

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Thomas SMITH

1. My name is Thomas Stewart Smith. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1944. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I obtained a BSc (Hons) in 1966, a Dip Ed Teaching Certificate in 1967 and an MEd in 1968.
3. I was an assistant teacher at Duncanrig Secondary School, East Kilbride from 1968 to 1973. From 1973 to 1978, I was the principal teacher of chemistry at Currie High School. From 1978 to 1980/81, I was the assistant rector at Morgan Academy, Dundee and from 1980/81 until 1986, I was the depute rector at the school. I was the head teacher at Arbroath High School from 1986 to 1989. From 1989 to 1999, I was the depute head at Keil School and from 1999 to 2000, I was the head teacher of Keil.

Employment with Keil School, Dumbarton

4. I was appointed as the depute head of Keil through completion of an application form and provision of my degree certificates and GTC registration. I also visited the school and was interviewed by the head teacher, the director of studies and the principal teacher of chemistry. References were taken up by the school.

5. As depute head, I had involvement in the day-to-day administration, timetable construction, exam arrangements, disciplinary issues and organising school events from weekly assembly to Speech Day. I also taught science/chemistry to a small number of classes. I was also the housemaster of a boys' boarding house and was responsible for the daily running of the house, assisted by an assistant housemaster and later by a house mother.
6. There were four boarding houses in Keil – Islay Kerr and Mackinnon for senior boys, School House for girls and Mason for junior boys, although this house later became a day house and the boys became part of the senior houses. I was housemaster in Islay Kerr House. William Bain was my assistant there from 1989 until he became the housemaster in Mackinnon House in 1998.
7. From 1999 to 2000, I was the head teacher in overall charge of the school but the school was facing a financial crisis and the concerns were principally trying to help Keil survive with cost cutting, staff appointments and promotional publicity.
8. As depute head, only the head teacher was more senior. We met every day. As a classroom teacher, I would take instructions from the principal teacher of science/chemistry. As head teacher, I was responsible to the Chair of the Governors/Trust.
9. No specific training was provided by the school for my different positions but induction included time with the head teacher and meeting a number of other staff and pupils. I also spent some time with my housemaster predecessor to learn of his processes and procedures.

Policy

10. I am asked if I had involvement in, or responsibility for, policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of children. As a housemaster, I and all the other housemasters met weekly with the head teacher to discuss individual pupils and

procedures and to agree changes to school practices and arrangements, particularly for the boarders. Commonly, this was to improve conditions in the houses.

11. In addition, the full staff met every month for a lengthy meeting to discuss the monthly pupil reports. Every child would feature and their academic and social progress would be debated. House staff would note decisions regarding their specific pupils.
12. As depute head, the head teacher involved me in formulating policies, changes, and improvements, including staff appointments and in-service training. I have provided further information regarding policies under the heading 'Abuse'.
13. Improvements included moving evening homework from the school to the boarding houses, facilities were improved in toilets and showers, the menu was adjusted, evening tuck shop was installed and supper facilities were introduced, and leisure facilities were extended in the houses.
14. Without question the school promoted good relationships between staff, pupils and both. This was a central theme to all of our policies. On his return from a Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) conference in the mid-1990s, the head introduced a child protection policy document which led to the appointment of a child protection officer and an independent listener. This introduced concepts and actions that had been rarely considered in the school.
15. From memory, I believe that the designated child protection officer would have been myself or the head teacher, but I cannot be absolutely certain after this length of time. Likewise I am not absolutely certain, but I suspect the listener was the chaplain, Rev Ronald Boyd. I suspect there was no surprise at the introduction of these measures because the issues at the time in Orkney had appeared in the media. As far as I am aware, no-one had considered the need for a written child protection policy before, although the welfare of children was always central to our ethos.

16. The school also had excellent relationships with the local police who visited regularly and provided good security advice. The school was sited in a difficult area.
17. Over the years, the curriculum was extended to include IT, German, and social and moral education. This allowed even a small school to provide a full curriculum.

Strategic planning

18. As depute head, the head teacher and I would regularly look to the future. We were like-minded over staff qualifications, both for teaching positions and for house staff, the requirements of the modern curriculum and the welfare of the children. Without doubt from 1989, Keil quite quickly became a softer, kinder, more professional environment than in the past and pupil happiness and academic success were main priorities. These objectives were well met in my opinion, which was shared by HMI.
19. When I arrived in Islay Kerr in 1989, I had had no previous experience of boarding. I considered the furnishings and décor in Islay Kerr House to be Spartan, with hospital style metal beds, and poor curtains and flooring. Likewise I found the style of housemastering strict and almost military, with what I felt was insufficient oversight of chiefs. I therefore tried to change the situation to be more akin to my own home and family and I moved the Islay Kerr housemastering style to something more familial.
20. In my time, boarding house furniture was upgraded to give each pupil a space of his own in a dorm, with new carpeting. More in-house leisure facilities were introduced and a tuck shop.
21. Pupils were no longer required to 'stand by their beds' when staff entered. While still giving the house chiefs a lot of responsibility, I kept a close eye on their work. I was regularly in the house, chatting to pupils. My door was always open for boys to come to talk to me, even when I was not on duty. House mothers were introduced to ensure a kinder environment, particularly for younger pupils. Whilst discipline was

important I was very conscious that Islay Kerr was the boys' home in term time, and I believe the atmosphere in the house was very relaxed.

22. Other wider changes were occurring at the same time. When I arrived, the school had an all-male staff apart from one part-time art teacher, and matron. Over time, staff became equally male/female and boarding houses each had a male and female presence, which definitely led to a softer although disciplined approach.
23. Over the 1990s, the school adapted to a changing roll as the numbers of girls and day pupils increased, while there was a fall in boarding boys. This was no longer simply a boys' boarding school. One of the original boarding houses became a day house and latterly included a Primary 7 classroom. These changes inevitably led to the provision of activities for girls and pastoral care for girls. The appointment of a male head of girls' house was completed following full parental consultation and was a most successful move.
24. The school worked extremely hard to provide a secure and caring environment. Generous staff levels were in place and there was always a duty staff member available all day, every day. The school's academic staffing level was approximately 10:1 and class sizes were therefore very small. The boarding houses were staffed every evening and every weekend. In Islay Kerr two to three members of staff shared responsibility for twenty to thirty boys, that ratio becoming more generous as the roll fell. On weekdays each boarding house had one housemaster on duty each evening; at weekends, the school had a duty teacher each day with a housemaster coming on duty each evening. In practice, however, most of the boarding staff would have been around. A good number of staff lived on site and the level of staff commitment was exceptional. The provision of regular activities, sports and weekend outings for pupils was given considerable attention.
25. Senior staff were very visible around the school with visitors, parents and guests and could often enter classrooms unannounced.

Other staff

26. As depute head, I had some direct responsibility for managing staff, such as covering for absent teachers, exam supervision, timetabling and extra-curricular activities. Under the head teacher, I shared responsibility for all staff (excepting non-teaching staff to the extent that they were managed more directly by the bursar). This involved the recruitment and the monitoring and encouragement of all. Staff support was first class.
27. In my own boarding house, I was more directly involved in overseeing the work of the assistant housemaster, William Bain. He was an experienced housemaster and gave the pupils an unbelievable amount of his time.
28. As head teacher in the final year, I had overall responsibility for staff.

Recruitment of staff

29. I was closely involved with all appointments. Applicants invited for interview required to be professionally qualified in the relevant subject(s) and GTC registered, and to have positive references. Contact was always made with referees. When applicants came to visit the school, several members of staff would be involved and senior pupils would be asked to guide the inevitable tour and provide feedback. Boarding house staff appointments involved extra considerations, as some were married, some had children, some were single – and much depended on the quality of the interview and any relevant references. Would this applicant fit into a boarding environment and have good relationships with children? We wished Keil to be as close to a home as possible.
30. Professional references were always taken up and always from present employers if relevant. Character references were also sought, particularly essential from recently

qualified staff coming straight from university/college. It was my practice, and I believe the practice of other heads, to make every effort to speak to referees.

Training of staff

31. I am asked whether I was involved in training and/or personal development of staff. Mainly by example and promoting the school ethos, but I had a closer involvement with probationer teachers who required formal appraisal. Probationer teachers required to have two years of formal appraisal, by head of department and senior management. I would sit in probationer class lessons and report back.
32. On appointment, teachers received with their job offer a reasonably detailed contract and a school handbook entitled 'School Discipline and Routine', which covered rules, routines, punishment, rewards, reporting of problems etc. Professional training days were compulsory when major national changes were introduced to the curriculum or exam structure. Staff were free to attend other training days and conferences and there were internal in-service days. Regular meetings took place – principal teachers, whole staff, ad hoc committees, and boarding staff. In a small school it was possible for staff to have significant input into school matters.

Supervision/staff appraisal/staff evaluation

33. I am asked whether I was involved in supervision of staff and staff appraisal/staff evaluation. I was involved, but secondary to the head who analysed the required staff self-evaluation returns. All staff completed self-evaluation returns for the head teacher but I can't remember the details, although it would have included their own review of the year and their ambitions for their future progression. I would meet with all heads of department to discuss external exam results and timetable arrangements for the next session. These afforded a teacher appraisal to tailor results with future classes.

34. Much appraisal of staff was informal as senior management regularly visited classrooms. In the later 1990s, the head teacher introduced a more formal annual system of staff appraisal, including classroom observation and interview, and all staff benefited from this.

Living arrangements

35. I lived with my family in a wing of a boarding house with an internal connecting door on the upper floor. This door was regularly open when I was home. The pupil rooms were in the main house over two floors. All boarding houses had at least one connecting door. Other house staff lived nearby. In Islay Kerr both the housemaster and assistant housemaster had connecting doors. No-one had access via the connecting doors apart from the house staff living there. They were private homes.
36. My assistant housemaster lived in a self-contained flat on the upper floor of the boarding house, again with an internal connecting door to the house. Latterly, my wife was assistant housemistress and of course lived with me. A number of other staff lived in the other boarding houses, private houses and bungalows all within the school grounds.
37. Staff had access to the pupils' residential areas, although practice and courtesy dictated a prior word with the house staff. All buildings had secure entry which required knowledge of a code. Parents and visitors had to report to the school office or to house staff. Other pupils also had free access to the residential areas, but only to the social rooms, library and fitness room and they were required to note in their own house where they were going.

Culture within Keil

38. My years at Keil were the happiest in my career. The pupils were generally well behaved and hardworking. The atmosphere was extremely friendly, and volunteering

rather than coercion was the norm. The pupils were good to each other, bullying was minimal and a willingness to take part in everything was impressive. The school was not their home but the efforts by staff to provide an environment as close as possible was commendable. The staff commitment was exceptional.

39. Historically, the boys had a major part to play in running the school. But this modified down the years. There was some evidence of minor fagging when I arrived at the boarding house in 1989, but I outlawed it immediately as unacceptable. One example of fagging I remember was of a chief requiring his rugby boots to be cleaned by a younger pupil.
40. During my ten years, the senior pupils were still given significant responsibilities but there was no doubt that house staff ran the boarding houses. Physical punishments were not acceptable, but prefects were allowed to issue copies (a form of lines) but staff should be informed. Most commonly these would follow unacceptable orderly work assigned to a pupil. All boarders were assigned orderly work, which involved daily tasks within the house, for example, making beds, tidying rooms, delivering laundry etc.
41. There was also a unique punishment called a 'long stand'. A long stand was when pupils assembled for assembly or similar events, if they did not quieten down while waiting for staff, the senior chief could order a long stand, which entailed the whole school standing for about five minutes in absolute silence.
42. Chiefs and deputy chiefs were appointed annually by the head, the deputy head and other senior house staff. They were all in years 5 and 6. Each house had a house chief, aided by two deputy chiefs, who each had school and house responsibilities. There was a senior chief, the equivalent of a head pupil, who had a great deal of responsibility for representing the school and helping staff by organising events, visitors' tours, constructing rotas for chiefs' duties etc. Interesting to note that in latter years, the senior chiefs were commonly female.

43. These punishment modifications from the harder line approach available to chiefs in earlier years, did not affect the obvious desire for junior pupils to earn responsibility posts in later years. In the main, pupils looked up to the chiefs and deputies and did as required.

Discipline and punishment

44. Punishment of children was mainly within the remit of staff. For unsatisfactory or missing work, extra exercises or detention were assigned. If work continued to be poor, satisfaction cards were given which had to be signed in all classes and were monitored closely by house staff. For unsatisfactory behaviour, the punishments were loss of privileges or house gating. For more serious misconduct, the school also ran a weekend system of light manual work called Natural History (NH), which could involve leaf sweeping in the garden, picking up litter, classroom organisation etc. Pupils were referred by staff. Detentions and NH were supervised by a chief and duty teacher; NH tasks were assigned by the deputy head. House staff were kept informed. Smoking would lead to NH, drinking to suspension, and drug abuse to expulsion.
45. The behaviour, work rate and conduct expected of pupils was clear to all. Pupil and staff booklets covered some of this but in general staff and pupils were well aware of what was acceptable without it being in print.
46. I am asked how staff and pupils were aware of school policy in relation to discipline and punishment. Pupil, staff, and parental booklets contained information and advice. Pupils met tutors formally almost daily and house staff spent a great deal of time with pupils each and every day. Staff had meals with the pupils. This was almost a family situation and communication was regular. Tutors kept records and reported each term to parents as part of the written report.
47. Senior pupils were given significant responsibilities which was a major strength in Keil. This included waking the house in the morning and supervising the tidying of

beds and rooms and public areas and organising house events. Prefects ensured all pupils attended meals, church and other activities and they were in general respected by younger pupils, most of whom aspired to becoming chiefs.

Punishments were not a regular feature but issuing copies and reporting to the housemaster were available to the chiefs. House staff were occasionally accused by chiefs of never being out of the house so a reasonably tight control was achieved. It was important in Keil School for the chiefs to be given significant responsibilities but regular presence of house staff in the house was essential to ensure that all chiefs were acting responsibly. Even when not on duty, house staff were often around the house. So a firm but fair oversight was applied.

Day-to-day running of the school

48. As the depute head, my main function was to ensure the smooth running of the school. I ensured the timetable ran smoothly and that absent staff were covered. Afternoon activities were also part of the curriculum and pupils were required to sign up for a specified number of these per week. Morning assembly and lunch and teatime were organised, with responsible staff/pupils available. Exam diets, both internal and national, were arranged. Formal reporting of pupils each term was organised as was the monthly 'gradings' meeting of staff to discuss the reports in advance. The NH punishment list was made available to staff. I also had a reduced teaching timetable.
49. I am asked to look back and say whether I can be confident that if any child was being abused or ill-treated, it would have come to light at or around the time it was occurring. Until the accusations of abuse were made, I had never considered any real possibility of this. I was made aware in 2004 of an accusation against OZC OZC at another school but his suicide closed this investigation. In 2015, I noted newspaper reports about the sentencing of KPC for an offence at another school before his time in Keil. In the same year, the police informed me of accusations against William Bain at Keil.

50. During KPC's and OZC's time at Keil, I had no concerns about them at all. Even looking back I can think of no reason for concern. They were both hardworking and popular teachers.
51. I would not have been surprised at some element of bullying, as in most schools, but such instances were not common. The school was so small, the pupils were well known to several members of staff and house staff were available twenty-four hours a day as well as the school doctor, matron, and chaplain.
52. I was confident that I was working in a fine school, with generally well-behaved pupils, with committed staff doing a professional job and I met nothing to dispel those beliefs. Pupils had good relationships with their teachers and our 'family atmosphere' was confirmed by HMI reports.
53. I remain astonished and dismayed that offences were occurring under my nose. House staff were regularly in the houses with the pupils seven days a week, the chiefs would normally have their ears to the ground and pupils shared rooms and facilities in close co-operation. That I did not suspect and that no pupil alerted me or my colleagues is quite distressing and has seriously spoiled my wonderful memories of Keil. The police called it grooming but I remain staggered that nothing came to light or was suspected by me.

Concerns about the school

54. I am asked if the school was ever the subject of concern, in school or to any external body or agency, or any other person, because of the way in which children and young people in the school were treated. I was not aware of concerns raised about the treatment of children by any external body or agency.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

55. Boarders were encouraged to take concerns to the house staff in the first instance. Should that be inappropriate then reporting to the senior staff would be the next step. It is fair to say that pupils would be comfortable to talk with quite a few of the teaching staff and matron was generally considered to be a sympathetic and compassionate ear. I worked closely with the headmaster but I am not aware of any serious concerns having been raised. If there had been any I was unaware of, I don't know what records the headmaster might have kept.
56. Parental complaints were rare and would normally be directed to house staff. In my experience these would always be dealt with timeously. Parental contact with house staff by telephone was common and regular. Parent contact evenings were organised over a Sunday to facilitate parental attendance where possible.
57. Complaints were simply dealt with and any recording would have been minimal. They were generally not of a serious nature and were often relatively trivial so that they were not worthy of a formal record. I received no complaints about ill-treatment apart from minor bullying. However, complaints of any kind were always dealt with. House staff kept notes if they were relevant to the end of term report.

Trusted adult/confidante

58. The school was so small that pupils had good relationships with several staff, not least the house staff whom they saw every day. In addition, matron was a full-time member of staff and was clearly valued by pupils. She was approachable, friendly, and discreet. The school chaplain, Rev Ronald Boyd, was a regular visitor and also very approachable. I have spoken to him since the school closed. He was clearly disappointed that abuse issues had never been raised with him. The school doctor offered surgery twice a week. He had two children in the school and he was good with children.

59. Boarders were also free to go home at the weekends or to visit the home of friends or relatives. These opportunities certainly offered an alternative contact (not least the parents) to confide in should the young person have major concerns.
60. Over time the school became more democratic and child centred and gave more attention to replicating a home environment. I believed latterly that the majority of staff were very approachable and very caring.
61. Some bullying was reported and dealt with but accusations of abuse never materialised. Allegations of bullying were minor, and always boy against boy but it is so difficult to come up with examples after such a long time – perhaps horseplay or disagreements on the sports field going too far.

Abuse

62. I am asked if during my period of employment, the school had a definition of 'abuse' that it applied in relation to the treatment of children at the school. I would expect all qualified teachers to be well aware of acceptable conduct parameters. I am fairly sure there was a definition of abuse, or at least a description, in our child protection policy document, but I no longer have a copy and I cannot remember details. I no longer have a copy of my original contract but a revised contract of May 1996 included a definition of 'gross misconduct' which would lead to dismissal, which echoes elements of a child protection policy through references to physical assault, gross insubordination, offences relating to drug abuse, sexual misconduct, abuse of children etc. This may well have been also in the earlier contract.
63. The school aims were to provide a safe, caring environment. A full education, good quality board and lodging and a healthy environment were expressed in all of the school's documentation. The Teacher's Contract clearly summarised the meaning of misconduct and gross misconduct and the action available to the school. Physical and sexual abuse were certainly totally unacceptable.

64. Keil was a member of SCIS. My memory is unclear but I think it was in the mid-1990s that the head attended a SCIS conference on child protection and produced a policy document. This was widely debated and issued to all staff. I recall that it provided for a named pupil listener and a named staff member to be approached. A 1998 school inspection stated the need to upgrade the child protection document and a number of other suggested improvements, all of which were taken forward. The HMI report did not specify in the document the upgrading required to the child protection policy, but may have reported more detail to the headmaster.

Child protection arrangements

65. Senior staff met weekly and all staff met at least every month. Various educational and residential issues were debated; abuse, ill-treatment and inappropriate behaviour were more focussed by the child protection document and increasing national concerns over abuse. I believed that our teachers were first class in their commitment to the school and the pupils, and that the close knit nature of the school made incidents of abuse something that would happen elsewhere. Naive for sure.
66. Staff were expected to listen to children, take seriously any accusation and report immediately to senior staff. Teachers were expected to respond professionally to issues. There would certainly be no attempt to sweep things under the carpet and senior staff were considered to be approachable. I received not a hint of impropriety. Staff would normally take care of things in their own classroom but serious matters were to be reported up, to house staff, the depute or the head.
67. I am asked what child protection arrangements were in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate conduct by staff or other adults towards the pupils. Even before the child protection policy previously referred to, all staff were mindful of the care of children. Staff were to be careful to avoid, when possible, being alone with a pupil, although at the same time to provide an opportunity for a pupil to be able to speak to them privately. The particular care involving one-to-one contact applied more to a classroom situation. In a boarding situation it is not always

possible or even desirable to avoid one-to-one contact, because children need a private time with house staff to discuss progress, permissions, day-to-day concerns about laundry etc. Mr Bain's flat door was regularly open in the evening and pupils (both girls and boys) sought his company to play games on his computer, watch TV, have him help with homework etc. but there was always, in my experience, a group of children. He was extremely popular with pupils of both sexes and was kind and helpful towards them. His flat door was left ajar so that other members of house staff could look in.

68. There was improved access to the house telephone or house staff telephone where pupils could speak privately to parents. Pupils were not allowed to wander freely after the school day. If not in their boarding house, they had to sign out with details of their destination but always within the school unless given permission. Boarding houses were secured by coded locks. Formal policy came later in the day for Keil but it still remains a tragedy, somewhat incredibly, that abuse remained unsuspected and undetected for a number of years. By formal policy I mean the child protection policy; before that, it was understood that teachers knew how to treat children.
69. In general, pupils were safe and happy and I am distressed that we never identified the cancer within.

External monitoring

70. The school always received advance notification of visits by Scottish Office inspectors. There was a full inspection in 1992 and a residential inspection in 1998, both with follow-ups. I remember also at least one unannounced visit from an English exam board officer. Inspectors spoke to children in classes, in small groups and individually. Staff were not present but all house staff were interviewed separately.

71. The inspectors spoke to me at length, both as a housemaster and as the deputy head. Verbal feedback was given to the head but the written published feedback was quite extensive.

Records

72. Records are no longer available, none having been kept for more than ten years after closure. However, whilst the school was in operation, copies of all pupil termly reports were retained in the walk-in safe. Staff records were retained by the bursar in the school office. These contained application forms and relevant papers from later years, such as staff appraisals. I am not aware of any abuse allegations.
73. I am asked to comment on the historical position as regards record-keeping. Pupil reporting was improved considerably over the years and provided greater detail from staff than in the past and the quality of staff comments was upgraded. Staff records would have contained staff appraisals in the later years.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

74. I do not recall any personal involvement in allegations of abuse while in post in Keil.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings

75. There were no police investigations while the school was open.
76. In 2015, some fifteen years after the closure of the school, I was approached by the police regarding abuse committed in the mid-1990s by William Bain. I was interviewed on two occasions. I, of course, assisted the police as much as possible.

77. The case finally went to court and the accused pleaded guilty and was jailed. While never being officially informed, I understood that the accusations were of serious abuse. I have never given evidence at a trial.

Convicted abusers

78. I know only of William Bain who pleaded guilty in 2017 to offences committed in the mid-1990s.
79. I knew William Bain well from 1989 to 2000. He was a member of staff and was assistant housemaster to me in Islay Kerr until 1998 when he became the housemaster of Mackinnon House.
80. He was a very intelligent man, a fine principal teacher of physics achieving good external exam results. He was a bachelor and gave unstintingly of his time to the school being well involved in rugby, photography, school quizzes and outdoor pursuits. He was very popular with the pupils, both boys and girls, and his flat door was almost always open. Our adjoining door was almost always open also when we were home, but pupils knocked and waited to be invited in to our study to discuss permissions, progress, problems etc. I considered Mr Bain to be a bit over generous with his time in allowing children to be in his flat but I had no concerns about abuse.
81. Mr Bain was appointed before my time but I have no reason to believe that his recruitment was not as normal, i.e. application, references and interview. He had no formal child care qualifications, except teaching qualifications, that I am aware of, but some of his skills would be ideal in a boarding school situation where evening and weekend activities were important. He would have received the in-service training that all staff received, as previously referred to.
82. I am asked whether he was subject to supervision and/or monitoring. None other than my being head of the house and he my assistant. Technically I was his line manager but in practice we shared much of the running of the house fairly equally.

Obviously in the context of teaching and housemastering in a very small school, we saw a great deal of each other. The head would, of course, know him well and would have formally interviewed him every year.

83. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no previous allegations had been made about William Bain.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

84. I provided the name of the school's insurers to the lawyer representing an abused pupil/family. A formal claim from that lawyer was passed to the trustees who approached a legal firm with links to the school and ascertained that professional advice could be provided, but the matter was settled in negotiation with the insurers without further involvement of the trustees.
85. In the light of the guilty plea, the trustees accepted with great sorrow and regret that abuse had occurred in the mid-1990s by one member of staff. I believe that he pleaded guilty to five charges, one of which was labelled 'serious'.

Helping the Inquiry

86. I am seriously distressed that I could live so close to an abuser for so long and not suspect it. It is also disappointing that no pupil informed any member of staff, some of whom were very approachable. Not to mention talking to their own parents.
87. It was over twenty years ago when Keil closed and I assume that by today the school would have upgraded again its child protection policies. Staff would now be a great deal more conscious of the increase of abuse in churches, schools, sports clubs etc.
88. School policy documents would be more focussed and comprehensive over abuse issues than in the past. Risk assessment is also a more recent phenomenon and

would feature more in a number of school activities when 'trust' was more often the main consideration.

89. Keil suffered by trying to do too much for too few and simply ran out of money. There is no doubt that the physical conditions were poor but the level of care was, until now, never in question. When a teacher offered to provide a weekend outing, I was delighted and grateful and gave little thought to the composition of the group, for example, were there two members of staff? With the benefit of hindsight, I accept that I should have been thinking of such matters at all times, although a requirement of more than one member of staff would have drastically reduced the number of outings possible.
90. The answer must surely lie in more focussed education, ensuring that youngsters are well aware of unacceptable approaches and that confiding in an adult is the correct response even when the abuser is a trusted teacher. Pupils should be made aware of what a grooming process might look like. I was surprised at just how much the police identified grooming as a major factor in the repertoire of a paedophile. This would surely alert potential abusers that they could be more readily identified by a potential victim. Suggestions of no teacher/pupil contact ever without the presence of a colleague would not be realistic. That suggestion was never made at Keil. It would have been impractical in a small boarding school like Keil and maybe undesirable as previously explained. It would be more possible and advisable for youth leaders, sports coaches etc. It would remain a dilemma for schools.
91. Children must be made aware of the nature of unacceptable approaches and have to be comfortable in reporting them. Closer school contact with social services could well reinforce this message.

92. 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.....

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature.

Dated.....

14 / 9 / 20