

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Sarah GUY

1. My name is Sarah Guy. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. In 1988, I graduated from the University of St Andrews in History and International Relations, MA. In 1990 I obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from the University of Cambridge.
3. Thereafter, I taught English as a Foreign Language and was a boarding house tutor at Sibford School, Banbury.
4. From 1990 to 1994 I was employed at Rickmansworth School, Hertfordshire. From 1995 to 2000 I was employed at Keil School, Dumbarton and from 2000 to the present date I have been employed at Lomond School, Helensburgh.

Employment with Keil School

5. I was a teacher of history at Keil School from 1995 to 2000 and in 1996 I became the Assistant boarding housemistress at Mackinnon House. I held that post until 2000. I was interviewed for the teaching post by John Cummings and Tom Smith. I produced my Curriculum Vitae, my references and my General Teaching Council for Scotland registration. From recollection I was asked if I would take on the boarding house role as I had experience in boarding.

6. My line manager for my teaching role was Mr Tom Smith. My line manager in Mackinnon House from 1996-1998 was Mr OZC and from 1998-2000 Mr Bill Bain. Appraisal and monitoring of my performance mainly took the form of liaising over rotas, duties and operational issues as well as pupil welfare and academic progress. I have no recollection of having formal training for these roles.

Policy and Strategic Planning

7. I did not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, policy in relation to the care of children. I did not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, strategic planning in relation to the school. During my time at Keil School the pupil roll was falling, so much of the planning was to do with marketing and trying increase the roll. I was not at any time involved in the day to day running of the school.

Staff management, recruitment and supervision at Keil School

8. I did not manage any staff and I was not involved in the training or personal development of staff.
9. I was not involved in the recruitment of staff at the school and have no knowledge of recruitment policy and practices. I don't know whether referees were spoken to.
10. I was not involved in staff supervision, staff appraisal or staff evaluation. All staff had an annual review of their role and effectiveness with the School Leadership Team. The annual review focussed mainly on academic results.

Living arrangements

11. During my first year of employment at Keil I lived off site in Drymen. For the next four years I lived in Carn Mhor. Carn Mhor was a detached house approximately 100 meters away from the boarding house.

12. The housemaster had a flat within Mackinnon House. There were various other staff residences in the boarding houses and in other accommodation on the grounds. Some staff lived off site.
13. The housemaster, myself, cleaners and maintenance staff had access to the children's residential areas.

Culture within Keil School

14. My personal experience was that Keil was an unpretentious, relaxed and happy place to work in with a commitment to providing pupils with an all-round education. To my knowledge, the practise of fagging did not exist.

Discipline and punishment

15. I cannot recall any formal policy in relation to discipline and punishment. Pupils could be disciplined and punished by staff and prefects. My perception was that the traditional Keil punishment of Natural History was well established. Natural History was known as NH and consisted of working in the grounds. As far as I can recall NH could be given out both by staff and prefects but I may be wrong. NH was carried out on Saturday afternoon.
16. Discipline was not the responsibility of the senior pupils although there were certain things they could hand out a sanction for. For example, a sanction could be given for being late for prep. Sanctions were along the lines of withdrawing permission to go out after prep or early lights out. As far as I can recall the giving of a sanction would be reported to myself or the housemaster and this would have enabled us to intervene if the sanction was unreasonable. My memory is vague on this.

Concerns about Keil School

17. The school was not, to my knowledge, ever the subject of concern, either in school or to any external body or agency, or to any other person, because of the way in which children and young people in the school were treated.
18. I do not know whether there was a complaints or reporting process in place, should any child, or another person on their behalf, wish to make a complaint or report a concern.

Trusted adult

19. I believe that many of the pupils sought the school matron out if they had worries or concerns. The matron's name was Evelyn MacLean. She is now deceased. She lived in a flat in School House and was much loved by staff and pupils alike. However, I don't know whether children raised concerns in this way.

Child protection arrangements

20. I do not recall the school having a definition of abuse that it applied, in relation to the treatment of children at the school.
21. There was no formal guidance that I recall, on how children at the school should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them. I do not recall any formal guidance on how to handle, and respond to, reports of any such behaviour.
22. I'm unsure how much autonomy and discretion was given to staff in relation to child protection arrangements. I'm not sure what child protection arrangements were in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment, or inappropriate conduct by staff, or other adults, towards children at the school.

External monitoring and record-keeping

- 23. I was not aware of inspectors or other officials visiting the school.
- 24. I was not responsible for any record keeping. Any records would have been with the housemaster and they would have been paper records, I imagine.

Investigations into abuse, reports of abuse and civil claims

- 25. I was never involved in any investigation on behalf of the school into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of children at the school or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards children.
- 26. I was never involved in the handling of reports of historical abuse to, or civil claims made against, the school by former pupils.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

- 27. I am aware of the successful prosecution of my former colleague William Bain. The school was no longer in existence when the police investigation took place and so I am unable to comment on the school's response.
- 28. I was interviewed by the police during the investigation into William Bain at my current school. It was a lengthy interview but I'm not sure if I gave a formal statement. I also provided screen shots of Facebook comments made in a Keil School Old Boy's thread which followed the publication of the allegations.
- 29. I have never given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school.

Convicted abusers

William Bain


30. I worked alongside Bill Bain at Mackinnon House from 1998-2000. Bill appeared to be a highly committed and popular teacher. He was always available to the boys in the house. Bill could often be seen playing rugby with them on the pitches after prep and also organised walking and outdoor trips. I had no concerns of impropriety. I felt that I had a good relationship with the boys in my care and assumed that they felt able to talk to me and confide in me.
31. Any concerns I had about Bill was that he was so accessible to the boys he could make himself vulnerable to accusations. I never articulated this though. It wasn't so major that it was something that I dwelt on. Bill did spend time with pupils when he was the only member of staff. He appeared very committed to his job and willingly gave of his time. The school seemed to be his life and he rarely, if ever, took time off to pursue his own interests as far as I could see.
32. As a young teacher, I think I may have felt that to even suggest he was making himself vulnerable would be to imply that there was something untoward going on, which never occurred to me was happening. Now, as a senior teacher with a lot more training and experience, I would suggest that, for his own protection, he should ensure he had other members of staff with him.
33. Had I had concerns about the welfare of the boys in the house I would have spoken to someone, probably Tom Smith. However, I did not have concerns. No boy ever spoke to me or implied that he was being abused. If any of the boys in my care during this time were abused by Bill I am truly sorry.

Helping the Inquiry

34. Whilst I am not involved with the boarding provision in my current school, I am aware that there have already been significant improvements in the safeguarding of pupils in

residential establishments. Child Protection policies and training are at the forefront of everything we do now.

35. It is important that pupils are always kept aware of the definition of abuse and the forms abuse can take. It is also important that children feel they are respected and able to access a trusted adult with the confidence that their disclosures are acted upon.
36. 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.....17 November 2020.....