

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MHC

Support person present: No

1. My name is MHC My date of birth is 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I have a teaching Diploma from studying at Moray House Teacher Training College, Edinburgh for four years. Later on after I left St Joseph's I did a qualification at Edinburgh University to teach history.
3. Between 1974 and 1978 I was a primary school teacher at Prestonpans Primary School in East Lothian. Whilst I was there I saw an advert in a local paper for a teacher at St Joseph's School. I couldn't see myself as a primary school teacher for life and I thought this was potentially interesting. At Prestonpans primary we had a speech therapist who also worked at St Joseph's. I asked her what it was like and she said it was a great place, the staff were well looked after, they had dances for the staff and so I applied for the job and got it.

Recruitment Process

4. The recruitment process was basically an interview and I supplied references. I don't know for certain but I would hope they got in touch with my references.

St Joseph's School, Tranent 1978 - 1994

5. St Joseph's School is situated half way between Prestonpans and Tranent but probably nearer Tranent than Prestonpans.
6. Before I went there I wasn't really aware that it was a List D school or of the purpose of the school in relation to children. I found out this information when I went for interview. In those days it was a boys' residential school, virtually solely for boys who were sent there from the Hearings System and for whatever length of time it was deemed they were meant to be there. I don't know if there were any day boys when I first went there, there may have been but we did have one or two in the early eighties.

First Impressions

7. My first impressions when I went there were that it was different from Prestonpans primary. The headmaster at Prestonpans was a local councillor, it was a big school with primaries one to three in a separate building and I taught in the other building for primaries four to seven which were streamed. In my last year I had taught a top stream primary six class which was fabulous and we could do anything.
8. When I went to St Joseph's I was asked by one of the boys, "who the fuck are you, you're a fuckin jakey?" I just stood and couldn't believe what he had said to me. I thought, what have I done? It was a culture shock getting spoken to and sworn at like that. Once you got over the initial shock of the language it was fine.
9. When I first went there I wore platform shoes and the boys called me MHC. They then started calling me MHC because of my surname which I much preferred to MHC. I'm pretty sure a lot of the kids came and went and didn't know my actual name. Even the staff called me MHC.
10. I have read the statements I was sent and I cannot equate what I have read with what I experienced there. I just can't. I mean the boys were challenging sometimes, which

was fair enough because they didn't want to be there. They weren't going to be happy with it but I thought it was okay.

11. As far as I could see it was a pleasant place for both the staff and the boys or as much as it could be for boys that didn't want to be there.
12. I would say the culture of the school was holistic. As far as I could see everybody tried their best for the boys. When I started I was clueless about backgrounds. I didn't really appreciate the background that some kids had come from because even Prestonpans wasn't that bad.
13. I remember one kid in about 1981 who had come from a panel in the summer and he had turned up with flannel shorts, a t-shirt and wellies and that was it. That was his clothes and I thought 'wow.' You tried your best for the kids because by then you knew the backgrounds some of them came from and they weren't great. You tried hard to make life as pleasant as you could for them.
14. The relationships between the staff and boys was generally pretty good. I can't talk for the social work side but on the teaching side we tried to adapt what we did to their needs educationally wise. There was no point in taking a kid in and after two or three weeks churning them back out and they still couldn't read or write a proper sentence. We tried to judge, or well, I did anyway, what that particular kid needed and tried to work towards that to help them along.
15. They were small classes with six or eight in each class but you rarely had that as some had usually absconded or were away with the social work. You usually had about four or a small group so you could do that work. When I had been at Prestonpans it was a class of thirty one so it was a big difference.

Structure and recruitment of staff

16. Brother **MJG** was **SNR** of the school, Brother **MBU** was **SNR**, Frank was the head of education and **MJL** was the head of social work.
17. The school was run by a board of managers and the Catholic church but at some point in the late eighties the regional Social Work took over the running of the place. I think in about 1991 the Brothers eventually left and a bloke called Jim Tague came in as head. He had been a head down south somewhere. A woman whose name I can't remember, came in from a Family and Children's department somewhere as his depute.
18. When I first went to the school the Brothers that were there were Brothers **MJG** **MBU** Ben and Cuthbert who were all involved in the school. Brother **HED** was the school bursar but you never saw him. There was also Brother **PAG** who looked about eighty and was retired. He didn't have a role in the school, he just lived there and you only saw him occasionally wandering about the place. None of them were involved in teaching when I was there but I think they had been in the past.
19. On the teaching side there were two senior teachers. I was the first of a new intake on the teaching side so there was quite a bit of change. I went in the August, the new art teacher came in September, the guy who taught history shortly after that and then the English teacher, shortly after that. The metalwork and woodwork teachers were already there when I started. The PE guy retired so we got a new PE teacher in. The boss Frank Rochford's wife Margaret Rochford, was a remedial class teacher and we had another female teacher who was called Gloria Monaghan.
20. I don't think the social work side had a structure like we did. I think it was **MJL** as the head and then there was the rest.
21. Savio Unit had a house mother **MCR** and had two social workers attached to the cottage.

22. Ogilvie Unit had Mrs [REDACTED] and her husband and son lived in the staff accommodation [REDACTED].
23. Benildus, the cottage that I was part of was Frank Cooper as a social worker and his wife Eunice Cooper who was a housemother. Their son Gerry who was in his twenties was a social worker as well. at some point in the eighties frank and Eunice retired and other staff came in.
24. Sinclair Cottage had [REDACTED] as the housemother and her husband MHB [REDACTED] and LVH [REDACTED] were the social workers.

Living Arrangements

25. The Brothers stayed in a separate building from the boys and were on the top floor of the main building.
26. I suppose all staff had access to all the residential areas. The housemothers literally stayed right next door to their cottages and there was a night staff for each unit. I think they locked the main doors to the units so nobody could get in and then I have no idea if the night staff went to sleep or not.

Roles at St Joseph's School

27. I started there in August 1978 and was there until 1994.
28. My line manager was Frank Rochford who was head of education.
29. I was initially a science teacher as I had done a fair bit of that in primary. A training college in Ayr had devised a science kit for primary schools so I managed to get the school to buy the kit. I can't remember when I stopped doing science but I then moved onto my own wee class in the morning which was semi remedial. Margaret took the

class for the boys who couldn't fully read or anything and I took the next stage up. We had a wee reading group and I basically taught them reading and maths or arithmetic, well basic numeracy compared to the rest of the schools.

30. At some point I can't remember the exact name of the role but I became a senior assistant teacher. That meant I was sort of semi senior staff. On a Wednesday we used to have what was called a leave meeting and the senior management team would decide who was getting home and who wasn't. With my new role I went to these meetings which were interesting. One of the points I made was why are we having that on a Wednesday morning, then telling the kids they weren't getting home because for the Wednesday afternoon, all day Thursday and the Friday they weren't going to be pleasant. So I managed eventually to get the meeting moved to the Thursday afternoon which made more sense.
31. For a few months in the nineties I was head of education and the School Depute was my line manager.
32. It wasn't the same SNR [REDACTED] for my whole time. Brother MJG [REDACTED] and Brother MBU [REDACTED] but I can't remember who [REDACTED] as SNR [REDACTED].
33. There was no formal appraisal system or monitoring of performance whilst I was there.
34. The [REDACTED] style when Brother MJG [REDACTED] and Brother MBU [REDACTED] were SNR [REDACTED], was that as far as I could see, they were always sympathetic to the boys. They were trying to do their best for the boys and tried to instil in us to do the same. As I said I can't equate the stuff in the statements about the beatings as it was just not part of anything that I ever saw. I don't understand where that came from.
35. Having come from a primary school environment I didn't consider then that these issues may have been happening and it is distressing to think that these things may have been going on without me knowing about it or picking up or asking about it because I would have said something if I had known.

36. We never saw Jim Tague when he became headmaster, he was known as 'the hidden heedie.'
37. The only time I was involved in recruiting staff was when I was head of education. We were looking for an English teacher and somebody at the school said there was somebody they knew was looking for a job. I interviewed this person along with possibly the person who was depute. I can't remember their name just now. She was South African and her name was Betsy Debenham. She provided references but they weren't contacted because they were from South Africa. We took her at face value.
38. She knew her stuff and it was the first time I had heard of dyslexia. She tested a lot of the boys and found a lot of them were dyslexic. When I looked back I knew I had been struggling to get kids to read and had we known we could have worked with it. It was the same with dyscalculia which is the same issue but with numbers.
39. I don't know how the Brothers went about recruiting other staff or what the policy was.
40. I can remember there was a volunteer working there who I always wondered about and probably unfairly. I don't know who interviewed him, who said it was okay and vetted him. He must have been vetted because I wouldn't think you couldn't just turn up. It must have been the late eighties into the nineties when he was there. I never had any involvement with him and I can't remember his name. He looked as if he was in his late thirties at the time and I remember he had a Skoda Rapide car.
41. I haven't a clue what his role was and he would come in the evening and do stuff with the boys but I don't know what. I don't know what he did outside the school or what his background was. He seemed nice enough but I always wondered why he was doing it. I presume he was being overseen by the permanent staff. He left St Joseph's before I did.
42. There was also another guy who was a sort of semi-volunteer. He wanted to be a Brother and again I have no idea where he came from other than he was Scottish. He was there for a couple of years training to be a De La Salle Brother. I think he got on

the job training. He was called Brother **IVB** and he was in his late twenties. He wasn't involved in education so he must have been involved in the social work side somewhere. He was incompetent and couldn't work with the boys and none of us thought he was suitable. I never had much contact with him but I think he was delusional and had problems.

43. I remember him chasing one of the boys down the field and trying to give him a hammering. If you are a Christian Brother you don't go chasing kids down the field to try and give them a thumping. It was me that stopped him when I saw him running after them. I think the boy had sworn at him or something. He was not suitable at all and he eventually got the message and left.
44. I did manage staff when I was head of education. This involved timetabling and trying to get a workable syllabus. I also had the responsibility of being in charge of the school campus, once every four weeks from Friday afternoon to Sunday night.
45. There were four senior staff and we worked on a rota basis. We would take phone calls from the police that had picked up so and so for doing whatever and then we went and picked them up from whatever police station.
46. I was meant to stay on the premises but I would try and get home. I do not remember ever staying there overnight.
47. The head Jim Tague was aware that I wasn't staying as he lived in Pencaitland and he didn't stay when it was his weekend. The depute head and the head of social work never stayed either. If a phone call came in one of the night people would take it and if it was deemed it was important they would give me a call and I would go back into the school.

Training

48. I never got any induction training when I started. We were separate from Lothian Region so we were never informed of any training and so we could never apply for anything, we were left out on our own. The only training I can remember was some people who were involved with an anti-drug initiative came in to talk about drugs. They showed the staff, not the boys, lurid videos of peoples limbs after they had been injecting heroin. We knew that drugs were bad so I don't know why we were shown that. We also got some sort of sex education for the staff but the only thing I can remember from that was that we had to go over this list of names for vaginas.
49. I wasn't involved in training or any of the personal development of members of staff.
50. I tried to do appraisal of staff when I was head of education but it wasn't met with any enthusiasm. There were five or six teachers and then instructors for metalwork, woodwork and PE. I never had any knowledge of the school's policy for staff appraisal.

Policy

51. I only ever had inconsequential involvement in any policy surrounding the residential care of the children.
52. When I first went there the boys were meant to be showered and in their beds for nine o'clock. I remember thinking the sun was streaming through the windows, with thin curtains and we were really expecting boys who are fourteen and fifteen years old to be going to their beds that early.
53. I thought that was bizarre so I used to try and make the point that I couldn't see the point in it. The nightman came on about quarter to ten so this meant it was a winding down period so I didn't think the boys were going to go to bed and sleep.

54. Two or three of us pushed the social work side to get the bedtime extended. We eventually got it extended to half past nine. We used to sit and watch 'The Young Ones' on TV which came on at nine o'clock and then get the boys to bed. We then moved it a bit further as latterly the numbers had come down quite a bit and we had a bit more leeway as the cottage had less people. The nightman, called James, had been older and retired and a younger guy came in. He would come in about half past nine, have a fifteen minute handover and then it was his choice to let the boys to stay up until maybe ten o'clock or half past which was much more sensible really.
55. One of the problems we had when I first went there was that the boys couldn't smoke. Tobacco was bad but then we hit the glue problem. There was a big field at St Joseph's and we used to get kids who at lunchtime or breaks would take off down the field with a bag of crisps, eat the crisps and put glue in. They used to say we can't smoke so we take glue.
56. There was one or two of us who continually made the point about the lesser of two evils. We knew smoking wasn't good for you but you weren't going to drop dead through smoking whereas we did lose boys through glue sniffing. The glue was a big thing for a while and we lost some nice kids and it really upset you. We nagged away and nagged away at Brother MJG who eventually in about 1982 I think, agreed to let the boys smoke. The glue kind of went into the back ground and eventually stopped.
57. It was always a bug bear of mine that boys were put out the door of St Joseph's when they were 16 years old. We knew and they knew they were out the door come May or Christmas time.
58. Up to that point they'd had social work involvement, if they need a new pair of trainers or clothes they got them but come the time they were 16 all that was gone. Their behaviour got worse as this approached because they were terrified of what was going to happen to them. They must have been thinking where were they going to live as there was no supported accommodation, it was a poor system. I can't remember anybody that went on to any other home or supported accommodation after they left. It was unacceptable and awful.

59. It was not a good system but I tried to help improve this. Mrs [REDACTED] retired which left her house unit, Ogilvie, empty. I went to see Brother MJG and said how about we use the house for the kids that are about to leave in two or three months. We used to get some of them work experience placements so I suggested we used Ogilvie as a place for them to go and give them training. I suggested that instead of them getting breakfast in the unit, instead of them getting sandwiches made, we use that to show them how to budget for meals and cook for themselves. We got them to wash their own clothes so that they were learning these things for when they left. I upset MJG by jokingly suggesting we teach them how to play darts and go to the bookies. It was designed to try and get kids some experience for later life.
60. I pushed for a few things. In 1984 before Standard Grades came out it bothered me that we weren't getting kids qualifications. In one of the statements that I was sent one of the kids has got it wrong because they said somebody else brought it in City and Guilds but it was me. I brought them in because I didn't think they could do 'O' grades as it was too hard. The City and Guilds they could manage so I brought them in for the numeracy side of it.
61. Then in 1984 when the Standard Grades came in there was three levels, credit, standard and foundation and I thought we have to get kids qualified in some way. We can't just let them leave with nothing, we needed to get them qualifications in English and Maths if nothing else.
62. So before the next year started in 1985 I went and saw the boss and suggested this. I wasn't trained as a maths teacher so I couldn't devise a course. I said to the boss I could contact Ross High School in Tranent and when he said I could go ahead I spoke to their principal teacher for maths. I explained to him what we were doing and that we never had a course or books. They suggested they come down and have a look at the school and agreed to give us a foundation level syllabus, told us what books we needed to buy and what else we needed to do. I think English did the same but got their syllabus from somewhere else. I did foundation with the occasional general standard grades for the boys.

63. All these policy type changes that I brought in or proposed were usually agreed with SNR [REDACTED] at a meeting, as he had to give the okay as opposed to us just going ahead and doing our own thing. It depended what it was though, as for the change of bedtime I had just suggested that to him and he just agreed it. It was the same with the standard grades I think but I must have said to Frank Rochford that this was what I was going to do.
64. I was never involved in any strategic planning.

Children

65. The majority of the boys came to St Joseph's by referral from the children's panel. I don't think the courts were still sending boys there when I started. I think there was one or two voluntary placements. One kid who was in my group, came from Haddington and his name was [REDACTED]. He was adopted and I don't think things were going well at home. I think social work were involved and got him there as a day pupil. He was a really nice kid.
66. It was a learning experience for me because one day as a throwaway remark, I said to him he was a nice guy and I could fair take him home. The next day he turned up with a suitcase. I thought 'oh dear, I need to watch what I'm saying.' I then had to explain to him that I couldn't take him home.
67. At the start it was just boys and the capacity of the place when it was full was about sixty odd boys all of secondary age between 12 and 16 years old. They had to leave when they were 16 which was not in their best interests but that was the system.
68. A few of the boys came and went. I'm not sure how long they all stayed but I can't remember any of them coming at age 12 and staying until they were 16. I don't remember boys leaving and then coming back. I think if they left us before they were 16 they tended to go somewhere else.

69. I think in about 1984 or 85 they started closing some List D schools and they closed all the girls ones because the notion was that there was no need for girls to be in them. They closed ones in Edinburgh, Haddington and other places and then within months they were saying, what do we do with the girls that would have been getting sent to them.
70. As our numbers had gone down and we had an empty unit, somebody, somewhere decided that it would become a girls' unit and it was refitted. We got two new teachers because girls needed home economics and before that boys didn't, apparently.
71. My room was requisitioned as it had a water supply and a sink and it was fitted out as a home economics room. Across the yard in a room where there used to be a pool table, they used this for business and secretarial studies.
72. By that time the ratio between kids and staff was about one staff to two or three kids.

Sleeping arrangements

73. I think when I first started there was roughly a maximum of twenty kids in a cottage. By the end it was maybe ten or twelve. The sleeping arrangements depended on the cottage. Ogilvie and Savio were big traditional buildings and Benildus and Sinclair had been built later and were different all together. I was never in Savio or Ogilvie so I don't know what the sleeping arrangements were but in Beneildus there were some single rooms and some shared that maybe had three beds to a room.

Washing / bathing

74. In Benildus and Sinclair I would've thought there was four or five showers but no bath. They was privacy as the cubicles had doors. I don't know what the washing and showering facilities in Oglivie and Savio were.

Mealtimes / food

75. The housemother looked after the boys and gave them breakfast and their tea. They had their lunch in the main building in the dining room. We ate the same food as the kids. Early days the food wasn't good but latterly it was fine. There was a wee staff room just off the dining room where we had our lunch and that was the only working place I have been served my lunch.
76. I complained once about one of the cooks. I lived in Portobello and on a Wednesday, which was my duty day, it was impossible to get home and then back between 4:30 pm and 6:00 pm to do my duty, so I would stay and have my tea in the staff room. One night I saw the cook leaving with a whole bag of chicken breast. I thought that wasn't right as that food was meant to be for the boys and she was using it for her own food so I told the boss.
77. When I first started the boys still went to berry camp in the summer holidays so I went with them in 1979 and 1980. The boys spent six or eight weeks picking soft fruit which was either sent to be canned or sold as soft fruit. Lockwood were the canners and they went bust so after that there was no camp so we had to do something else with the kids. It was going to be a long summer in the school so I came up with this hair brain idea of taking them on a cycle tour of the Highlands staying at youth hostels. When it came to the food for that we got two big bags of dried mince, some pasta and some tomato type sauce. That is what they gave us to take with us for ten days in the Highlands. It was awful and god knows what it was that was minced.
78. In the eighties when there were 'butter mountains' in Europe this refrigerated lorry came into the yard and we got literally tonnes of cheese and for months after all we got to eat was cheese or something made with cheese.
79. For a short period of time I supervised tea for the kids in Ogilvie because the person who cooked for them was killed in a car crash and they were looking for someone to do it so I volunteered. It was always a bit frantic because they always had a main course, plain loaf bread and jam and cakes but you had to eat at least one slice of

bread before you could have a cake. They all spotted what was the biggest cake and there was a race to try and get it.

80. When I was in Benildus Cottage they would get toast or something for supper but on one occasion I went and got a big sack of potatoes from one of the local farms that didn't cost much and we had chips instead.

Clothing

81. When the boys came to St Joseph's they were given clothes to preserve their own clothes. This was so that if the clothes they had on during the week got damaged it was of no consequence. If they went away home for the weekend they would use their own clothes.
82. There was a laundry and they had a seamstress and when they came back from the weekend they would hand their clothes into the laundry where they would get washed and any repaired in time for the next weekend.

Schooling

83. The classes for schooling of the boys was based more on ability than age groups other than those who were close to leaving. We couldn't control what ages of kids were coming in so we couldn't say for instance just give us S2's, we just had to take what the children's panel gave us.
84. We didn't get any warning about academic ability and in fact I've had kids be sent straight into the classroom by a social worker when they have been sent from a panel. Twice I had somebody coming through the door of the class who I didn't know who it was. The social worker brought them down and obviously somebody had said there is space in that class.

85. That wasn't an ideal way to do things. They should've been dealt with by social work to settle them in first but because it was during school time this unhappy kid was sent right into the class room as soon as they arrived from the panel.
86. I would say that I think the schooling was a success. A couple of times I had kids coming back years after they left. One kid came back years later with his girlfriend and thanked me for helping him to read. Others came back to say thanks and for what I and the other staff did.

Leisure Time

87. There was loads for them to do in the evenings and it would depend what staff were on. When I first went there, one social worker's evening activity was coloured TV because the units only had black and white ones. I thought he was a bit of a chancer doing that as an activity.
88. In the summer they would be out in the fields, down at the pitches or we'd take the kids out. Port Seton outdoor swimming pool was still open back then so we would take them there. Sometimes we would just choose to stay in the unit and play pool, table tennis or whatever. I used to take five-a-sides and long bangers.
89. Then there was Brother Ben's club and that is the great mystery for me. I don't know what the hell went on there with Brother Ben. It has bothered me greatly. I do not know what was true and what wasn't true. I did 'the tickler' when I went to the club as that was part of the induction thing. I went along and he wound the thing up. It was the kind of thing you get at the shows. I cannot see this thing being said in the statements that people were unconscious. The club seemed to be very popular with all electronic stuff.

Holidays / trips

90. The kids never went on any holidays organised by the school but they did go on them organised by the social work. I have no idea where they went other than one kid and his family. He came from Glasgow and when he came back after the summer he was

not happy as the social work had sent him to the caravan site at Port Seton. I quite understand that he was not happy having been at St Joseph's so near to Port Seton all year and then got sent back there for his holidays.

91. The kids did go on trips. Frank Rochford had been at university in England with some bloke who was head of a school in Formby in Southport just outside Liverpool. Frank was a keen footballer and St Joseph's went down there in the spring and they came up to St Joseph's in September or October.
92. They would put you up in one of their units where we would get fed and watered. On a Saturday morning the boys would play football against their team and in the afternoon they would go to the shows in Southport. They would come back and get fed and in the evening the boys would have TV or table tennis or something like that. On the Sunday morning we would go to mass at Liverpool cathedral and then back up the road to St Joseph's.
93. We had various camps and things that were organised. I'm not aware of any other staff taking kids to their own homes but I suppose they might have. I remember taking some poor soul twice to Easter Road to see the football. I was to get him out the school for some reason but I can't remember why.

Healthcare

94. I was interested when I read the accounts in the statements that there was mention of a school nurse. That isn't something I remember and until I read that, I didn't know we had a school nurse or did that kind of thing. If the kids say we had one, then we must've had but it has passed me by.
95. If a kid skinned their knee or had a black eye I thought the housemothers dealt with that kind of thing. There was somebody called matron but as far as I was aware she was more the domestic side and sorted the clothes out.

96. I'm not sure what would happen if someone was badly injured regarding doctors or hospitals. I'm pretty sure ^{MGW} [REDACTED] although he didn't mention it in his statement so maybe it wasn't him but somebody had a suspected broken arm at one of the berry camps at Aberlemno in Angus. I was tasked to take the boy to the hospital in Dundee and get it checked. It was broken and it got plastered up and I took him back to the camp. So yes if there was anything major it would be hospital. I do not have a clue how they dealt with dentistry and stuff like that as it would be the social work side of the staff that would be responsible for that.

Work / chores

97. The boys had to do chores in the unit but it was nothing strenuous as far as I can remember. When we were on the bike tour and staying at the youth hostels the wardens were always impressed because our crew would just get in there and clean the floors because they were used to doing that in their cottage units. Others staying there would moan but our ones would go in and do the dishes and stack them away.
98. St Joseph's had a gardening instructor and I assume they would do gardening stuff as well. I remember one kid during the summer using things we called allan shears which were big petrol driven things. He was asked if he would sort out the rough around the fields and the sides of the pitches. You couldn't get him off this thing and he was even out in the evening doing it. He loved it and he cleared the entire area.

Visits

99. Depending on the boy, parents were allowed to visit regularly. If it was visitors that weren't parents I would assume they would be vetted. I don't know if the visitors were allowed to take the boys out, possibly but I wouldn't know because again that was down to the social work side.
100. Social workers would come and visit them. I would normally be in class when they came so I don't know if they would speak with the kids on their own or if there were members of St Joseph's staff present.

101. The only time I would be there would be if there was a panel coming up and I'd maybe have to do an educational report for a review meeting. The social worker would come in, the head and the school social worker would be there and sometimes a parent where they would decide what they were going to recommend to the panel. I don't know how often these reviews happened.
102. As far as I was aware any child getting discharged from the school would be decided by the panel. What the school would do was to recommend or not recommend and it would then be up to the panel to decide whether they came back to us, went elsewhere or were discharged.
103. As I mentioned before about setting up the Ogilvie Unit for those about to leave, that was the only support they got before leaving. There would only be a handful of kids in there at a time maybe for about a term before they left.
104. The Ogilvie Unit ran like that for about three or four years and I thought it was successful but then again, I would as it had been my idea. It was just boys at that time and it changed when the girls came in because they took over that unit.
105. It seemed to work okay but once the boys left we had no idea how effective it had been. We didn't know because we couldn't keep any tabs on them. Even their external social workers just disappeared.

Discipline and Punishment

106. I have read the statements I was sent and I can't accept what is being said. I never saw or heard any of that. I never saw any punishment like the statements are talking about where kids were getting beaten. You would have thought you would have picked up on that if kids were being beaten regularly.
107. If kids behaved really badly they would lose their weekend. They wouldn't be allowed to go home. That could be something they had done in the cottage or whatever.

108. That decision was made at the meeting that had originally been on the Wednesday but I managed to change to the Thursday. We would all talk about it and some staff would say they couldn't go home and others would say whatever they had done it wasn't that bad and doesn't warrant them not going home. It was usually taken off them for something like they had absconded and stolen a car where they were being a risk to themselves and others. If they had been shoplifting then that wouldn't merit it. Ultimately we would discuss it but it was the boss's decision on whether they got home or not.
109. Usually if something happened in the class their social worker would be phoned to come. They would take them away, have a word with them and they would then be brought back.
110. Once and once only did I witness any corporal punishment. Somebody had been out in the minibus and this kid had been in the front seat. For some reason as he got out he took the handbrake off and the minibus had rolled down a slight slope. It didn't come to any harm. It was the weekend and MJL [REDACTED] was the person in charge and he decided it was a belting offence.
111. I had the discomfort of having to witness the boy getting two or three wallops on the backside with the belt. This was recorded in a book that I had to countersign to say what had happened and that I had witnessed the boy getting the two or three of the belt on his backside and that he was fully clothed. I don't know what the book was, I had never seen it before and I never saw it again.
112. That was the only time I saw or heard about corporal punishment.
113. I was not aware of there being a policy or code of conduct for discipline.
114. I never disciplined any children physically. The only form of discipline I used was that usually at the end of a period we would ease off and play a game or something. If they hadn't been working or did something wrong then they wouldn't get the game, they'd have to keep on working.

115. The book I mentioned is the only book I ever saw any punishment getting recorded in. I wasn't aware of a recording system but I would assume there was a record of those being kept in at the weekend because how else would they account for the whereabouts of the kids. Maybe each individual social worker kept a record. Each kid had a key worker who would be one of the social workers usually attached to their cottage.

Restraint

116. The only time restraints got used was if there was a fight going on and you got to them. Sometimes if they had a run in with somebody they would probably arrange a fight and they would go down the field. By the time you got wind of it and saw it you were that far away that you struggled to get there.
117. However if something just kicked off, you got up and took a hold of them and I had to do this once or twice. You just grabbed them. There was no training, it was just a case of stopping them hitting each other until they calmed down. Maybe you would take them away out the way for a while until they calmed down.
118. There was no policy or guidance given about restraint.
119. I never saw anybody being excessive with their use of restraints. If it did happen I never saw anybody doing so.

Concerns about St Joseph's School

120. As far as I know the school was never subject of any concern from within the institution, or by any external body or person, regarding the way children or young people were treated.

121. If there were any concerns or messages that were being passed back to parents I would imagine it was the key worker or social worker that did that.
122. I had some interaction with parents but that would be at review meetings. The only other time was at Christmas. There was always a party and kids would get presents but if the kid wasn't actually there I would get the job of taking the present to their house and I would meet parents then.
123. One time in the eighties, Frank and I arranged an open day for the school, sorted out transport to pick parents up and not one soul turned up. We were a bit miffed and never did it again because we never saw the point.
124. The parents that did turn up for meetings were brought in by external social workers. I suppose a minority were just made to come.

Reporting of complaints / concerns

125. I don't know of a complaints process at the school for a child or somebody on their behalf to make a complaint. It probably went through their key worker.
126. I never received any complaints to me and I wasn't aware of any complaints being received about abuse or mistreatment.
127. If there were any received then I would assume they would be recorded. I'm not trying to whitewash the place. I'm not trying to say it was a fabulous place, I just never came across any of that. I wasn't staying there all the time but even when I was on at the weekends there was nothing.
128. There are stories in the statements like a teacher hitting a 50p piece into a table with the belt. Even with a sledgehammer you be hard pushed to do that. None of us had belts anyway. Some of the things I read just didn't equate.

Trusted adult / confidante

129. The children would chose who they spoke to. Sometimes it would be teaching staff, sometimes the social work staff but often it was the housemothers as they were a real mother figure. The housemother would probably then take it to a social worker from the school.
130. I can't remember anybody speaking to me. I think the assumption was that it would be the key worker they would go to.

Abuse

131. During my time at the school they never had a written or verbal definition of abuse that I know of.
132. In my time at the school I never saw any behaviour that I considered to be abuse.
133. The only thing that was anywhere near it was a member of teaching staff had an altercation with a boy. We employed somebody called Gloria Monaghan. She came from south Ayrshire and said she had worked at a munitions or firearms factory that had been blown up which may have explained some of her behaviour. She was tiny as well. Her and a kid called [REDACTED] did not get on. I remember once all hell broke loose and I saw them in the corridor going past my classroom and there were arms and legs everywhere. I have no idea where they went or how it was resolved or what it was about. It was just one of these bizarre things that you couldn't believe what you were seeing as it went passed your door.
134. No child ever reported abuse to me.
135. I would have hoped that if any child was being abused it would have come to light. I don't know if anybody was being abused but had I heard of something without doubt I

would have done something about it. If I hadn't had any joy internally I would have taken it externally to Lothian Region social work department.

136. We used to have a camp at Cardrona outside Peebles and I went down to check everything was okay. There was nobody there so I went into Peebles to see if I could see anybody and I saw the school transit with boys in it outside a pub. I stopped and asked the boys where the member of staff was and they said he was in the pub. I went in and he was having a pint. I asked him what the hell he was doing in there when he had boys outside in a minibus and told him to get moving.
137. I went back to the school, reported it and then I got a hard time from the boys because he put it about I was trying to get the camp stopped. I wasn't I was just objecting to the fact he had left boys in the minibus outside the pub whilst he went for a pint.
138. The member of staff was ^{LVI} [REDACTED]. He was the boiler man at the school. He was at the camp as an extra body to help the teacher who was in charge but he had another group of the boys fishing on the River Tweed. That wasn't abuse I didn't see that as abuse more neglect.
139. Abuse could have gone on in the school because it was a big place and if somebody was keen to do that sort of thing there was plenty places they could go and do it.

Child protection arrangements

140. As far as I can remember there was no guidance or instruction given to staff on how children in their care should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them whether that was by staff, other adults or fellow pupils.
141. There was nothing like there is nowadays and even when the social work came in and took us over you would have thought they would have done something but there was nothing.

142. There was no guidance or instruction on how to deal with any reports of abuse that I remember.

External monitoring

143. I don't remember any external monitoring by inspectors or other officials at St Joseph's. Again nowadays there are local authority inspections but there was nothing like that then.

144. Up until the social work took over we were totally independent and as far as I could see nobody really cared about us. We seemed to be out on a limb as I suppose the rest of the List D schools were.

145. You would have thought when they took over in the late eighties they would have done training around all these things. Maybe they spoke to the head and made suggestions but nobody came near us in the units or the classrooms as far as I am aware.

146. The only record keeping I can remember at St Joseph's was the class registers and children's panel reports that I would put into the key social worker.

147. I don't remember there being any sort of report card for the children that you would get at other schools.

148. Looking back now it was kind of lazy and things could have been done better. We did a lot of good stuff with the kids which was never recorded but we should've done. It would have been so much better.

149. Even if all these things had been written down because when they closed in about 1996 or whenever it was who knows where any paperwork went after. They may have gone to East Lothian Council because the school was situated in their area.

150. I do remember somebody had been rummaging and found a ledger from the early part of the twentieth century, detailing kids from the time it was an industrial school. I gave it to Mrs [REDACTED] because she had been there a long time so there must have been some sort of records. Social work must have taken them when they closed.

Investigations / reports of abuse / civil claims

151. I never had any involvement where I was involved in conducting any investigations, the handling of any reports or civil claims into abuse at the school.

Police investigation / criminal proceedings

152. I gave a statement to a defence lawyer in the police investigation into Brother Ben about seven or eight years ago. I was annoyed at that. The lawyer came and said that the complaint was that Brother Ben had been torturing kids by electrocuting them. I told him that was rubbish and that I had done 'the tickler.' He asked me to go to court and say that and I should've had realised when it was the High Court not the Sheriff Court that it was more serious. It wasn't until I got to the witness room and there was five or six ex-pupils there who were there on his behalf and they were talking about torture, kicking folk and sexual abuse and I was wondering what that was all about.
153. I went into the witness box and I was hammered by the prosecution saying I must have known about Brother Ben. I was only there to say that it wasn't a torture. I had no idea about the rest of it.
154. I felt I was there on false pretences. The defence lawyer got me there about the torture and I had no idea that all this was going to be spoken about.
155. The men that were in the witness room had been boys in his unit and they were adamant these things had not happened and were really angry about the others who said it had.

Convicted abusers

156. Brother Ben is the only person I know of that has been convicted of any offences relating to the abuse of children at St Joseph's school. Up until then I only ever knew him as Brother Ben. I had no idea that his name was Michael Murphy until the trial.
157. He was maybe about ten or fifteen years older than me. He was there when I arrived. I think he left St Joseph's before me.
158. His role at the school was a social worker in Ogilvie Unit. Some of the kids have said he lived in the unit but I thought he lived in the main building with the other Brothers. He was never in charge of Benildus Unit when I was there.
159. He seemed to be popular because of the electronics club he had. I went along to that once when I started as the boys obviously spotted me as an idiot who never knew anything about it and asked me to go along.
160. I would describe 'the tickler' as two metal bars with wires and you held them. Brother Ben would wind up this thing. It wasn't attached to the mains but looked like one of the old style telephones. Anyway when he wound it up or got the boys to wind it up you would get the vibration through you. There was no pain involved and that was it. If you ever touched the Van De Graff Generator, that powered static electricity at school that was worse than 'the tickler.' 'The tickler' was the only name I knew it as.
161. Brother Ben was always pleasant enough on the times I had contact with him. He never said very much and always seemed quite a shy person.
162. Other than going to that evening club that once, I never really had any personal dealings with Brother Ben. Occasionally if one of my boys was at a panel an external social worker would come in and Brother Ben might be at the same meeting.
163. He used to have record decks and stuff and I had the idea for a school disco. We got his two record decks and his record collection and used it to run quite a few disco's.

One of the social worker's dad worked in a school in Edinburgh and for some obscure reason he thought it would be a good idea to get some girls from St Thomas's and bus them in. I couldn't believe that these girls would come to St Joe's for a disco. Brother Ben was not involved in the running of the disco, it was purely his equipment.

164. I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of Brother Ben abusing children.
165. Whilst I was at the school and during my dealings with Brother Ben I had no concerns about him and I was never made aware of any concerns about him. Obviously something was going on though, but as he was in a separate unit, I had no dealings with him really.
166. I have never heard of him being called Brother Bernard but I have heard the boys talk about Bootsie.

Alleged Abusers

GFJ

167. I know GFJ I started in August 1978 and I think he started not long after me in 1979. He taught Modern Studies and History. I had known GFJ before he came to the school because I had been on something with him when I worked at Prestonpans primary.
168. He was fine and he did an awful lot of the outdoor stuff. He was still there when I was head of education so I had oversight of him and I would say I knew him reasonably well. He was the one who had the camp with the kids down in Cardrona, I stayed down there overnight a few times and he was great with the boys. He did loads of outdoor stuff with them, gorge walking and lots of other things they enjoyed.

169. I never saw him disciplining the children as I wasn't with him when he was doing the outdoor stuff or in the classroom.

170. I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

MJK

171. MJK was the metalwork teacher. He had been there a long time and I think he retired maybe about three years after I started. He was a lot older than me and I think he is dead now.

172. I didn't really know him at all, I never saw him with the boys so I don't know how he was with them and never saw him discipline them.

173. I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

LVH

174. I know LVH He was a social worker in the Sinclair Cottage. I think he was there before I started. His wife was the school secretary and I think he was still there when I left.

175. I didn't really know him well but I didn't get on with him. I fell out with him because Sinclair and Benildus Units had been swapped when we came back after the summer and it was him that wanted them swapped. It annoyed the hell out of me and I thought it was really underhand. Nobody told us and I turned up expecting to go back to the same unit but he had changed them.

176. I think he lived in the house attached to the Benildus unit but he wanted to be attached to the one he worked in, so got them changed. I thought it was sleekit. If he had said before that we going to do this then fair enough but when I came back and found it was done, I know it was stupid but I took the hump.

177. Anytime I saw him with kids he seemed quite good with them. I never saw him disciplining them.

178. I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

LVI

179. LVI was the nephew of LVH. Again I had seen him before and knew him to look at because when I was at Prestonpans primary, we used to go to the pool at Port Seton and he was there.

180. He joined St Joseph's maybe in about 1979 when the boiler man HLU retired and he came and took over that role. He left before me and I think he later died of alcohol poisoning or liver disease.

181. When he joined though he was mister keep fit and he used to have a bit of banter with the kids. He was actually quite good with them. He was quite mechanical and he made a kit car which he got the kids to help him with. Down the very bottom of the fields in the grounds he made a go-kart circuit. He made go karts and got them to help make a couple of them as well.

182. I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

Brother MJG

183. Brother MJG was SNR when I went there. He was about twenty or twenty five years older than me.

184. I didn't know him that well but he was a very nice man and always very approachable. He had a lot of time for the boys and was really nice to them.

185. I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

Brother **MBU**

186. He was **SNR** and **SNR** Brother **MJG**. I think he was **SNR** during the social work takeover and then the transition because after social work took over the Brothers withdrew.

187. I would say he was about fifteen years older than me. I didn't know him that well but he was seriously a nice bloke who had a lot of time for the boys and the rest of the staff. He was very approachable and if you were thinking about what a Brother should be then to my mind he was it.

188. I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

LUZ

189. I know **LUZ** well. He was a social worker who came to St Joseph's about two years after me so probably late 1979. I don't think he was long out of university so was probably about mid-twenties when he started.

190. He was really good with the boys. He was a keen footballer and it was his dad who got the girls from St Thomas's. He came down to Formby two or three times. He and I could both drive the big coach back then as long as it wasn't for public hire and we would take shots each of driving. I would say I knew him fairly well but not socially.

191. I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

Mr IAX

192. I knew IAX He had an American accent. I didn't have much to do with him and didn't know him very well. He was a social worker but I'm not sure what unit he was attached to. I think he came to St Joseph's in about 1983, 84 or 85 and was there for three or four years. I'm not sure what he had done before but I don't think it was social work. He wasn't much older than me and was probably in his mid-thirties when he arrived.

193. I never really saw him with the boys, I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

IAZ

194. I have never heard of IAZ

LRM

195. I have heard of him but I have no idea if he was ever at the school. I actually met him once in his house when I got him to bless a present of a gold cross for my godson for his first communion. I did it through the cardinal's office though and it was not connected to St Joseph's.

Mr MJL

196. I knew MJL he was the head of social work and the one that I had to witness giving the boy the belt. I never heard of him being referred to as MJL or MJL He was there before me and he was gone before I left, probably about 1989 or 1990.

197. He lost the plot a wee bit. His daughter had gone down to join the Met police and she ended up getting killed by a car. He was a broken man. He went downhill, his marriage split up and he left. He died a while back. Again I didn't know him very well, it was only through work, I never saw him out with St Joseph's.

198. He was about ten years older than me. He was always very good with the boys and the parents and used to have a lot of banter with them.

199. Apart from the belting incident I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

MHB

200. MHB was ex-police and he was a social worker in Benildus whose wife was the housemother. He wasn't a housemaster because we never had them, just housemothers. He was a good bit older than me, in his fifties and was there when I started. He retired four or five years after then had a heart attack and died.

201. He was at two of the berry camps that I was at but I only knew him through work. He was quite strict but was good with the boys.

202. I never saw him disciplining the boys and I never saw or heard, or heard of him abusing children.

Brother MGX

203. There was the but there was no such person as Brother MGX

Brother MGZ

204. I don't know of Brother MGZ

MHD

205. I don't know MHD The only woodwork teacher I know of was GVX

Specific allegations that have been made to the Inquiry

GFO

206. GFO has given a statement to the Inquiry and has said in his statement "Mr MHC who was one of the teachers and known as MHC used to throw blackboard dusters at you and if they hit you it was very painful and also dangerous. He had two dusters of different sizes and called them 'Big Eck' and 'Wee Eck.' Wee Eck you could swat away but not Big Eck. He could have taken someone's eye out or fractured someone's skull.
207. Mr MHC would also get you to smell the coffee. He had a bottle that he would take the lid off and make you smell the coffee. Instead of coffee there was some sort of ammonia so that when you smelt it your eyes felt like they were popping out your head. You could only do it once until you caught on. I used to warn the new boys about it but nobody warned me."
208. I don't remember anything very much about GFO other than remembering the name. I remember all four names on the statements but not them
209. To my knowledge I never sanctioned or punished him and I never abused him.
210. I had two dusters, named after 'Oor Wullie.' 'Fat Boab' and 'Wee Eck.' It was a piece of nonsense. It was one of these things that because we only had four or five kids in the class at anyone time we had plenty space.
211. I used to chuck them at the desk and they would bounce off the desk. If you were a pupil I'd be firing it at the desk but not at them. Half the time they would be firing it back. It wasn't a punishment or a vicious thing it was just a piece of nonsense. Back in the eighties I think it was fairly common in secondaries that folk would fire dusters.

212. It wasn't done in a bad way, you had a joke about it was it 'Fat Boab' or 'Wee Eck' and the boys would by and large laugh. There was nothing malicious in any way, absolutely not. I did not hit anybody, take anybody's eye out, hit them on the head or aim at them. I never did that, for the obvious reason that you could take somebody's eye out.
213. I don't think the passage of time has affected my recollection of what is alleged and I can't explain why these things are being said.
214. If a child was treated in the way described in that I had been hitting them with the dusters it probably was abuse. I don't know, maybe not. As I said you could go through most secondary school teachers at that point and they did the same thing.
215. It was always aimed to miss. It was never aimed at the kids ever and it never hit them.

Gary McQueen

216. Gary McQueen has given a statement to the Inquiry and has said in his statement "Mr MHC was famous for throwing dusters at anyone who was mucking about which would hit you on the head. He also had what was called MHC's toffee which you would get if you were maybe late for a class or if you hadn't join a line quick enough. Everyone including all the Brothers knew about it."
217. "MHC's toffee was a liquid which I believe was ammonia in a big glass bottle that had two handles and a cork. He would get the bottle out in front of the class and you had to come forward, shut one of your nostrils with a finger and take a deep breath of fumes with the other and then you had to do the other nostril."
218. "As soon as you breathed those fumes and everything started burning and your head would feel like it burst. You would get a big chemical rush and your whole head would feel like it was full of pins and needles. I don't know if there were any after effects but you had to and lie down for five or ten minutes and you couldn't have gone back to class. Obviously you could kid on that you were inhaling the fumes but Mr MHC would know by your reaction if you had done it properly or not. If you weren't flat out

on the floor with your eyes streaming you obviously hadn't done it properly and you'd have to do it again."

219. I have been trying to remember that one. When I started as a science teacher I inherited a cupboard full of chemicals. Eventually health and safety had to come and take them away as there was ether and chloroform and I probably could have killed half of Tranent and Prestonpans with what was in there. I never used it.
220. I think we had been talking about something like what happens when you faint and you get smelling salts. Then I'd be saying that they are ammonia based. Then I'd go into the cupboard, then I would tell the boys this is what it is that is in the smelling salts. They would have a shot and I would say "look, do not breathe it, do not take big sniffs, take a wee sniff." I think most of the boys in the school had a shot over that week and that was it.
221. It wasn't a torture, it wasn't a disciplinary thing of you've been bad, come and sniff the ammonium. It was a case of this is ammonia and this is what it is used for and if you want to sniff it, sniff it. If you don't, don't. I sniffed it before they did, to show them what to do and the level of sniffing that they should do.
222. I don't remember anything about Gary other than remembering the name.
223. I never punished or sanctioned Gary McQueen that I remember and certainly not by making him sniff ammonia, no. I never abused him.
224. My response to these allegations are that is not what happened.
225. I don't know if the passage of time has affected my recollection of what is being alleged because I know what I did. I have spent the last couple of weeks going over and over thinking could I have been, and no I am happy with what I did at the time. It wasn't abuse, it wasn't anything nasty or bad. The dusters, yes I threw them but not at kids, it was in a general direction and the ammonia was "Do you want a sniff?" They used

to do things like sniff snuff for a while as well, so they were into doing that kind of stuff. I don't know why but snuff was a thing.

226. It wasn't a punishment or a bad thing, it was like here this is ammonia and this is what it does and have a sniff. If somebody was daft enough to have a big sniff then that was up to them. It was not done as a come here boy and they were not compelled to do it. they were given the choice.
227. These things that are being alleged didn't happen and I cannot explain why these things are being said. The boys have obviously remembered ammonia or something and then exaggerated the whole thing but that was not done in anyway.
228. Would that be abuse if these allegations were true, I don't know. If it was a punishment then yes it would be but if it is an experiment in the classroom then no. Nobody was ever made to do it. It's the same as the Van De Graff generator, if you are made to touch that then that is abuse but then if you are daft enough to touch it when you are told you will get a shock then no it isn't.

HFN

229. HFN has given a statement to the Inquiry and has mentioned in his statement *"There was a teacher there called MHC we called him MHC for short. He was an outside teacher that came in every day to teach English. Nobody like him.*
230. MHC had two blackboard dusters that he had taken the pads off. He had named them 'Wee Eck' and 'Big Bob' and he would throw them at your head in class if you weren't doing your work. I got a duster thrown at me a lot of times. If you're head wasn't down in your book, he'd throw one at you. He would throw it even if you lifted your head for a second to think, so you would keep your head down even if you weren't working.
231. MHC would also sneak up behind you and clout you on the back of the head if he thought you were day-dreaming or anything. He had a clear glass jar with clear liquid

in it. When you were new he would take the cork of it and ask you to smell it. It was pure ammonia and it would burn your nose. He done that to every new person that came into his class. MHC was in his thirties I think.

232. *A boy called KCS stood up to MHC once and told him he wasn't going to put up with him throwing things. He told MHC that it was against the law and that he was going to report him to the headmaster. MHC told him to go ahead so KCS walked out. The next thing we heard was a commotion outside the classroom and someone shouting 'You back stabbing bastard.' KCS told us later that MHC had followed him out, shoved him from behind into the wall and hit him, and then shouted these words. Mr Rochford had come down to see what was going on and, MHC told him that KCS had hit him. I don't believe that KCS hit him, but I didn't see what happened."*
233. I don't remember the boy KCS I don't remember sanctioning or punishing him and I never abused him.
234. My response to these allegations is the same as before.
235. I've never heard of KCS I don't remember that incident or anything similar to it that HFN is talking about.
236. The passage of time has not affected my recollection of what is being alleged.
237. I cannot explain why these allegations are being made.
238. It is the same answer as previously that if these things that are being alleged were being done deliberately then yes I would class that as abuse. If the incident with KCS had happened then yes that would be abuse but it never happened.

239. MGW [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry and has mentioned in his statement *"In St Joseph's, most of the kids got beaten by the Brothers because of their behaviour. There was a lot of bad behaviour with the staff, staff getting attacked. There was a lot of physical violence from the staff. I was only assaulted by MHB [REDACTED] and Mr MHC [REDACTED]. I would see other kids being hit by the staff across the yard. The kids would threaten to stab the staff if they hit the kid again.*
240. *There was a band called The UK Subs, they were a punk band. They wore black armbands. I pretended to be a fan and bought an armband. I put a swastika badge on it and wore it to Mr MHC [REDACTED] class, he taught a bit of everything. Mr MHC [REDACTED] was Polish. I didn't realise at the time what the swastika meant to him. It was only when I was older that I thought, how could I have done that. Mr MHC [REDACTED] asked me politely to take the armband off. I escalated things by doing the Nazi salute. Mr MHC [REDACTED] went raj, he went crazy. Mr MHC [REDACTED] ripped the armband off and dragged me out of the classroom and down to the social work corridor. I would say I deserved that."*
241. I remember his name and think he was the boy I mentioned before that had the broken arm but that's it.
242. I never sanctioned or punished him and never abused him.
243. Pupils threatening staff in the yard, that never happened. It just wasn't happening. That's not the St Joseph's I remember and knew. That is a completely different picture of St Joseph's to what I experienced.
244. I'd like to point out that most of the boys did like me. I got on well with the boys. I am kind of offended by him saying that nobody liked me because that wasn't the case. I always got on well with the kids. I always tried to do my best for them and it is upsetting when an allegation comes out like that.

245. I don't think the passage of time has affected my recollection of these allegations because I don't remember that incident at all. I hardly remember MGW at all to be honest.
246. I cannot explain why these allegations are being made.
247. Whether the description of what happened in the incident involving the armband is abuse or not, I would say probably not.
248. Things like chucking dusters, you don't think that years in the future somebody is going to see it differently from what it actually was. Same with the ammonia.
249. I cannot remember any pupil getting hit in any way even accidentally by a duster that I threw. If it had been a class of thirty pupils there is a fair chance it would ricochet and hit somebody behind. In my class all the boys were in a row so you knew that if bounced off the desk it wasn't going to hit anybody. As I said quite often it was retrieved and fired back. It was just a piece of nonsense and was just one of the things we did. I don't know how to explain it. I didn't take the felt bits off them and I had the names on them in felt tip pen. It was just a jokey sort of thing.
250. I have never been subject to any other complaint about the abuse of children and I have never been convicted of any criminal offence.
251. I have worked with some difficult kids, even after St Joseph's, some real challenging ones and had no complaints. It's the way I work. People in my last school couldn't believe that I could be so calm. It's just the way I work. Why get excited and they were always amazed at how laid back I was.
252. I have handed over some photographs of ex boys who are now men and who I have since met socially to reminisce about St Joseph's. They have stated quite clearly what a good influence St Joseph's was on them and transformed their lives. They have said without St Joseph's influence they would not have become the people they are today.

253. There used to be a St Joseph's Facebook site that was run by a former pupil of St Joseph's called [REDACTED] Unfortunately he died and the site is no longer there. The site had a lot of positive stories on it from former pupils.

Leaving St Joseph's School

254. Whilst I was at St Joseph's my father retired from his business, maybe about 1986 and I ran the business and at the same time I was still teaching. I thought I could do both and I did for a while. I had a mental break down and I split up with my wife. It got too much so I left to concentrate on the business.
255. I later went back to teaching and got jobs working with similar kids that had been in St Joseph's at West Lothian, Guernsey and then teaching maths at a school in Livingston. I later went into pupil support roles in Kirkcaldy, then Dunfermline and was there until I retired in May this year.
256. I loved teaching and I have never hit kids. I have never slapped heads or kicked backsides.
257. I don't think I got a reference from St Joseph's because I knew the head at the first school I went back to and I think St Joseph's had actually shut by the time I went back to teaching in 1997 so there would be nobody there to give me a reference.


Helping the Inquiry

258. The only explanation that I can give if abuse was happening at St Joseph's that I was not aware of is that it could have been happening without me knowing about it. It was a big campus, stuff could have been going on where I had no idea where it was.
259. Unless I had picked up from kids or unless I heard staff saying I got so and so round the back of the wherever I wouldn't have known that anything was happening.

260. Other than that, as I said Brother Ben was a complete mystery to me. The accusations against him were multiple and that just passed me by. I had no idea that was going on, if it was going on, I just don't know.
261. If the experience of abuse of children who were at St Joseph's has had a lasting affect and impact on them then I can only explain that this is because the abuse might have happened to them. That is all I can say about it. If there was abuse that I didn't know about it and it did happen to them then I can see how it would impact.
262. The lessons that could be learned to help protect children in places like St Joseph's in the future is better training, better supervision of staff, better record keeping and a robust complaints procedure.
263. Very much a lesson is that there is record keeping of what happens, how you deal with the kids and what you are doing in the classroom. The record keeping should've been a damn sight better than it was.
264. Nowadays most of the schools are local authority so there will be access to the training and that was one thing we were sadly lacking in. Even your own subject you couldn't keep abreast of what was happening.
265. Vetting of staff needs to be better because I'm pretty sure they took staff that hadn't been and shouldn't have been there.

Other information

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

Signed..... 

Dated..... 20/11/2023