head who had  
3           been at the school for his entire career in one capacity  
4           or another, and he said he had certainly never heard of  
5           anything like that.

6           Q. Okay. How long served was that teacher? Do you  
7           remember when he began?

8           A. I don't, but I think it was straight out of what must  
9           then have been teacher training college and he retired  
10          from his post at QVS, so he was there the whole time.

11          Q. For an entire career?

12          A. Yes.

13          Q. Okay. One of the things that's interesting on page 18,  
14          you say at paragraph 63:

15                 "I would point out to new staff that they might see  
16                 things that a parent would normally pick up, such as  
17                 sudden or severe weight loss or bruising and scars. I  
18                 would make it clear that it was important to pass these  
19                 things on. I also thought it was important to mention  
20                 that I would much rather know about something that  
21                 someone thought wasn't right so that we could do  
22                 something about it rather than being allowed to carry on  
23                 in blissful ignorance."

24                 Was that approach not in place?

25          A. I don't know. It may have been, but there was no

1 articulation of it as far as I was aware and it's  
2 important for the head to set the tone and to lead on  
3 that sort of good practice. So when I had my initial  
4 meetings with each new member of staff, once they had  
5 taken up their appointment, I thought it was important  
6 to say that. For me it is probably the main difference  
7 between a boarding school and a day school education,  
8 that there isn't that -- that correct -- correct; the  
9 ratio that you would normally get of children to adults  
10 in a home, however big a family, it's just not the case  
11 in boarding schools, so I think, as tutors, pastoral  
12 tutors, we have to be very, very careful. It's part of  
13 our duty of care.

14 Q. I think you go on to say this was something you'd picked  
15 up working in boarding schools.

16 A. It's the way my thinking evolved. I don't think anybody  
17 ever told me that. It's just the way I've come to  
18 think.

19 Q. Did other teachers come to the same conclusion under  
20 their own steam, as it were, or were you somehow  
21 different do you think?

22 A. I can't think I was different. Whether it would have  
23 occurred to those who saw themselves as mainly day  
24 school teachers, I don't know, but if you were at  
25 a boarding school and a boarding house member of staff,

1           then yes, I think it would have been very much at the  
2           forefront of their minds.

3       Q. We've heard evidence, for example, in the houses, if  
4           there was a handover, there would be a handover with  
5           notes identifying particular children who may have  
6           issues that day.

7       A. Yes.

8       Q. Is that the sort of thing you're thinking about or does  
9           it go beyond that?

10      A. Oh yes, a more informal system of just teachers, tutors  
11         who might be concerned about something talking maybe to  
12         the chaplain or to the deputy head (pupil support),  
13         deputy head (pastoral), because we're in loco parentis  
14         when we're in the boarding houses. We're looking after  
15         them in the way that their parents would if they were at  
16         home.

17      Q. Okay. You have been talking about the staff and I think  
18         we can move on to an interesting section in your  
19         statement on page 24, which is headlined, "Professional  
20         relationships between staff at the school". And you  
21         begin:

22                 "Honestly but sadly, I should say that there was  
23                 a readiness on the part of some members of staff to  
24                 complain about others whenever possible. This meant  
25                 concerns were more likely to be raised without substance

1 than to be kept under wraps. There seemed to be a huge  
2 sense of complacency and bitterness amongst a hard-core  
3 section of the staff. I experienced this throughout my  
4 time at QVS."

5 Was that quite different from your previous schools?

6 A. It was certainly different in my awareness of it. It  
7 might have happened at other schools but I was less  
8 aware of it. I didn't, for example, as deputy head at  
9 Bishop's Stortford, and I was the sole deputy head, have  
10 any experience of staff turning up to complain about one  
11 another to me, whereas at QVS I remember I got  
12 an anonymous note under my door at one point to complain  
13 about the qualifications, or lack of, of a teacher who  
14 had retired two years previously. It was a very odd  
15 set-up in that respect.

16 Q. Sounds like a culture of bitching about each other?

17 A. That would be one way of putting it, yes.

18 Q. Why?

19 A. I wish I knew.

20 Q. Well, you were there. What do you think?

21 A. I think -- but I can only speculate, and I've speculated  
22 in my statement -- that for many teachers, probably  
23 most, QVS was a strange environment because it is  
24 unique. It's unique in being a state-funded school  
25 which is a boarding school in Scotland. Most of the

1 teachers had come from the Scottish state sector and  
2 found themselves immensely well-paid but in a strange --  
3 in an environment which was to them strange. Boarding  
4 school staff, in other words boarding staff, so boarding  
5 housemasters, boarding housemistresses, we tended to  
6 appoint from outside Scotland because if we were looking  
7 for people with boarding experience, we had to look  
8 outside Scotland, so they were more familiar with it,  
9 but -- and they tended -- did they tend to complain  
10 less? I think they complained about one another less.  
11 But the non-boarding school staff just seemed -- a lot  
12 of them seemed very uneasy in the setting and perhaps  
13 that's the way they vented their unease.

14 Q. And you never really managed to change that?

15 A. I hope I made a bit of a difference by challenging when  
16 people would say, "Do you know such-and-such or  
17 so-and-so?" I would say, "Oh, the QVS rumour mill; now  
18 why do you think that that's the case?" But whether that  
19 changed what they were talking about in the staffroom,  
20 I don't know.

21 Q. You say, last sentence of paragraph 84:

22 "Looking back, I don't think that the readiness of  
23 certain staff members to complain about other staff  
24 members had an effect on the way the children were cared  
25 for in the school."

1 A. Yes, I still think that.

2 Q. You still think that?

3 A. I do.

4 Q. Would you agree the potential is there?

5 A. Having heard the sort of gripes that got as far as my  
6 ears, I would say probably not. It was something to do  
7 with staff/staff relationships.

8 Q. But if the focus is on sniping, to use another word,  
9 about someone else, did that become the focus of the  
10 staffroom?

11 A. I used to visit the staffroom at least once a week  
12 during morning break, but I suspect that staff might be  
13 careful what they said around me. So I can't comment on  
14 what was said when I wasn't there.

15 But I would say in the staff's support that, as far  
16 as I could see, they were entirely aware that the  
17 children were our first priority, that they came first.

18 Q. You talk about discipline, obviously, in detail in the  
19 statement and we needn't rehearse that. Just one point  
20 from it. At paragraph 96, page 27, you say:

21 "Prefects were given guidance about how to deal with  
22 minor problems without resorting to punishments. It was  
23 generally first provided at the end of the summer term  
24 prior to a pupil entering S6. I think there was  
25 ultimately a written guide. Training was provided



1           during that down time that you get at schools after the  
2           exams had finished."

3           Was that, can you remember, early on in your time at  
4           QVS or was that something that came towards the end?

5           A. I think it developed from an early stage in my time  
6           there and it was certainly more fully developed by the  
7           time I left.

8           Q. Okay. So there's an increasing use --

9           A. Yes.

10          Q. -- of policies and publications, some of which  
11          obviously --

12          A. And guidance and in-person training and observation and  
13          reflection.

14          Q. You've talked about concerns about the school at page 30  
15          on and obviously you've made reference there to the  
16          loutish behaviour and a hierarchy amongst the boys.

17          A. Yes, initially.

18          Q. Initially.

19          A. (Witness nods).

20          Q. Were there tensions as between the boys and the girls or  
21          did it really stay within the boys' hierarchy?

22          A. I think I may have said at some point I felt the boys  
23          were definitely dominant in terms of the school culture  
24          when I arrived. And the most extreme example is the one  
25          that I know I've mentioned where one boy was reported as

1           urinating on his girlfriend in front of both boys and  
2           girls in one of the common areas of an evening. So, no,  
3           I think the girls probably did feel that they were a bit  
4           wary, perhaps, of the boys at times?

5           Girls can give as good as they get but in  
6           a different way. So, for example, when I came into post  
7           at Bishop's Stortford College, it had very recently  
8           become co-educational, it was previously an all-boys  
9           school, and after a few months or so, certainly in the  
10          first 18 months, we had a number of incidents where boys  
11          were absolutely devastated, I mean in tears, because of  
12          something that a girl had said to them, and one incident  
13          where a boy had hit a girl and the male staff were  
14          appalled: how could a boy possibly hit a girl? Right,  
15          yes, it's unacceptable for any child to hit another  
16          child, but the level of dismay was very -- they were  
17          dismayed for different reasons. Girls fight with their  
18          tongues by and large and boys tend to lash out  
19          physically.

20         Q. But as you say, as time has gone on, one of the weapons  
21          that both can use is their mobile phone.

22         A. Yes, that's true.

23         Q. And obviously that was a problem that you had to deal  
24          with, presumably progressively, as phones became more  
25          advanced, and in particular, acquired cameras?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. You talk about trying to ban phones with cameras. Was  
3 that a success?

4 A. That was in the early days. I almost think I inherited  
5 that. It was certainly very early on in my time, where  
6 the very long-standing deputy head had said, "This is  
7 what we should do", and had written it into the guide to  
8 life. But within a year or two it became obvious that  
9 it was almost impossible to get a phone without  
10 a camera, so if we were to allow children to have mobile  
11 phones, which on balance was a good thing in terms of  
12 contacting family, we had to accept that there were  
13 going to be cameras and we would have to try to manage  
14 that in as safe a way as we could.

15 Q. We see from your statement that that developed into  
16 concerns about online grooming?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. In other words, as the world goes into what had been  
19 traditionally quite a closed environment, it's entirely  
20 open now with the internet?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. You've been in education and obviously thought about  
23 these things. I appreciate you've been out since 2016,  
24 but is there any solution that you can think of to  
25 internet and mobile phones on a practical level?

1       A. I would suggest it's about talking with young people as  
2       much as possible from as early as possible a stage.  
3       It's the same as -- in that sense, it's even part,  
4       maybe, of sex education, about encouraging children to  
5       talk about what is acceptable, what isn't, why do people  
6       behave in certain ways, how do you look after yourself?  
7       It's an education matter.

8       Q. Not something you can achieve by control?

9       A. I would be very surprised if anyone did manage that.

10      Q. Okay.

11      LADY SMITH: Mr Brown, I take it you have a little bit to go  
12           yet?

13      MR BROWN: I do. I was going to come to that.

14      LADY SMITH: We'll take a break if that would work for  
15           Wendy.

16           Wendy, I usually take a break some time around now  
17           in the afternoon. If it works for you, we'll do that  
18           just now.

19      A. Yes, my Lady.

20      LADY SMITH: Then get back to the rest of your evidence.

21           Thank you.

22      (3.01 pm)

23   (A short break)

24      (3.15 pm)

25      LADY SMITH: Are you ready to carry on, Wendy?

1 A. I am, my Lady.

2 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Mr Brown.

3 MR BROWN: My Lady.

4 Wendy, obviously we've talked about some of the  
5 changes you tried to effect when you were head of QVS  
6 and we know from your statement about many things and  
7 the details of them. As an open question, you talk  
8 about particular experiences you had of, say,  
9 child-on-child abuse allegations, for example of a rape  
10 and that sort of thing. We don't need to drill down  
11 into that because we have the material from you and from  
12 elsewhere. More broadly in terms of abuse, how  
13 confident were you that if abuse was happening when you  
14 were head, that it would come out?

15 A. It would be a very unrealistic and foolish head,  
16 I think, who said, "Oh, I'm confident that there's no  
17 bullying or harassment or whatever in my school". But  
18 what I can say is that we as a staff, certainly the  
19 senior leadership team particularly, did as much as we  
20 possibly could to encourage the children to look out for  
21 one another and to be confident to speak out, both for  
22 themselves and for one another, and my experience  
23 suggests that certainly, after a few years of my time in  
24 post, possibly even earlier, they did do that. They  
25 were very concerned for one another. They are --

1 I think they have a special bond, the children at QVS,  
2 because they are all the children of serving families  
3 and they know, either in reality or they can imagine  
4 potentially, what it's like to suffer a loss, to be hurt  
5 in one way or another. So they do look out for one  
6 another.

7 Q. And presumably, would you agree, that really in your  
8 leadership role you have to be as objective as possible  
9 and gain as much information as possible?

10 A. Yes. I'm not quite sure why you say "objective".  
11 I think empathy is a hugely important part of  
12 investigating these things, but certainly I wouldn't  
13 want to be partial, if that's what you mean by  
14 "objective".

15 Q. Well, this is the point. You're in a small community.  
16 You may know people.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And therefore it's perhaps a difficulty that you might  
19 foresee if, for example, there's a complaint about  
20 someone you work well with, have worked with for years  
21 and whom you don't suspect.

22 A. Oh, I see. There is that possibility, but certainly in  
23 my experience as a head, a head can never be friends  
24 with staff at her or his school because, at least to my  
25 view, to be somebody's friend means that when the chips

1           are down, you must be prepared to put that person first.  
2           And a head can never do that. The school's always got  
3           to come first.

4           Q. Perhaps the children have to come first?

5           A. The school is the children. The school is both the  
6           institution and -- I think I've said this at the end of  
7           my statement -- the people in it at any one time.

8                     So yes, the school and the children.

9           Q. Okay. Just in terms of information, for example, we  
10          know, and we don't have to go into names, that a teacher  
11          you inherited from your predecessor had been the  
12          subject of GTC interest?

13          A. Yes, if that's the one I'm thinking about who  
14          I mentioned in my statement --

15          Q. Yes, indeed, and for our purposes we're calling him  
16          'Grant'.

17          A. Okay.

18          LADY SMITH: For completeness, that should be GTCS, the  
19          Scottish Council.

20          MR BROWN: GTCS. And was the subject of a fit to practice  
21          hearing where charges were found not proven.

22          A. Yes. I don't know how far the hearing got. All I heard  
23          from him was that the charges were not proven.

24          Q. And I think you were advised by GTCS, you would have  
25          received a letter in terms?

1 A. Subsequently, yes.

2 Q. Could we look briefly at MOD 481, page 4, please. This  
3 is obviously a Disclosure Scotland document from the PVG  
4 scheme record and it's to a lady at QVS who you will  
5 recognise.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And obviously the details of the individual are blacked  
8 out for anonymity purposes but if we go to the foot of  
9 the page, and if we can zoom in on "Other relevant  
10 information", the police have confirmed that there was  
11 an ongoing police investigation in relation to possible  
12 sexual activity with a pupil. There was an admission to  
13 having had relations, and if we go on to the next page,  
14 right up at the top inevitably ...

15 A. I can't see anything at the moment.

16 Q. It will arrive. But it was when the pupil was 18 and  
17 after she had left school.

18 "Further to investigation no further police  
19 proceedings were taken."

20 Now, that's from, I think, 2013. That's during your  
21 tenure. That's the sort of thing that you would see,  
22 I take it?

23 A. I certainly don't remember seeing that one. When it  
24 first came up on the screen and I read the text it  
25 sounded very like the 'Grant' case, but as you say, the



1           date is much later, so no.

2           Q. The PVG process presumably is something that repeats?

3           A. It is, but as you've seen, it goes to the HR department.

4           Q. But that's the sort of thing one would expect within

5           a school -- you're aware of it anyway --

6           A. Yes.

7           Q. -- because of GTCS, but that's the sort of information

8           that presumably from a head's point of view is

9           important?

10          A. Yes, I would have expected to see that.

11          Q. Perhaps you did?

12          A. Sorry?

13          Q. Perhaps you did?

14          A. I honestly don't remember seeing anything like it.

15                I mean, it's so -- it's so relevant I can't think

16                I would have forgotten it. All I can say is I don't

17                remember seeing it.

18          Q. All right. But that sort of information, which is not

19                a conviction or the like, is relevant to knowing what

20                you're dealing with and potential risks. Would you

21                agree with that?

22          A. Yes, and that's the sort of thing that I was alluding to

23                when I said that at a previous school the bursar, who

24                was then the recipient of these, had said to me that he

25                had been informed of some possible criminal activity --

1 not by a teacher in this case, someone who was applying  
2 for a non-teaching post -- and we didn't take that  
3 application any further. So yes, that's the sort of  
4 thing I would have expected to be told about.

5 Q. But presumably that's the sort of information from  
6 a manager's point of view which is crucial so you know  
7 the landscape?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. If we could then move onto another teacher who we  
10 are naming, and that's Gerard Buchanan, this is  
11 a teacher you appointed, as far as you recollect?

12 A. Yes, I did.

13 Q. And I'm right in saying, as I think you set out, he had  
14 been a member of staff at a state school locally who had  
15 helped QVS out for interviewing?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So is that how you came to know him?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. He joined the school, he was a German teacher; is that  
20 right?

21 A. Yes, he was appointed as head of modern languages and  
22 a teacher of German.

23 Q. Was he someone you got on with?

24 A. Inasmuch as I got on with any members of staff, yes. He  
25 and I had a shared interest in music, classical music,

1 and a keen interest in words saying exactly what they  
2 were meant to say. So in that sense, we were on the  
3 same -- on the same page, if you like. But I wouldn't  
4 say I knew him particularly.

5 Q. Not a friend?

6 A. No. As I said, I didn't have any friends amongst the  
7 staff. There were people I got on with, but no.

8 Q. Was he one you got on with as opposed to --

9 A. Yes, we would pass the time of day together.

10 Q. All right. Obviously there came a time where you were  
11 approached, I think, in late August of 2015 by the  
12 police?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. To alert you to the fact that this gentleman was someone  
15 who was of interest to them because of cyber crime, to  
16 use, I think, the word you used earlier.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Tell us what happened.

19 A. I can read you my notes, if you like, but to summarise,  
20 the police, they described themselves as the cyber crime  
21 unit, turned up unannounced in my office and said that  
22 one of my staff was in the company of their  
23 colleagues -- this was after school had begun for the  
24 day, and I was puzzled initially because, you know, how  
25 can this person be with the police if he's already

1 teaching, but it turned out he hadn't come into school  
2 that day and they had appeared at his home property very  
3 early in the morning and arrested him, presumably, and  
4 taken his computer equipment away, and they had come to  
5 take any IT equipment that he used at school away as  
6 well for investigation.

7 Q. Lest it was relevant to their enquiry?

8 A. I assume so, yes?

9 Q. Which was concerning child pornography?

10 A. Yes. I don't know, without looking at my notes, whether  
11 I was told it at that point. But very soon after if not  
12 at that time.

13 Q. Okay. I think if we go to MOD 647 and page 48, this is  
14 a note prepared by you, I think, at the time?

15 A. It looks like it, yes.

16 Q. Sorry?

17 A. It looks like it, yes. It looks like my language.

18 Q. So:

19 "On the morning of Friday, 28 August after X had  
20 been arrested but before he appeared in court, our  
21 community police officer came to see me at work. He  
22 told me, without my asking him or indicating any  
23 interest, that X had admitted to the police that he had  
24 done what he was accused of doing. The police officer  
25 stressed that he had told me this in confidence, that he

1 was trusting me with the information and that I was to  
2 keep it to myself.

3 X appeared in court later that day, in a closed  
4 hearing. He was released on bail. He was not  
5 identified in the press.

6 On Sunday, 30 August, I visited X at home, having  
7 been contacted by him. This was a pastoral visit with  
8 three main purposes. One was to find out whether he was  
9 mentally and emotionally surviving and as stable as  
10 could reasonably be ascertained. Another was to try to  
11 find out from him whether there had been any involvement  
12 of the school, its pupils or its personnel in what he  
13 had been accused of doing, including whether the school  
14 could be traced or linked in some way. The third was to  
15 ask him what he would like, or was prepared for, me to  
16 say to staff about his absence; also what to say to  
17 pupils and parents if they enquired.

18 Whilst trying to reassure me that the school was not  
19 involved or connected in any way with what he was  
20 accused of, X told me that he had done what he was  
21 accused of doing. As part of his answer to my questions  
22 about there being any school involvement, X volunteered  
23 the information that this behaviour had been going on  
24 for a long time - since well before he came to the  
25 school; probably 17 or 18 years.

1 I did not pass on this information to the police  
2 because I knew that he had already confessed to them,  
3 and I had no reason to think that there was anything he  
4 had told me which he had not already told the police.

5 I knew also from an early stage (from our HR person  
6 at school) that there would have to be an MoD inquiry at  
7 some point. From what I was hearing from another source  
8 (at DCYP) it seemed likely that this would take place  
9 after a court decision had been made, but our HR input  
10 suggested that it might go ahead sooner.

11 When the MoD inquiry did begin - early February  
12 2016 - I told the investigating officer everything that  
13 X had said to me, along with the other details of the  
14 days in question, and what I knew of subsequent  
15 developments."

16 So two days after the police officer has visited the  
17 school, you speak to the teacher, who admits that he's  
18 been doing this for 17 or 18 years, but assures you it's  
19 not taking place at the school?

20 A. Four days afterwards, but yes. Because the cyber police  
21 came on the Thursday and then the community police  
22 officer came on the Friday.

23 Q. Well, I'm just reading from "two days after the police  
24 officer" you mentioned.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. But you don't mention that to anyone until February, is  
2 that --

3 A. I did tell the senior leadership team, the academic  
4 senior leadership team, and the GTCS acknowledged that  
5 as well in their investigation.

6 Q. But I think, as we know, the issue of gross misconduct  
7 was because you didn't share what you knew, so far as  
8 the MoD was concerned, appropriately, is that a fair  
9 summary?

10 A. That's their view, yes.

11 Q. In terms of the procedure that was then followed,  
12 I think we know that you sent a letter to the teacher --  
13 we can see this on page 15 -- on 1 September 2015,  
14 telling him that he was being put on special paid leave.

15 A. Yes, that's a template letter that I was given by the HR  
16 department, which I topped and tailed.

17 Q. Yes. I know from -- pardon?

18 A. Apart from the middle bit. Sorry, I shouldn't say that.  
19 "The advice you were getting from DBS seems changeable",  
20 that's not something that the HR people would say.

21 Q. No. Because there was tension, I think it's fair to  
22 say, as to whether special paid leave was appropriate?

23 A. Yes, the then HR manager was of the view -- and I think  
24 I've copied some of the paperwork on this to you  
25 recently -- that the advice he was getting from MoD was

1           inappropriate, that it shouldn't be special paid leave,  
2           that it should be suspension. Nevertheless, we did  
3           instigate what the MoD told us to do, which was special  
4           paid leave, and then once the HR manager had brought the  
5           MoD advisor around to his point of view, we then  
6           suspended Mr Buchanan.

7           Q. I think, if we look at page 51 of the same document --

8           A. I should say, actually, having read this now, it's not  
9           the template letter that I thought. This is a covering  
10          letter that went with the template letter.

11          Q. Yes.

12          LADY SMITH: What does DBS -- let me put it this way. DBS  
13          is sometimes used as a shorthand for the Disclosure and  
14          Barring Service, which is the English equivalent of  
15          Disclosure Scotland. Were you using it in that sense in  
16          that letter or were you using it to refer to a person  
17          whose initials were DBS?

18          A. I'm not sure. If I could just see it again?

19          LADY SMITH: Can we just return to the letter?

20          MR BROWN: Yes, 50.

21          LADY SMITH: Do you see it's in the second paragraph, you  
22          use it twice.

23          A. Yes, Defence Business Services, if I remember rightly.

24          LADY SMITH: Oh, Defence Business Services.

25          A. I think, yes.



1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MR BROWN: I think we were moving on to page 51.

3 This is obviously an email from you and this is  
4 dated the 28th, the same day that you saw the police  
5 officer.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. "We have more. It will be special paid leave, not  
8 suspension, but that's the only piece of positive news."

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. "Well, that and that the police say they will not be  
11 giving out any more information to anyone, even the  
12 press.

13 None of the charges mentions QVS or QVS pupils."

14 Then next paragraph:

15 "I have left a message on Gerry's answerphone, but  
16 his home number seems permanently engaged, perhaps  
17 unsurprisingly. I hope he responds and I can go to talk  
18 with him ..."

19 Perhaps you may think it doesn't matter, but  
20 obviously "Gerry" is the word you chose. It's informal.  
21 Why was that?

22 A. Yes, I called all teachers at school by their first  
23 names.

24 Q. If we go to page 62, we see by 4 September, four days  
25 later, the view has changed obviously?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And at that stage it's moved to formal suspension.

3 A. Yes, that's right.

4 Q. And again, is this a pro forma letter, going down to the  
5 second-last full paragraph:

6 "It is important for you to note that suspension is  
7 neither an assumption of guilt nor a misconduct action  
8 and will not prejudice the outcome of the investigation  
9 into the alleged misconduct."

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Although you would accept by this stage there had been  
12 a very full admission, which you knew about?

13 A. Yes, and the police knew about it as well.

14 Q. I beg your pardon?

15 A. Yes, and the police knew about it as well. As you say,  
16 this is a template letter that --

17 Q. Well, they didn't know about the admission he had made  
18 to you?

19 A. As it turned out, they didn't know about the 17 or 18  
20 years.

21 Q. No.

22 A. But as I said earlier, I assumed that the confession he  
23 had given to me was the same one he had given to the  
24 police and I'd been told not to pass it on.

25 Q. You assumed?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. But the fact of reality was you had more information  
3 than anyone else?

4 A. I don't know what else he told the police.

5 Q. Well, from what you've just said, he didn't tell them it  
6 was for 17 or 18 years.

7 A. Apparently not, no.

8 Q. I think if we go to page 70 of the document -- and  
9 I don't wish to dwell on the background, but obviously  
10 there was a process. Gross misconduct was made out, and  
11 that finding was made, and the decision was taken that  
12 your services at QVS were no longer required.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. You appealed that, and this is the appeal decision.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Of 20 July 2016. The second bullet point, the first  
17 having looked at the procedural fairness of the process,  
18 we then come onto the substantive fairness of the  
19 decision-maker:

20 " ... comes down to a reasoned conclusion about your  
21 actions and on how these affect line management's  
22 confidence in your judgement, taking into account all of  
23 the appropriate considerations. In our meeting there  
24 was repeated reference to a 'potential error of  
25 judgement'."

1                   That was from you, I take it?

2           A. Yes, I think so.

3           Q. "In fact it is clear that in deciding not to pass to the  
4           police a potentially material piece of evidence (i.e.  
5           a statement that the alleged offence had been committed  
6           over a period of very many years) your judgement was  
7           seriously amiss. This error was compounded very  
8           significantly when you refused to disclose to your line  
9           manager the information given to you at your meeting  
10          with the teacher on 30 August."

11                   Reading on:

12                   "Given the considerable publicity in recent years  
13           about child sex abuse and the ability of perpetrators to  
14           hide this and your responsibilities as headteacher, your  
15           insistence on withholding information and on coming to  
16           your own conclusions about any potential risks or damage  
17           to children in your school (leaving aside possible risks  
18           or damage to others) over very many years was a very  
19           serious error. Seeking to remain in charge of the  
20           investigation despite being in possession of potentially  
21           key information was another significant error of  
22           judgement. Collectively these errors amounted to very  
23           serious breaches of the Civil Service Code and were  
24           clearly set out in a detailed reasoned decision letter  
25           of 23 May."

1                    Obviously that was not the decision that you wanted?

2            A.    That's correct.

3            Q.    Do you accept now there were errors of judgement as

4                    distinct from potential errors of judgement?

5            A.    Yes.    Yes, I do.

6            Q.    One of the purposes of the Inquiry is to think about

7                    what might be done to try and protect children looking

8                    ahead, and one of the subjects of interest has been

9                    absolute openness.

10           A.    (Witness nods).

11           Q.    Would you accept it was an error of judgement not to

12                    share that information immediately?

13           A.    Yes.    I can only put it down to inexperience and a false

14                    assumption that what I had been told by Gerry was the

15                    same as he had told to the police.

16           Q.    Was it down, in any sense, to loyalty to the school?

17           A.    Not in terms of protecting Gerry but I had come to the

18                    conclusion early on in this investigation that I could

19                    no longer trust that the MoD had the school's best

20                    interests at heart and that's why I sent you one of the

21                    pieces of information recently, which is an email from

22                    Catherine, whose surname I forget, to our business

23                    manager, I think it was, saying that we must inform

24                    Stirling Council of what had happened with Gerry and his

25                    arrest.    Now, that is not the case in Scotland.    There

1 is no need for QVS to report to the Local Authority.  
2 It's not a Scottish school, a Local Authority school,  
3 and the state sector -- some in the state sector,  
4 I mustn't say everybody, there are some in the state  
5 sector who would love to have ammunition to use against  
6 independent schools such as QVS. So I realised at that  
7 point that the MoD in the person of Catherine did not  
8 realise what the situation was in Scotland and I had to  
9 be very careful about what I allowed them to do.

10 Q. But this was a teacher who had come from  
11 Stirling Council.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Isn't this the sort of information that really has to be  
14 known by everyone?

15 A. I was warned by various people that under data  
16 protection I had to be very circumspect in what I told  
17 to anybody about Gerry. That was one of the reasons why  
18 I wanted to get his approval for a statement to staff  
19 and parents and pupils and others. So I tried to be as  
20 circumspect as possible. And there was no requirement  
21 for us to report to the Local Authority, as Catherine  
22 said there was, so I didn't.

23 LADY SMITH: Wendy, if Gerry had told you in a one-to-one  
24 conversation in the sort of circumstances you did have  
25 a one-to-one conversation with him that he had been in

1 the habit of looking at child pornography for 17 or 18  
2 years but there were no ongoing police proceedings, what  
3 would you have done?

4 A. Gosh. Taken it to the senior leadership team, the  
5 school business manager, who would have passed it on to  
6 HR, which is an MoD side of things, and then discussed  
7 what the appropriate action was.

8 LADY SMITH: Hang on, you would have taken it to people who  
9 are down the management line from you, first of all; is  
10 that right?

11 A. The people I've mentioned, yes, although at least one of  
12 them would then refer it up the MoD chain for advice.  
13 And we would probably tell the police because we had  
14 a very good relationship with the local police.

15 LADY SMITH: So why not do it on this occasion?

16 A. Because I thought it had already been passed on.

17 LADY SMITH: Did you ask?

18 A. No. As I say, I can only put it down to inexperience.  
19 I simply assumed that the confession, which I'd been  
20 told not to pass on, was the same confession I had  
21 heard.

22 MR BROWN: Well, you were being asked, with respect, to not  
23 share what the police had told you.

24 A. I was --

25 Q. What you were told by the teacher was wholly separate.

1       A. I was --

2       Q. And not bound by any confessional, to be theoretical

3       about it?

4       A. I was told by the community police officer not to share

5       the fact that Gerry had confessed.

6       Q. And yet, page 44, paragraph 162, third line from the

7       bottom, in describing what Gerry had done:

8                "There are few more serious charges where those who

9       work with young people are concerned."

10      A. I don't think this is the right statement.

11      Q. No, it's not. Page 44, paragraph 162.

12      A. Yes, that's the right one.

13      Q. So your view of child pornography is there are few more

14      serious charges where those who work with young people

15      are concerned?

16      A. Yes, that's true.

17      Q. And at that point, on 30 August, he is telling you

18      things, giving you assurances, but of course that's

19      exactly why the police had come into your school to

20      remove his equipment to find out what, if anything, he

21      had been doing at school.

22      A. The investigating officer or whatever the correct term

23      is from Edinburgh, who were by that stage dealing with

24      Gerry, had assured me in a phone call on Friday that

25      there was no connection and there was no evidence that



1 anything to do with QVS had been discovered. Possibly  
2 I was naive in assuming that they had searched all the  
3 equipment by then, but I took them at their word.

4 Q. I asked you whether part of your decision-making, which  
5 you now accept today would seem to have been perhaps  
6 assumption by lack of experience, what about loyalty to  
7 Gerry, one of your teachers?

8 A. He received the same degree of support and respect that  
9 any teacher at QVS would get.

10 Q. Even though you know, because he'd admitted to you, that  
11 he's been doing this, one the most serious charges you  
12 can think of, for 17 or 18 years?

13 A. Yes. He was removed from the school by that time.  
14 There was nothing more that I had to do with him.

15 Q. Other than share the information --

16 A. Which I did with the Senior Management Team, yes.

17 Q. Down the way?

18 A. Yes. Until the investigation in February, at which  
19 point I told the investigating officer from the MoD  
20 everything I knew.

21 Q. So, just to be clear, why did it take six months to  
22 share it?

23 A. Because I was giving a lot of thought to it throughout  
24 that time about what I could and couldn't do in terms of  
25 data protection and what the police had told me and what

1           was in the best interests of the school.

2           Q. Did you think perhaps, in line with the MoD's findings,  
3           you should have passed on responsibility to someone  
4           else? You were too close?

5           A. I decided initially to take on the investigating officer  
6           responsibility because I thought it was unfair to ask  
7           one of my deputies to do it, and according to MoD  
8           procedures, it's the line manager who should carry out  
9           the investigation. But because this was such a serious  
10          and unpleasant case, I thought it was unfair to ask one  
11          of the deputies to do it, so I decided at that point  
12          that I would take it on and then the ultimate decision  
13          would be from somebody higher up in the MoD chain than  
14          me. That was my way of thinking.

15          Q. Thinking of it now, do you accept that you were too  
16          close, knew too much and shouldn't have been anywhere  
17          near that investigation?

18          A. I can understand that point of view. I think I was ...  
19          I was trying to spare others the onerousness of it, and  
20          I knew that I would be entirely open when the  
21          investigation came about, but I entirely understand that  
22          other people might not see it that way.

23          Q. You knew best?

24          A. No, I wouldn't say that I knew best. I was trying my  
25          best.

1 Q. Does loyalty matter to you?

2 A. Yes, I think it's an important quality for people to  
3 have.

4 Q. And would that explain your loyalty, for example, to  
5 Andrew Keir?

6 A. No more than anyone who was a friend, and my view of  
7 Andrew is based on experience.

8 Q. Andrew Keir gave evidence to the Inquiry. I take it it  
9 would come as a surprise to you that he accepted that he  
10 had been jailed for 28 months?

11 A. No, it's not a surprise. It did happen.

12 Q. What was he jailed for 28 months for?

13 A. He was jailed twice, once in Scotland for alleged  
14 inappropriate behaviour in a swimming pool with boys at  
15 Gordonstoun, and then he was --

16 LADY SMITH: Wendy, I'm sorry to interrupt you. He was  
17 convicted after trial.

18 A. Yes.

19 LADY SMITH: So it ceases to be an allegation then.

20 A. Oh, sorry.

21 LADY SMITH: The allegations were founded to have been  
22 proved beyond reasonable doubt.

23 A. Yes, that's right. That was the first occasion. And  
24 then he was jailed in England for offences relating to  
25 online images of children.

1 MR BROWN: One of those few more serious charges?

2 A. Yes. He was a retired teacher by then, but that doesn't

3 make a material difference.

4 Q. Well, as I think the Inquiry is already aware, this

5 involved material from the early 2000s up until 2017.

6 A. I'm not aware of the period in question.

7 LADY SMITH: Did you know he'd pled guilty?

8 A. Yes.

9 MR BROWN: Are you aware of the material that was found in

10 his computer in written form?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Stories with titles such as, "School showers", which in

13 summary relates to two male teenagers carrying out

14 sexual acts to each other within the school showers,

15 initially both males were too shy to go into the

16 showers, however built up courage to do this on their

17 first time in the showers with other male pupils, all

18 the male pupils become involved in carrying out sexual

19 acts together. Or, and I think you'll see understand

20 the relevance of this given the reference to the

21 swimming pool at Gordonstoun which featured in his

22 trial -- are you aware of that --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- "Speedos". The document talks about an older child

25 running a badminton club and finding himself left alone

1 with twins from the year below. Following the badminton  
2 they all have a shower naked and the child performs  
3 explicit sexual acts on both twins. One of the twins  
4 thereafter performs a sexual act on the older child.

5 He didn't share that with you obviously?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Were you too loyal to Andrew Keir, do you think?

8 A. My view on Andrew hasn't changed. As I say, it's based  
9 on experience.

10 Q. And yet he is someone who you would describe as  
11 committing a serious charge where those who work with  
12 young people are concerned?

13 A. Yes. I'm not denying it. He's not denying it either,  
14 as far as I understand.

15 Q. Yet you were a character witness essentially saying, as  
16 her Ladyship pointed out, these were allegations.

17 I take it you don't believe them, notwithstanding the  
18 finding of guilt?

19 A. I was a character witness for Andrew in Elgin. That was  
20 on the first charge. At that point I wasn't aware that  
21 there were to be any other charges. In fact, I don't  
22 think he had been arrested for the other charges at that  
23 point. So my testimony was based on what I knew of him  
24 at Gordonstoun.

25 Q. Would you give the same testimony now?

1       A. I would -- I couldn't change my view of what I said  
2       about his time at Gordonstoun because it is fact.  
3       I would have to include what I've since learned about  
4       him.

5       Q. One final area. You talked in your statement about  
6       appointing people and one of those, I think, was the  
7       drumming instructor at QVS?

8       A. Yes, that's right.

9       Q. This is the same drumming instructor who has recently  
10      been convicted at Falkirk sheriff court?

11      A. I don't know for sure, but I think so from what I've  
12      heard on the grapevine.

13      Q. I think we know that the charges he was convicted of  
14      date from 2011 up to 2019.

15      A. Really? I didn't know that.

16      Q. Again, it would appear that with the best will in the  
17      world you can't make assumptions.

18      A. (Witness nods).

19      Q. Either that the people you are appointing are being  
20      honest with you or that your systems work.

21      A. Mm-hmm yes.

22      Q. Or that children will come forward.

23      A. Yes. I don't know how these crimes came to light.  
24      I don't know whether it was the children who came  
25      forward. I have no idea. Certainly they didn't during

1 my time there.

2 Q. Is there anything else you would wish to add?

3 A. No, I don't think so. My statement is on record.

4 I think it would sound like special pleading if I said  
5 that I was too trusting. I always tried to put the  
6 children first and the children are the school.

7 MR BROWN: Wendy, thank you.

8 A. Thank you.

9 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
10 questions of Wendy?

11 Wendy, thank you for engaging with the Inquiry, both  
12 by providing us with the long detailed statement that  
13 you did, and I'm sure that took many hours of your time  
14 to do so, I'm grateful to you for that, and for coming  
15 here today and answering our questions. I appreciate  
16 some of them are difficult. This isn't any intention of  
17 putting you on trial. As you've heard Mr Brown's final  
18 comments to you, the short point is it can show how  
19 assumptions are dangerous things where children are  
20 concerned. I can just assure you we've seen a number of  
21 examples of the danger of assumptions. We're learning  
22 all the time and you've helped us do that. Thank you  
23 very much. I'm now able to let you go.

24 A. Thank you, my Lady.

25 (The witness withdrew)

1 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

2 MR BROWN: My Lady. We have one more other witness, that's  
3 the witness 'Grant', tomorrow morning.

4 LADY SMITH: Yes.

5 MR BROWN: And then we will conclude with a joint session,  
6 which we haven't enjoyed since the beginning of the  
7 hearings, with the current head of QVS and Colonel  
8 Clive.

9 LADY SMITH: And of course it's a matter of welcoming them  
10 back.

11 MR BROWN: Yes, indeed.

12 LADY SMITH: They were here earlier this year.

13 MR BROWN: Absolutely, and I know Mr Shaw has been watching  
14 throughout, just as the other headmasters have done --

15 LADY SMITH: Of course.

16 MR BROWN: -- and Colonel Clive and Mr Plumtree, who gave  
17 evidence at the outset, have been following, I know that  
18 too, online.

19 LADY SMITH: Thank you. I'll rise now until 10 o'clock  
20 tomorrow morning when we will resume the evidence.

21 (3.55 pm)

22 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am  
23 on Wednesday, 27 October 2021)

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