

Friday, 26 March 2021

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(10.00 am)

LADY SMITH: Good morning and welcome to the last day of evidence this week in the boarding school case study.

I believe we have a witness who is ready to go, is that right, Mr Brown?

MR BROWN: That is correct, my Lady. We have Lisa Kerr, the Principal of Gordonstoun today.

LADY SMITH: Thank you. (Pause).

Good morning. Could we begin by you raising your right hand and repeat after me.

MS LISA KERR (affirmed)

LADY SMITH: Please sit down and make yourself comfortable.

First of all, an important question, what would you like me to call you? Would you like me to use your first name or your second name.

A. Please call me Lisa.

LADY SMITH: That is very helpful, thank you. You have the paperwork that Gordonstoun have very helpfully provided in the red folder there, but it will also come up on the large screen. I am sorry it is a very large screen, which might be a little daunting, but the small screen has taken weekend leave already. It is refusing to work today, I'm afraid. But I think you will still be able to see Mr Brown and communicate eye-to-eye with him,

1           which I hope is helpful.

2           If you are ready, I will hand over to Mr Brown, and  
3           he will take it from there. Mr Brown.

4                           Questions from MR BROWN

5   MR BROWN: My Lady, thank you.

6           Lisa, good morning. The television doesn't block us  
7           so that is a good start.

8           Can we begin by talking about you, because I think  
9           it is fair to say, unlike the other heads, speaking  
10          generically, you are a very different person in terms of  
11          background from the traditional head of a boarding  
12          school, is that a fair summary?

13   A. It is a fair summary, Andrew, yes.

14   Q. Because I think one finds that in November 2016,  
15          Gordonstoun appointed a progressive new leadership team,  
16          and you were brought in as principal, as someone who had  
17          no educational background, save as a parent and governor  
18          of Gordonstoun. Your background prior to that in terms  
19          of your professional life was?

20   A. I graduated in music, and then I had a 20-year career in  
21          media communications and business, I was one of  
22          the first producers at Classic FM, and then moved on to  
23          build a radio company, and then moved into policy  
24          regulation and strategy for the commercial radio sector.

25          I then ran my own business, providing consultancy

1 services to a whole range of organisations, particularly  
2 those undergoing transformational change. But  
3 throughout my career I also had quite an extensive  
4 non-executive portfolio, including from my mid-20s as  
5 a school governor, firstly at a boarding school in Kent,  
6 and then at Gordonstoun.

7 Q. Gordonstoun reflects the fact that your own children  
8 were educated there, is that correct?

9 A. Yes, although I was also actually pregnant with my first  
10 child when I was approached about becoming a governor at  
11 Gordonstoun. So the move to Gordonstoun was as a result  
12 of an introduction to the then chairman, who knew I was  
13 relocating to Moray, and asked if I would consider  
14 joining the board.

15 Q. We'll come back to governance as a discrete issue in due  
16 course.

17 As part of this progressive new leadership team, as  
18 it was described you are the principal, there was  
19 a headmaster, Titus Edge?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And a finance director, Hugh Brown. At the time there  
22 was enthusiasm, obviously, from within the school, and  
23 I think it was recognised that this is -- this was a new  
24 approach in terms of the boarding school sector, no one  
25 done it before, having a very busy-like approach, is

1           that fair?

2           A. I think Gordonstoun always has been quite a progressive  
3           school and this approach did reflect the needs of the  
4           school at the time. It has slightly changed, the  
5           structure, since then. I have to say I have always been  
6           enormously warmly welcomed by staff and parents and  
7           within the sector, and I am a member of HMC, the  
8           Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference.

9                     In many respects the job I do is not very different  
10           from those leading other schools. It is more that  
11           I bring a different background to it, and therefore  
12           complementary skills with the rest of my colleagues.

13          Q. We have heard that boarding schools, as a matter of  
14           routine are educational charities. Is Gordonstoun the  
15           same?

16          A. It is, yes.

17          Q. But despite the charitable status, given the scale of  
18           the operation of a boarding school, they are,  
19           colloquially, businesses. Does the approach taken by  
20           Gordonstoun reflect the financial realities: they are  
21           expensive not-for-profit organisations, but they require  
22           a great deal of management?

23          A. I think that is right. I think anybody running a medium  
24           or large charity has to run it with good business-like  
25           principles in order to have responsible stewardship of

1 the charitable funds. In my case, it is talking about  
2 nearly 300 staff, a 200-acre estate, more than 600  
3 health and safety working practice statements, a  
4 fundraising function, alumni, obviously teaching and  
5 learning and pastoral care absolutely as the beating  
6 heart of that, international development and so on.

7 Q. Obviously we have been hearing over the last  
8 week and a half about a sea change in regulation.  
9 Looking over the period that the Inquiry is interested  
10 in, from 1930s up until 2014 and indeed now. Have other  
11 schools followed the business model that Gordonstoun  
12 started in 2016, or are you still really the only clear  
13 team, as has been described, with a principal who  
14 doesn't have an educational background but a business  
15 background? Have other people followed suit, in other  
16 words?

17 A. I am not sure there has been a significant change,  
18 I think it is more that a number of schools recognise  
19 that the day-to-day running of the schools is actually  
20 quite helpfully sometimes separated from the oversight  
21 of the whole organisation. In that sense what we have  
22 is not that different from many other schools which will  
23 have, for example, a principal or an executive head, and  
24 then heads of -- in our case, we have the head of summer  
25 school, the head of junior school, the head of senior

1 school, with me as the overarching principal of all of  
2 those things.

3 LADY SMITH: In many schools the role of head has become  
4 much more akin to the role of a chief executive in  
5 a corporate body, hasn't it?

6 A. That is absolutely right, my Lady.

7 MR BROWN: But is Gordonstoun the only one to have appointed  
8 someone without an educational background for that role,  
9 as far as you are aware?

10 A. As far as I am aware, yes.

11 Q. In that regard, we have been hearing a lot about  
12 regulation and membership of various organisations  
13 becoming a requirement. Obviously I am thinking, on the  
14 teaching side, of GTCS, or on the non-teaching side,  
15 SSSC. Who are you registered with?

16 A. So I am PVG-checked, which is the most important thing.  
17 And I am not registered with either GTCS or SSSC because  
18 I am not delivering direct pastoral care and I am not  
19 a classroom practitioner.

20 Q. But as you say, and again we will come back to PVG, you  
21 would consider that to be the essential part.

22 A. Yes, I think PVG is incredibly important. We make sure  
23 that every single member of staff at Gordonstoun, and  
24 governor, and indeed even those contractors who might be  
25 coming on site regularly to do things like plumbing

1 work, are PVG-checked. We think it is absolutely vital.

2 Q. Again, since we are talking about it we may as well just  
3 focus on it now, you will have heard other heads talking  
4 about the difficulty of getting spouses, for example.  
5 Thinking in terms of guardians and guardianship I think  
6 is quite a big part of Gordonstoun's practice, is that  
7 fair?

8 A. Yes. Yes, absolutely.

9 Q. You have been listening to the evidence, I know. Did  
10 that reflect your experience, that you want to get  
11 everyone PVG-checked, but sometimes it is not as simple  
12 as you might wish it to be?

13 A. That would also be our experience, yes.

14 Q. And like others, have you managed to get people  
15 PVG-checked, or have you ever come up against a brick  
16 wall?

17 A. We are quite determinedly successful.

18 Q. Have you ever not managed to get someone checked?

19 A. No.

20 Q. It just takes more effort --

21 A. It does, but it's worth it.

22 Q. Yes. In terms of GTCS, the other thing you will have  
23 been aware of is figures were given a week ago today  
24 suggesting the numbers of teachers working in the  
25 boarding sector who still required to be GTCS-registered

1 by 1 June, which as we know is the cut-off. Is it fair  
2 to say those figures don't reflect your understanding of  
3 the position at Gordonstoun?

4 A. I was surprised to see some of the figures presented by  
5 GTCS in relation to Gordonstoun and they don't match our  
6 records. In particular I go back to 2017, and by my  
7 records at that point we only had four unregistered  
8 teachers versus the 35 that were reported to the  
9 Inquiry. But I think I can understand where the  
10 confusion has arisen and I would be happy to expand upon  
11 that, if that would be helpful.

12 Q. Yes, please.

13 A. We submit an annual return to the Registrar of  
14 Independent Schools and it seemed from what was  
15 presented to the Inquiry that that is where the  
16 information had come from, and in that submission we  
17 will be very fulsome in describing anybody who is  
18 involved in teaching in the broadest sense. Now, GTCS  
19 only covers those who are classroom practitioners. It  
20 is worth saying that actually, even for classroom  
21 practitioners, GTCS registration is quite challenging  
22 for independent schools because some of the subjects  
23 that we teach from an academic perspective don't fall  
24 within the Scottish curriculum, and therefore there is  
25 not an obvious route to registration, so we have been



1 quite proactive really since 2014 with GTCS in working  
2 on that.

3 But more broadly, students at Gordonstoun will learn  
4 sailing, they will learn outdoor education, they will  
5 learn a musical instrument, they will learn bushcraft,  
6 for example, and none of those things that we will be  
7 teaching fall within the registered teacher status and  
8 the professional update requirements, which are very  
9 important and which we wholeheartedly support, that are  
10 regulated by GTCS.

11 Q. I suppose, cutting to 1 June, as of 1 June will all  
12 teachers, to use the word loosely, be GTCS-registered  
13 from your perspective?

14 A. From our perspective, we would expect anybody working in  
15 the classroom will be registered with GTCS. I suppose  
16 the caveat I might give is the challenge we might face i  
17 in terms of the time it might take to bring somebody  
18 into the register, if, for example, they are coming to  
19 work from outwith Scotland, and we do need to recruit  
20 from outside the Scottish teaching body in order to have  
21 staff who have sufficient experience, for example in  
22 boarding but in other areas of the curriculum, and it  
23 can take time.

24 We are not in a position to say "You may only apply  
25 for a job if you already have GTCS registration", we

1 have to say "if you are eligible for it", and sometimes  
2 there can be significant time lag there. But when this  
3 happens we will work with GTCS and ask whether they are  
4 content that, while that registration is pending, may  
5 that teacher still teach, and, if not, we will then have  
6 to double up and have another GTCS-registered teacher in  
7 the classroom whilst that registration comes through.

8 LADY SMITH: Lisa, just going back to the problem you have,  
9 or might yet have, with a subject that is not within the  
10 Scottish curriculum or immediately recognised by GTCS as  
11 being the sort of thing they would normally regulate,  
12 are you foreseeing that, through working with the GTCS,  
13 you will be able to get them to accept that some of  
14 these subjects, for which Gordonstoun is the only school  
15 one could go to learn about it, will be accepted by GTCS  
16 for registration?

17 A. In terms of classroom practice, my Lady, yes. And we  
18 have worked very successfully with them up to now on  
19 something known as named school registration. So our  
20 dance teacher, who teaches GCSE dance, for example, was  
21 part of the 2016 pilot which Gordonstoun participated in  
22 on named school registration.

23 We are not anticipating any work being done on  
24 things like sail training and outdoor education because  
25 those members of staff have their own professional

1 registration bodies.

2 LADY SMITH: For example, what?

3 A. So Gordonstoun is the only school that is registered  
4 with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. Or  
5 if you are a mate on Ocean Spirit of Moray, I would need  
6 to check the specific regulations there, but --

7 LADY SMITH: Are these UK bodies?

8 A. Yes.

9 LADY SMITH: So there will be some professional registration  
10 for a teacher teaching only outdoor activities but it  
11 won't be GTCs registration.

12 A. So that would be an outdoor activities instructor, so  
13 they wouldn't have a registration, they would have  
14 qualifications there, so it would be canoeing or being  
15 a mountain leader, those kinds of things. But the most  
16 important thing from our perspective is that they are  
17 PVG'd.

18 LADY SMITH: We keep coming back to this, because it is PVG  
19 that particularly targets child protection.

20 A. Yes.

21 LADY SMITH: Child and vulnerable persons protection.

22 A. If I may, my Lady, from our perspective PVG is about  
23 safety. GTCs and SSSC is about professional  
24 registration and update.

25 LADY SMITH: Yes.

1                   Mr Brown.

2           MR BROWN: I am obliged. Thank you for that.

3                   Again since we are touching on the PVG scheme and,  
4                   as you just said, that is about safety, and that  
5                   presumably, for an operation like Gordonstoun, is at the  
6                   very heart of what you do. Or should be.

7                   From your perspective, and again because this has  
8                   been touched on with other heads, from your perspective  
9                   does the PVG scheme work easily for you, or are there  
10                  things that you would like to see change?

11          A. I suppose from my perspective it is not so much about  
12               whether it works easily for us, but whether it's  
13               effective in maintaining a dynamic register of suitable  
14               individuals for working with children. We have been  
15               concerned about the suggestion that we should re-PVG  
16               people, because what that suggests is we therefore need  
17               a new snapshot.

18               I suppose the ideal situation would be, and I quite  
19               believe in visions that are always a little bit out of  
20               reach, because they really do help you strive toward  
21               excellence, the ideal would be that if a member of staff  
22               gets into trouble on a Saturday night, then on Monday  
23               morning the person who is in charge of the PVG register  
24               gets a phone calls and says "Hang on, something has  
25               happened. We know you are the interested organisation

1 in relation to that individual and we want to let you  
2 know about that".

3 So there are two elements to that scenario, one of  
4 which is that is it dynamic, but also that it is not  
5 just about conviction but it is about concern.

6 Q. It is the dynamism that I was interested in, and that is  
7 why I was asking about it working smoothly, because the  
8 impression that might be given is it's snapshots over  
9 quite long periods of time, potentially, and others have  
10 mentioned the idea of a rolling notification, if you  
11 like. That of course assumes that people know about it  
12 to notify you, but equally, I suppose, what role do you  
13 see Gordonstoun has in notifying other bodies about  
14 issues that might be of interest from the PVG side of  
15 things?

16 A. I think that brings us to mandatory reporting, and the  
17 concept of mandatory reporting being about concerns and  
18 suspicions, not just actual events that have been  
19 confirmed through a legal process. We believe very  
20 strongly in mandatory report, and in fact it's  
21 misconduct possibly leading to summary dismissal at  
22 Gordonstoun if you don't report a concern in relation  
23 to abuse of a child.

24 The reporting systems that we have at the moment  
25 aren't set up to support mandatory reporting because, by

1 definition, if you are reporting suspicions rather than  
2 confirmed events, some of those will prove to be  
3 unfounded. And whether it's in relation to PVG or other  
4 bodies, or I think more particularly how one works,  
5 almost always really positively, with social work and  
6 the police, we are not as a society set up well for  
7 mandatory reporting.

8 LADY SMITH: I suppose, as you have mentioned, one of  
9 the keys is what it is that you report, and making it  
10 clear that it's not only when there is a completed  
11 process and it has been established, that the person in  
12 question abused a child, for instance, and it may or may  
13 not have been a criminal offence but it amounted to  
14 abuse of a child, but it's using the system, as you say,  
15 to report concerns and you don't have to feel that you  
16 can properly say "This person did a bad thing", but at  
17 one end of the scale what you are doing is reporting  
18 a concern.

19 That is fair to the alleged perpetrator, if we can  
20 call them that, but it is also fair to children who need  
21 to be protected. Perhaps it is getting that message  
22 across, that you don't need to worry about the system  
23 being used to label people automatically as being  
24 perpetrators or abusers.

25 A. I would completely concur, my Lady. I think mandatory

1 reporting has to be set up in such a way that it is safe  
2 for members of staff to know that their careers won't be  
3 destroyed, but most importantly that it is safe for  
4 children to know that the follow-up that will take place  
5 will be done sensitively and also that matters won't end  
6 up in the press.

7 LADY SMITH: Yes.

8 MR BROWN: We can perhaps revisit this, because it is  
9 a discrete and fundamental issue, I think perhaps  
10 towards the end when we are discussing perhaps your  
11 thoughts on how matters may be taken forward in the  
12 round.

13 Again, you will have seen how other heads have been  
14 approached, and reference is made to the responses that  
15 the schools provided. You have the red folder in front  
16 of you, it will probably come up on screen such as  
17 I select, but can I stress this is not a memory test, so  
18 it is for information really.

19 Can I just say at the outset, obviously all schools  
20 have responded, but the Gordonstoun response clearly,  
21 just simply in terms of size, reflects a great deal of  
22 information and thoughtful response to the Inquiry.

23 I think if we can start -- oddly enough, you have  
24 heard me talking about parts A to D, and in previous  
25 hearings we have been referring to A, C and then B. If

1 I can start briefly on part D, which is the abuse and  
2 response, not to look at abuse itself but to look at the  
3 way the school responded, because it is helpful to  
4 understand.

5 If we can go to GOR.001.001.0237 at page 1. If we  
6 go down to 5.2 and "Extent", the first question  
7 obviously is looking at an assessment of the scale and  
8 extent of the abuse of children cared for at the  
9 establishment. That is something that we will focus on  
10 in the second part of the hearings, which, in  
11 Gordonstoun's case, will be hopefully in the autumn of  
12 this year. But the response is instructive at this  
13 stage. It reads:

14 "The timeframe of the Inquiry is more than 70 years.  
15 In the course of that time there have been thousands of  
16 students and hundreds of staff at the school. From  
17 this, the school has identified 11 incidents of abuse  
18 and/or alleged abuse of children involving staff. The  
19 spreadsheet of examples in response 5.9 shows a total of  
20 a further 82 cases of peer to peer abuse."

21 In that regard obviously, and this is a point we are  
22 coming to, Gordonstoun had a lot of records to look at  
23 and it did look at a lot of records, is that fair?

24 A. Yes, we did have a lot of records to look at, although  
25 I think, as we have said, many of those had been what we



1 would call thinned over the years. But we also used  
2 other methods of assessing the extent of abuse, most  
3 notably reaching out very proactively to our alumni  
4 directly and through the press.

5 Q. Yes. But I think also, as we see, to use the words of  
6 the response, there was a "corporate memory  
7 interrogation". In other words, you went back to  
8 previous heads and previous staff and asked them what  
9 they knew?

10 A. We did, yes. There are actually only two of my  
11 predecessors who are still alive, both principals, but  
12 a number of other staff were spoken to, and our research  
13 team have worked incredibly hard over the last few years  
14 on it.

15 Q. You have mentioned the research team. What does that  
16 mean in practice?

17 A. We have an archivist, and we have had a dedicated  
18 researcher on this project, if I may call it that.  
19 Members of the board have been directly involved. We  
20 have set up an alumni response team who are specifically  
21 trained in being able to speak to survivors of abuse.  
22 Every person who might answer the phone, if anyone rings  
23 the switchboard, has been trained in how to hear  
24 a survivor. And I think what has been interesting is  
25 the extent to which, through that process, a number of

1 survivors have felt able to trust us with information,  
2 and indeed I continue to correspond directly with  
3 a number of survivors who may, for example, each time  
4 they write -- I had an email correspondence just this  
5 week -- reveal a little more of what happened to them,  
6 and I do feel very honoured that they trust me with  
7 that.

8 Q. I think, going back to records, if we could go to  
9 part C, GOR.001.001.0112 at page 110. We are getting  
10 the page up. Gordonstoun I think, as we will hear, was  
11 proactive from 2013 and then 2015, because of particular  
12 events in reaching out to alumni, making them aware of  
13 potential abuse having taken place and asking for  
14 further information, is that correct?

15 A. It is. Although the Inquiry will be aware, through our  
16 evidence we have submitted, that a number of individual  
17 items were brought to the attention of the school over  
18 the decades, significant disclosures did begin to be  
19 made in 2013. I was a governor at the time. I can  
20 actually still remember where I was when I received the  
21 phone call from our Vice Chair of governors at the time  
22 to tell me what had been disclosed. It was a very  
23 conscious decision on behalf of the board of governors  
24 and the school leadership to respond openly and  
25 proactively at that time, because what had been reported

1           was so against the ethos of the school -- Gordonstoun  
2           isn't a typical boarding school, it has a very unique  
3           founding ethos which we may come on to --

4           Q. We will come to that shortly.

5           A. The matters that had been disclosed were so against the  
6           founding ethos of compassion and the approach of  
7           kindness that had been so much at the heart of the  
8           school, it was so out of alignment, and that is I think  
9           why the board and the leadership team took the step that  
10          they did.

11          Q. We have now the page up on the screen in front of you in  
12          terms of past record. I think it's fair to say the  
13          school acknowledges historically the school did not have  
14          a formalised overall record-keeping policy, and one of  
15          the benefits of that was you actually had a lot of  
16          records to look at?

17          A. Yes.

18          Q. Things weren't thrown away?

19          A. Correct.

20          Q. Student files were kept, although their levels of  
21          information would be pretty limited in most cases,  
22          particularly the further back you went, is that  
23          accurate?

24          A. That is accurate although not entirely consistent.  
25          There doesn't really seem to be a pattern as to what was

1 kept and why.

2 Q. You have staff files from 1990 onwards?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Financial files were kept. That is inevitably for seven  
5 years?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And records of incidents concerning wellbeing and  
8 welfare of children have been retained since 1997. Is  
9 that again reflecting the transition of welfare,  
10 safeguarding, becoming matters of import in the  
11 mid-1990s?

12 A. That is right. The Inquiry will be aware our first  
13 child protection policy was published in 1995,  
14 coinciding with the appointment of the first child  
15 protection co-ordinator.

16 Q. Which is in line with the rest of the sector?

17 A. Indeed.

18 Q. The penny has dropped at that point?

19 A. Indeed, yes.

20 Q. Looking on now to page 113, obviously there has been --  
21 halfway down in the heading "Present":

22 "In line with new legislation and national  
23 guidelines, and with the advice of SCIS ... in the  
24 process of developing the record retention policies and  
25 procedures to be aligned with the GDPR and changes in

1 data protection, legal requirements (to be in place  
2 2018)."

3 Again we have heard about this. Is the position now  
4 that there is GDPR compliance, but if there is a concern  
5 about potential for a child protection issue, records  
6 will be kept?

7 A. It is now our policy under the General Data Protection  
8 Regulation that all pupil records are kept forever.

9 Q. So you are different in that regard?

10 A. Yes, that is our published policy which is part of our  
11 parent contract, not at least because one of the many  
12 things the Inquiry has taught us is the importance of  
13 being able to demonstrate the level of care that was or  
14 was not given to children, and with the lifting of the  
15 Statute of Limitations it is really important the school  
16 is in a position to be able to demonstrate how it has  
17 looked after children.

18 Q. Mention is made in that paragraph of SCIS, the Scottish  
19 Council of Independent Schools, who gave evidence last  
20 Friday, and John Edward is present again today. He is  
21 someone you engage with presumably regularly?

22 A. Yes, SCIS is a tremendous organisation, and I would say  
23 probably, like most organisations, because of its  
24 leader, and John is a really outstanding leader of SCIS  
25 but a really important confidante and adviser to the

1 sector.

2 Q. Obviously guidance is given by SCIS in terms of record  
3 retention, but in this case at Gordonstoun it goes  
4 further than guidance. Thank you.

5 Could we now turn to the background to the school  
6 and go to part A, which is GOR.001.001.0003 at page 1.  
7 Gordonstoun, it is fair to say, is well known for  
8 a number of reasons, but the reason perhaps that we can  
9 focus on is Kurt Hahn, who obviously was  
10 an educationalist with a distinct vision, it is fair to  
11 say. We obviously can see that Gordonstoun School was  
12 founded in 34 as a boarding school for boys aged 13 to  
13 18. Kurt Hahn had travelled from Germany, where he had  
14 set up a previous school at Salem, and he came to  
15 Scotland having been imprisoned for speaking out against  
16 the Nazi regime.

17 In terms of the vision, he believed, looking further  
18 down at part 2:

19 "The school was founded as a residential school  
20 because the founder believed in the virtues of boarding  
21 education as way of providing lasting benefits to young  
22 people ... The spiritual needs of all were catered for.  
23 The development needs of the children were always  
24 considered in a broader content than just the classroom,  
25 and were delivered through the additional pursuits of

1 outdoor education, sail training, projects, and service  
2 to the local community."

3 And that ethos I think persists today?

4 A. Yes, it does. People often come to Gordonstoun and  
5 remark that they have never really known a school that  
6 lives by its ethos and motto quite so strongly as  
7 Gordonstoun does, and Kurt Hahn's name is still spoken  
8 multiple times daily within the school because of that  
9 inspiring educational vision that he set up and that has  
10 obviously gone to spawn so many other important  
11 educational movements, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's  
12 Award. I do think understanding how Gordonstoun was  
13 founded, by a man who had to flee his home country  
14 because he had spoken up for what he believed in and was  
15 in fear of his life, I do think that helps to understand  
16 the culture of upstander, not bystander, that  
17 Gordonstoun has always sought to live by.

18 It is clear, obviously, from the evidence we have  
19 provided to the Inquiry, that things have gone wrong  
20 along the way, but it is the contradiction with that  
21 culture that is so distressing. As we have said, we are  
22 a school for all faiths and none. The Good Samaritan  
23 reading is regularly given, because it is just such  
24 a good example of why it is so easy for good people to  
25 walk by, and it is so important that good people stand

1 up for things.

2 Q. In that regard, can we touch briefly on Aberlour House  
3 and the Good Samaritan analogy. Obviously, and this was  
4 said in the opening submission, in terms of legal  
5 responsibility Gordonstoun as an entity has had legal  
6 responsibility for Aberlour since 1999. Aberlour, as  
7 the report sets out, was set up, or as we know was set  
8 up by Kurt Hahn only a couple of years after  
9 Gordonstoun, is that correct?

10 A. It is, yes.

11 Q. It had the same motto, which is --

12 A. "Plus est en vous", "There is more in you".

13 Q. Geographically it was close to Gordonstoun in the sense  
14 it was in --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- Speyside and Moray?

17 A. I think in the 1930s it probably took about an hour to  
18 get there.

19 Q. Yes, I am sure you can drive to the biscuit factory,  
20 which has turned into -- well, Wester Elchies obviously  
21 hasn't, but Aberlour has, rather more quickly.

22 In that regard, and we can look at this  
23 relationship, would you accept in terms of complaints of  
24 abuse, because this is obviously something that you were  
25 aware of, that there are pupils who were both at



1           Gordonstoun but also previously at Aberlour, that  
2           Gordonstoun has a moral responsibility for those pupils?

3           A. Gordonstoun absolutely has a moral responsibility for  
4           its pupils, and many of those who suffered abuse at  
5           Aberlour House did come on to be Gordonstoun pupils. It  
6           is one of the reasons that we have sought where we can  
7           to provide support to them, but also to provide  
8           an apology. I think, hand on heart, I would give  
9           an apology to any child who had suffered abuse in any  
10          school, because I think it is what a survivor deserves.

11                     In relation to Aberlour House we have taken the  
12          decision that, because the Inquiry doesn't have anybody  
13          appearing before it who can give that apology, then we  
14          will give it.

15          Q. But you would accept that whilst distinct legal entities  
16          until at least 1999, the schools had a very close  
17          relationship?

18          A. I think the school had -- the schools had fluctuating  
19          relationships. There were always links but they were of  
20          differing closeness at different times. So let's talk  
21          a little bit about what the links might be. So there  
22          were periods where the bursar at Gordonstoun would  
23          report to the separate headmaster at Aberlour House, and  
24          I think it is important that until 1999 there was  
25          a separate headmaster and a separate board of governors,

1           although there was some overlapping governance. There  
2           was a time when also the bursar would report to the  
3           headmaster of Aberlour House to perform some  
4           administrative functions. There were some teachers from  
5           Gordonstoun who performed teaching.

6           But I think there was a particular period under also  
7           the SNR [REDACTED] of CIPHER WITHDRAWN - DON [REDACTED] where, although  
8           he was [REDACTED] at a time when the governors of  
9           Aberlour House had been considering closer links with  
10          Gordonstoun, I think he pulled the schools further  
11          apart, and in doing so actually gained membership of the  
12          Independent Association of Prep Schools, which could  
13          only done actually by demonstrating you were not managed  
14          by a senior school. And certainly when Mark Pyper  
15          joined Gordonstoun as principal in 1990, he recalls  
16          a distinct period where he was asked to oversee  
17          the headmaster, he was an acting headmaster for one year  
18          at Aberlour House, and that was different from normal.

19          So I think, yes, there were times when there was  
20          great closeness, but I think there were times when they  
21          were less close.

22          Q. But at its heart would you accept that Aberlour, or its  
23          predecessor Wester Elchies, were always understood to be  
24          a prep school of Gordonstoun?

25          A. I think they were understood that way, and I think there

1           were benefits for both organisations of that.

2           Q. That is my point. Both organisations were content for  
3           that to be so?

4           A. Yes, I think absolutely. And I suppose what that shows  
5           is that there are different ways of understanding the  
6           links in organisations, so pupils will have one  
7           understanding, staff will have another and the law has  
8           another. But we are absolutely open about the fact  
9           there have always been close links between  
10          Aberlour House and Gordonstoun.

11          Q. Again just since we have the documents to hand it might  
12          be instructive to look very briefly. Could we look at  
13          SGV-000067152, which is a prospectus from 1958. That  
14          perhaps makes the point?

15          A. Absolutely, yes.

16          Q. Then if we can go to page 3, a document of its own  
17          interest, I suppose, and of its time. Expeditions were  
18          part and parcel clearly of Wester Elchies, but as the  
19          text says:

20                 "In 1937 a preparatory school for Gordonstoun was  
21                 started at Wester Elchies House. In the autumn of 1947  
22                 Aberlour House was added in order to accommodate growing  
23                 numbers."

24                 That sets the background and presumably Kurt Hahn's  
25                 intent that, having set up Gordonstoun as a senior

1 school, there was also to be provision for junior  
2 pupils --

3 A. Absolutely.

4 Q. -- under the same model. If we go, please, to page 5,  
5 we see under "Curriculum and Activities":

6 "The principles which underlie the education  
7 provided and for the general method employed, reference  
8 should be made to the prospectus for Gordonstoun. At  
9 Wester Elchies the method is adjusted where necessary to  
10 suit the younger boys."

11 A. Absolutely. It is a very strong shared ethos,  
12 absolutely, and one that is also shared by many Round  
13 Square schools too, as well.

14 Q. Yes, we will come back to Round Squares momentarily.

15 Page 7 under "Admission", photographs of teaching  
16 under trees:

17 "Boys are admitted to the school on the  
18 understanding that they will proceed to Gordonstoun in  
19 due course."

20 That I think may have altered because there is no  
21 requirement, but perhaps there has always been  
22 an expectation just as a matter of practice that if you  
23 start in one, you'd probably move on to the other?

24 A. Yes, I think there was that. My understanding is there  
25 were periods at Gordonstoun where there was maybe

1           disappointment that more pupils didn't come on to  
2           Gordonstoun, and I suspect that from the decision to  
3           merge the two schools in 1999 and then move on to the  
4           Gordonstoun campus in 2004 will have been to align that  
5           educational journey more closely.

6           Q. Although if we go on to page 10, I think, to make the  
7           point of distinction as opposed to the similarity or  
8           close connection, this is a report from the Scottish  
9           Education Department from 1951, and of course it is  
10          a report on Wester Elchies and Aberlour House School as  
11          a distinct entity, although at that stage its official  
12          category was B.

13          A. Certainly having reviewed such records as I have, it's  
14          clear that things are not clear. There were separate  
15          inspections and so on, for example, but periods of the  
16          odd closeness too.

17          Q. I think again for interest because -- we can come back  
18          to this in a moment, at page 12 one has details of the  
19          staffing, which in 1951 was four full-time teachers and,  
20          going down the page, five visiting teachers. And in  
21          terms of experience, most would have university degrees,  
22          but not all. Some educational experience, or as we see  
23          in the case of Mrs Wilkinson, four years' teaching  
24          experience would allow. It was a different world in  
25          terms of perhaps the registration and requirements one

1           has now?

2           A. Yes, it certainly appears to be from that, yes.

3           Q. Page 14, which is looking perhaps more at the  
4           residential and welfare side, there are matrons and two  
5           under-matrons. Ample storage. And if we go down, the  
6           concerns at that stage, as distinct from what you now  
7           experience, ten spacious rooms, with numbers, and ample  
8           wash hand basins, et cetera. It's a very different and  
9           simpler regime.

10           Could we go on to page 21 of this document. This is  
11           obviously a letter, 12 March 1964, headed  
12           "Gordonstoun School" and it is writing to, as we will  
13           see, the Registrar at the Scottish Education Department,  
14           St Andrew's House, saying:

15           "At the present moment, the main school and  
16           preparatory schools are separate since they are  
17           controlled by separate companies. Gordonstoun Schools  
18           Limited is the controlling company behind  
19           Gordonstoun School and is limited by shares.  
20           Aberlour House Limited is the controlling company behind  
21           Wester Elchies School and is limited by guarantee.  
22           Although the two boards have many members in common,  
23           they still remain as separate entities for the present."

24           This is an example of the ebb and flow perhaps you  
25           talked about?

1 A. Yes, the reading I have done round this suggests this  
 2 was a period when the boards were thinking about more  
 3 close alignment, and then they appointed a headmaster to  
 4 Aberlour House who had different views and took the  
 5 school quite separately. I think in the last couple of  
 6 days we have may have submitted to the Inquiry a letter  
 7 from the headmaster at Gordonstoun -- the widow of the  
 8 headmaster at Gordonstoun at that time which I found,  
 9 well, frankly very moving, and instructive in this  
 10 regard.

11 Q. I think that is in relation to the period of CIPHER  
 12 CIPHER WITH you have mentioned already?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. If we go to page 35 in the same document. This is  
 15 a letter from 9 January from Aberlour House, Aberlour,  
 16 Banffshire, from CIPHER WITHDRAWN writing to a Mr Basire:

17 "Let me explain my purpose. I became SNR of  
 18 Aberlour House, the preparatory school for Gordonstoun,  
 19 in [REDACTED]. Although the school is  
 20 well-established ..."

21 And he goes on to talk about various programmes.

22 Then if we go down to the fifth paragraph:

23 "Happily there is a great 'rethink' going on  
 24 everywhere about the real and false barriers created by  
 25 independent schools. As you probably know, we at

1           Gordonstoun ..."

2           He is thinking, it would appear, of an overarching  
3           body, if I can put it that way, including himself?

4           A. I think he is also an alumni of Gordonstoun.

5           Q. Yes:

6           "... have been pioneers, not of the 'guinea pig'  
7           system but of having a complete cross-section of the  
8           nations socio-economic strata in the school from its  
9           inception. Kurt Hahn always felt strongly that this was  
10          essential for a host of reasons but particularly to  
11          overcome the enervating attitudes of privilege."

12          Finally if we look at page 39. Again, this is just  
13          an example to take it forward to [REDACTED], again a letter on  
14          printed notepaper of Gordonstoun School, but writing  
15          about Aberlour House, and this is confirming that:

16          "Our preparatory school Aberlour House is  
17          [controlled] and financed by Aberlour House Limited,  
18          a company limited by guarantee. The directors of the  
19          company are the governors of the school."

20          It's a formal letter. But what is instructive, it's  
21          from the secretary of Aberlour House Limited, but  
22          obviously there is I suppose like a Venn diagram,  
23          an area in the middle where both schools are operating  
24          together?

25          A. I think that is consistent with what I said earlier,



1           about there being periods where the controller or the  
2           bursar at Gordonstoun acted as the administrator to  
3           headmaster of Aberlour House.

4           Q. I think to go back to your principal point, the  
5           understanding from different groups may be, as a result,  
6           different. You would understand why pupils who had been  
7           at Gordonstoun but came from Aberlour would consider  
8           themselves under the one roof?

9           A. Yes, indeed.

10          Q. Again just to be clear, because I think in response to  
11          letters you wrote last week there may have some adverse  
12          reaction because of the perception that you are trying  
13          to distance yourself on the legal perception of -- or  
14          the legal distinction between the two schools, again  
15          I ask the question morally, would you accept that  
16          Gordonstoun has responsibility for the Aberlour victims?

17          A. I find that a really difficult question to answer. We  
18          have been very clear, I hope, in our opening statement  
19          and in our whole approach to the Inquiry, that we  
20          understand the legal separation and that is the basis on  
21          which we have been asked to respond to the Inquiry.

22          Q. Of course. I am not suggesting otherwise.

23          A. Yes, absolutely. We also understand that the heads of  
24          Aberlour House and Gordonstoun for significant periods,  
25          from the corporate memory that you referenced earlier,

1           operated separately.

2           If the phrase "accept moral responsibility" is of  
3           primary importance, then I think that is something that  
4           I would need to think quite carefully about.

5       Q. It was simply taking on from your reference to the  
6       Good Samaritan, would you accept that you have to pick  
7       up the injured from Aberlour?

8       A. Absolutely, and I would hope that we have done that.  
9       And I think -- to be really clear, I think it is  
10       absolutely important that survivors of abuse at  
11       Aberlour House are heard and that they have the support  
12       and recompense that they need.

13           The law doesn't allow us to do that which is why,  
14           for example, with my absolute moral support, a number of  
15           them have had Aberlour House Limited reinstated to the  
16           Companies House register in order that they may take  
17           civil action against the insurers.

18       Q. You understand civil law is not something that I am  
19       interested in for a variety of reasons?

20       A. Indeed.

21       LADY SMITH: The law part, Lisa, if you put yourself in the  
22       shoes of somebody who was a child at Aberlour, in the  
23       era when for example the literature was telling them  
24       they were part of Gordonstoun, Gordonstoun was drawing  
25       them on from Aberlour, not just that it was linked, but

1 the literature could give the impression to their  
2 parents as well as to them that Gordonstoun and Aberlour  
3 were all part of the same thing. Is it entirely  
4 understandable that they may feel that it was not only  
5 people at Aberlour in positions of responsibility who  
6 let them down, but it was people at Gordonstoun in  
7 positions of responsibility who let them down?

8 A. My Lady, I think that is extremely well expressed, and  
9 I think with the benefit of hindsight it is possible and  
10 it is right to ask whether those in positions of  
11 responsibility at Gordonstoun did ask enough questions.

12 LADY SMITH: Yes. Thank you.

13 MR BROWN: Those are issues obviously we can ask people  
14 closer connected in time about. Thank you.

15 We touched on socio-economic strata in  
16 **CIPHER WITHDRAWN**'s letter of **██████████**. Looking then at the  
17 structure, and I am focusing on Gordonstoun, just  
18 looking at Gordonstoun now, and of course Aberlour,  
19 because it is on the same campus, as of --

20 A. 2004.

21 Q. Thank you. There is no question it is certainly under  
22 all one umbrella now which you are the leader of.

23 Gordonstoun became co-educational ...

24 A. In 1972, so it has been co-educational for the majority  
25 of its existence.

1 Q. In terms of just the make-up of the school over time,  
2 obviously Kurt Hahn set it up as a boarding school  
3 because he thought boarding was important, is there day  
4 provision to any degree?

5 A. Is there day provision? Yes, there is. In the junior  
6 school we are about two-thirds day, which is reflective  
7 of the age of the children. In the senior school about  
8 10 to 15% day, although actually our day pupils spend  
9 most of their time at school as the boarders would, so  
10 really all they are doing at home is sleeping in term  
11 time.

12 Q. Has that split been fairly constant for some period of  
13 time or is it something that evolves over time in  
14 itself?

15 A. It has been constant. I think if one were to look back  
16 at old Aberlour House and the junior school now, I think  
17 we would see a much greater proportion of day pupils in  
18 the junior school now, in line with the trend away from  
19 boarding at younger ages.

20 In the rest of the school, the make-up of the school  
21 has remained remarkably consistent over time, in  
22 particular the split of one-third international,  
23 one-third Scottish, one-third the rest of the UK.

24 Q. I was coming to that.

25 A. I beg your pardon.

1 Q. Not at all. In terms of that international element, it  
2 has always been part of Gordonstoun?

3 A. It has. And really from the very founding of the school  
4 when Kurt Hahn left Salem and came to Moray, even within  
5 the first ten pupils in the school, the tenth of whom  
6 was Prince Philip, there was extraordinary diversity  
7 both in terms of socio-economic diversity and also  
8 international. So internationalism has been very much  
9 at the heart of Gordonstoun from the beginning and  
10 really speaks to one of the core elements of the ethos,  
11 which is learning to live alongside people who are  
12 different from you and appreciate them not despite their  
13 differences but because of their differences.

14 Q. In terms of socio-economic, we read on page 5, part A,  
15 GOR.001.001.0003, 37% of your current students, this was  
16 when you produced it in 2017 and no doubt it has changed  
17 subsequently:

18 "... 37% of students have fee reductions of varying  
19 levels up to 100% of the fees, established by  
20 means-testing, except in the case of scholarships ..."

21 That remains roughly the same, I take it?

22 A. It does, yes. Socio-economic diversity is really  
23 important, it goes back partly to comments that  
24 Kurt Hahn made about removing the elements of privilege,  
25 and having those who maybe come from privilege

1 backgrounds to appreciate those who may have a very  
2 different background.

3 Q. In terms of the international side, with so many  
4 international students, we have touched on this with  
5 other heads, is it expected those who come to  
6 Gordonstoun in terms of English language skills are  
7 suitably proficient?

8 A. It is, yes. There is an English language assessment  
9 that has to be passed.

10 Q. Again, so concerns that people may not understand  
11 shouldn't arise because there will have been  
12 an assessment to establish that at the outset?

13 A. That is right, yes.

14 Q. Could we look, please, at GOR-000004461, to move on to  
15 the establishment itself. This is lifted from  
16 Gordonstoun's own material, and we see the original main  
17 building?

18 A. Gordonstoun House.

19 Q. Which is presumably where you operate from on a daily  
20 basis?

21 A. It is. We're very lucky.

22 Q. We can see points marking where it is in Scotland, in  
23 the north -- on the north coast on the Moray Firth,  
24 close to Elgin. And if we go down just fractionally,  
25 one sees the general map with RAF Lossiemouth.

1 A. Very good neighbours.

2 Q. And then Hopeman fishing village off to the left of the  
3 map and the Gordonstoun estate and school building.

4 If we go over to page 2, and I think this again sets  
5 out, if nothing else, the Round Square, we can see in  
6 the centre of the map Gordonstoun House itself, the  
7 original building, but also to the right a round  
8 building, which presumably originally was -- was that  
9 stabling?

10 A. Yes, it was the stabling for Sir Robert Gordon. There  
11 is a great story of him building a round building in  
12 order not to be backed into the corner by the devil.

13 Q. And that is Round Square?

14 A. That is Round Square, hence the Round Square movement.

15 Q. Yes. Obviously it is an estate setting, and we see the  
16 detail, obviously we can read for ourselves. There are  
17 a great number of outlying buildings which will reflect  
18 different houses, classrooms and the like. So within  
19 the school is it fair to say there is a fair amount  
20 of movement between buildings?

21 A. There is. We often talk about Gordonstoun as being  
22 a school without corridors.

23 Q. Security obviously is an issue, and that we may come to  
24 in the second phase of the Inquiry. Is it fair to say  
25 that security as between buildings, as between movement

1           between buildings prior to the 1990s, certainly was not  
2           really a matter of great focus?

3           A. It is interesting when you compare Gordonstoun's campus  
4           with that of other boarding schools. For example,  
5           Harrow in England where, in order to move from one  
6           building to another, you might be walking down a busy  
7           road. Many parents choose Gordonstoun because of its  
8           safe and rural location. Apart from the village of  
9           Duffus, and the RAF which obviously has its own fencing,  
10          there is not much else around. We have security  
11          barriers at the east and west gates and in term time  
12          24 hour security from a team of four.

13          Q. That is now?

14          A. Yes, it is.

15          Q. When was that introduced?

16          A. In a sort of staggered way, but I think in our  
17          submission, I wouldn't be able to recollect the date off  
18          the top of my head. It will have been -- the security  
19          guard will have been introduced a few decades ago, and  
20          locks on buildings are reported in the school  
21          development plan from I think 1994. Key locks on  
22          boarding houses.

23          Q. Yes, that is why I was make the point again in the 1990s  
24          the penny is beginning to drop --

25          A. It is.



1 Q. -- that life is not just straightforward, and one can't  
2 perhaps make the assumptions that have been operating  
3 the previous 60 years of the schools' existence?

4 A. I think in a whole range of areas the 1990s was a period  
5 where there was a recognition of the importance of  
6 quality assurance coming in. Part of the Gordonstoun  
7 founding ethos is the idea of trust, that you trust  
8 young people to do the right thing, to undertake  
9 a walking punishment, for example, and many of our  
10 alumni bemoan the loss of the trust system, but it is  
11 very sadly incompatible with quality assurance which is  
12 what is so important in modern education and care.

13 Q. Looking at the map, and it makes the point if one looks  
14 at the all the detail provided in the bottom left corner  
15 and further down the screen, obviously there is a house  
16 system at Gordonstoun and that will have changed over  
17 time, is that fair? It fluctuates presumably with  
18 numbers, with girls coming in, there is transition?

19 A. It does, and for significant periods in the school's  
20 history some of the houses were off campus. They are  
21 now all on campus.

22 Q. That is why I mentioned Hopeman. It had a house at one  
23 point?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Was there a house at one stage in the 50s in Forres?

1 A. Yes, one near Rothes, yes, Elgin.

2 Q. And again one of the concerns may be, looking at the  
3 historical approach to schooling, there was a great deal  
4 of assumption these systems would work. In terms of  
5 oversight, oversight would have been present in terms of  
6 a housemaster, one takes it, upon whom a great deal of  
7 responsibility would fall for the day-to-day running and  
8 for, example, discipline of those semi-autonomous  
9 buildings if not organisations?

10 A. Yes, I think that is right, and I don't think that is  
11 just limited to those buildings that were off-site.  
12 I think the level of autonomy that was granted to  
13 housemasters in that era is at a level that we today  
14 would find astonishing and completely unacceptable, and  
15 it is not hard to draw a line between that and  
16 particularly the peer-to-peer bullying that some  
17 students experienced in some houses that I hope we have  
18 disclosed openly to the Inquiry.

19 Q. That is what I was coming to because I think in your  
20 part D, we will come back to this, there is  
21 acknowledgement that it's clear the way individual  
22 houses were run impacted on the degree of purported  
23 abuse to you or abuse that you have discovered looking  
24 through the records that have been kept. Shortly put,  
25 some weren't managed well, is that fair?

1       A. I think it is fair. And there are these -- to be  
2       completely candid, we recognise there are individual  
3       incidents, some of them very serious throughout school's  
4       history but there is a particular period of particular  
5       concern in the 70s and 80s where some houses were  
6       clearly not well run and if that bullying was known  
7       about, was known about, nothing appropriate was done  
8       about it.

9       Q. In relation to, though, these autonomous houses, the  
10      examples you give where there was bullying, does the  
11      school accept that sort of set up can allow a code of  
12      silence effectively to operate, and it has kept --  
13      things are kept in-house and not reported more widely,  
14      that is one end of the scale. But the other is the  
15      simply inadequate oversight of the house by the  
16      controlling mind, the head of the school?

17     A. I think it's worth thinking about. I have certainly  
18     reflected a great deal on why that culture might have  
19     developed, and it's not universal. It's very  
20     interesting that there is at least one boarding house  
21     through that period where there were not significant  
22     issues occurring. I think there are a couple of  
23     possibilities, one of which is that that amount of trust  
24     and autonomy went wrong, went too far. I think also we  
25     see it as a period in the sector where there was

1 a completely unacceptable view that these are just the  
2 things that happen, and that whether staff moving from  
3 other schools where that happened, or pupils indeed  
4 moving from other schools where that culture was  
5 accepted, whether that had some kind of effect on  
6 changing.

7 What I think was a culture, at least in an official  
8 level, it is said bullying is not acceptable in any  
9 form, you see that quite clearly in the policies of the  
10 time, that those policies were not being followed  
11 through within some of the houses.

12 Q. And I suppose, taking it on, either weren't being  
13 understood at managerial level or were being ignored?

14 A. I think either of those things is possible.

15 Q. This brings us on to a concern. Obviously we talked  
16 about the fact that Gordonstoun in 2016 took a decision  
17 in terms of the senior management team and you, your  
18 appointment, that it is taking a very businesslike  
19 approach, which one may understand in terms of your  
20 experience of a regulatory framework, because the  
21 educational world is becoming very regulated and you can  
22 bring much to that because of your professional  
23 experience over and above the educational side.

24 Obviously image matters to a school. I'm not being  
25 critical, but you would understand that it's

1 an important part and parcel of your daily work,  
2 I suppose, how Gordonstoun is presented in the public  
3 side of things. Fair?

4 A. Yes, it is, it is fair that image matters. I think for  
5 Gordonstoun actually the flipside -- the reverse of that  
6 hypothesis is true, in that the Gordonstoun reputation  
7 has by and large always been inaccurately negative when  
8 compared to the reality of the school, for all the  
9 reasons that we understand given the reputation and some  
10 individual cases.

11 Q. One hears the same stock phrases trotted out --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- no matter what is being reported. What I am  
14 interested in is going back to the 1960s and 1970s,  
15 which you have identified perhaps as a period when there  
16 was scope for abuse to take place because of inadequate  
17 leadership, I suppose, within houses, and following that  
18 up, potentially inadequate leadership at management  
19 level of the school. Do you think because it is  
20 a business it has to survive though in that period image  
21 might have played a part in not responding?

22 A. The first thing I would say is I would extend it to the  
23 80s.

24 Q. All right.

25 A. You are asking for an opinion. My opinion actually is

1 no, that this will not have been about image, I think it  
2 will have been actually about a lack of awareness of  
3 how -- how to keep children safe. And I think that is  
4 not a Gordonstoun issue at that time, although clearly  
5 it was an issue at Gordonstoun, if you understand the  
6 distinction, but it is a societal understanding. It is  
7 clear that for decades one thought that if a member of  
8 staff was an adequate teacher and a good chap, then they  
9 could be in charge of a boarding house. That is so  
10 different from our understanding of how things are  
11 today.

12 Q. What I am perhaps getting at is the fact that  
13 financially there is ebb and flow, there are times where  
14 the school may be more financially stressed, and at that  
15 point is that a time, do you think, because you have  
16 obviously reflected a great deal and gone through  
17 a great deal of information about the school in these  
18 periods, do you get any sense that there was anxiety:  
19 we can't reveal that things are less than perfect?

20 A. I haven't seen any evidence of that, but I do understand  
21 that the absence of evidence is it not the same as the  
22 evidence of absence.

23 Q. I am just interested because again, and it's not so much  
24 Gordonstoun but with other schools, one is aware  
25 for example of the importance of assisted places in

1 keeping funding going and there is great focus --  
2 Gordonstoun may be rather different, although I think  
3 there was use of assisted places at some periods?

4 A. I would need to check the records on that one actually,  
5 I am sorry. I am not suggesting that it is not been  
6 a factor, just there has been nothing I have seen that  
7 has made me think that is a factor.

8 Q. No, I am grateful, because I know you have clearly gone  
9 to a great deal of effort to produce the reports that  
10 you have in such detail.

11 We touched there on leadership, and obviously you  
12 are the latest evolution of leadership at Gordonstoun.  
13 Can we go to part A, GOR.001.001.0003 at page 53. The  
14 importance of leadership, which I think would you accept  
15 as a distinct requirement for a headmaster is now ever  
16 more important as a concept?

17 A. I am not sure I understand the question.

18 Q. You have been brought in because you have been a leader  
19 in business.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Therefore one might assume Gordonstoun thinks it is  
22 terribly important that our senior management team, our  
23 corporate leadership, is professional and on top of its  
24 game. Leadership is fundamental in a school's operation  
25 now, as I said, if nothing else because of increasing

1 regulation.

2 A. Yes, I think leadership is absolutely essential and it  
3 is not just about one person. I think if we look back  
4 in the sector it will significantly have been about the  
5 culture set by one person, but good leadership of  
6 a school depends upon a strong leadership team, and  
7 certainly today that is what we have. And I think what  
8 I have seen from the records, particularly from the  
9 early 1990s onwards, there was a real recognition that a  
10 complex organisation, and a boarding school is  
11 an incredibly complex organisation, requires a good team  
12 of leaders.

13 Q. You say here, in terms of going down to paragraph 3:

14 "What experience/qualifications did such staff  
15 have?"

16 And this is where you go through in the response  
17 a review of who has been running Gordonstoun. And  
18 obviously you have at the beginning Kurt Hahn, who was  
19 a very forthright individual one gets the sense of?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And he determines how the school operates at every  
22 level, is that fair?

23 A. He does, and he was a very strong individual, he had  
24 a very clear sense of ethos. And the appointment of  
25 staff at that time, from what we have seen, was



1 significantly about those who could help deliver the  
2 ethos. He was also recognised as an eccentric  
3 character, I guess a genius often is an eccentric  
4 character, and there was at the time then a pretty  
5 substantial school council built to oversee how he  
6 worked, and I think the move to a joint leadership team  
7 then in the Brereton era shows a recognition of the  
8 complexity.

9 Q. Yes, the joint headmaster with FRG Chew?

10 A. Bobby Chew, yes, who had been there from the founding of  
11 the school with Hahn.

12 Q. But at its inception, Hahn sets it up, Hahn selects the  
13 staff --

14 A. He does.

15 Q. -- Hahn is the (inaudible) singular?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And then there is the gentle progression presumably as  
18 time passes and the school grows. You have provided  
19 numbers. At its inception it was ten and we are now  
20 around 600?

21 A. Yes, in the senior school about 430 and in the junior  
22 school 110.

23 Q. And the real growth I think, as we see from -- was in  
24 the 60s, where suddenly it goes into the 3/400 level  
25 fairly consistently.

1           Over the page, looking at the transition, you then  
2           have a teacher in place, and you mentioned his widow's  
3           letter which you received, JWR Kempe, who is in for ten  
4           years. In that decade Mr Kempe, albeit -- we will come  
5           on to the governance in terms of board in a while, but  
6           at that stage he is still the controlling mind  
7           primarily. How the tone of the school is appearing in  
8           relation to other establishments is set by that  
9           individual?

10          A. Yes, indeed.

11          Q. And one sees that, for example, we will come to this in  
12           a moment, how corporal punishment is managed. It is  
13           very much down to the perceptions of that individual?

14          A. Yes, I think this speaks to the report that the Inquiry  
15           has seen from Delyth Lynch about the charismatic leader,  
16           which can be a great force for good. The best heads in  
17           those eras were benevolent dictators, I suspect. But  
18           there is risk in that, real risk in that, and that is  
19           why systems, processes, policies, leadership teams,  
20           quality assurance are so important.

21          Q. So an individual character can be contained?

22          A. Can be -- can have all their good elements harnessed and  
23           any of their failings appropriately managed.

24          Q. Contained?

25          A. Yes, I think it is just about -- it's about proper

1 governance and management.

2 Q. Yes. Are you accepting until perhaps the 1990s, proper  
3 control and management didn't exist as we would  
4 understand it now?

5 A. Absolutely.

6 Q. But we see then Michael Mavor comes in in 79 to 90, he  
7 has inherited a lot of staff from the previous regime,  
8 they are all qualified, but there is still certainly in  
9 that period the importance of the one man driving the  
10 direction of the school still in place?

11 A. Yes, and I think each of those heads in those eras will  
12 have had the thing they wanted to achieve through their  
13 leadership. That is what makes a good leader,  
14 of course, it's a vision of what they want to achieve.  
15 But you are right, very much one person in those eras.

16 Q. Do we see a tradition with Mark Pyper coming in in 1990  
17 and he is in position for 21 years?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. That is the period, and we will hear from him in due  
20 course, that is where the transition to approaching the  
21 modern school begins to start?

22 A. Yes, I think that is right, and this is where the  
23 charismatic individual can be a real force for good, and  
24 from day one Mark was very clear about -- and I can call  
25 him Mark just because he continues to be in contact with

1           the school -- but he had a very clear idea from day one  
2           that pastoral care was his priority. Now that also  
3           of course aligns with societal changes at the time.

4           Q. So quite how one goes hand-in-hand with the other we had  
5           perhaps better ask him?

6           A. Yes, although when you consider his CV, he was appointed  
7           when he was quite young, his CV does show experience in  
8           other boarding schools, so there will have been a degree  
9           of personal experience there.

10           I think this point about is it society, is it the  
11           school, is it the regulator, is actually really  
12           important, and when those three things work together you  
13           create a virtuous cycle of improvement, and I think it  
14           is quite hard to say, well, what was it? Was it that  
15           inspection that prompted something, or was it the  
16           Children Act, or was that particular head? Actually  
17           what really makes things better is when all of those  
18           things are aligned, and you have this -- you end up with  
19           a culture of self-evaluation, which also comes in in the  
20           1990s, and self-evaluation and reflection is incredibly  
21           important.

22           Q. So one may have triggered the other, but of course  
23           conditions have to be right, there has to be a receptive  
24           hearing of changes introduced?

25           A. I don't think Mark always had a receptive ear at the

1 school. His evidence to the Inquiry states that. And  
2 actually in speaking with him, it does somewhat  
3 strengthen one's resolve to keep doing the right thing.  
4 Whatever that context might be for me now as a leader,  
5 it was clear what it was for him in the early 90s. He  
6 knew what needed to be done and even if it was difficult  
7 he was going to do it.

8 Q. That would turn on his view of what was right?

9 A. Yes, and his experience, which was then very much backed  
10 up by the developments in the sector in that decade.

11 Q. He is then followed, and I think perhaps one of  
12 the points to touch on, and we will come back to this  
13 a little later, is at this stage employment of teachers  
14 is becoming -- or is it being understood as actually  
15 very important and the need to check?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. The need to have a good process. That is the time this  
18 is beginning to come in, is that as you would understand  
19 matters?

20 A. Absolutely. As we were saying earlier, this is the era  
21 where actually just assuming that everything is okay is  
22 no longer acceptable. One has to check that everything  
23 is okay.

24 Q. Because you touched earlier on about the way -- the  
25 difficulties you have because of the particular nature

1 of Gordonstoun of employing staff with the appropriate  
2 Scottish qualifications, qua GTCS. In reality I think,  
3 and we have heard this again from others, within the  
4 boarding school world it's literally a UK world and staff  
5 will tend to come from a sector which was UK-wide and  
6 move between different parts of the UK, is that  
7 an accurate assessment?

8 A. It is actually, and also increasingly internationally.

9 Q. Is that particularly Gordonstoun with the international  
10 element or would you understand that is true of  
11 all -- the entire sector?

12 A. I think it is probably true of all the sector, because  
13 of the growing number of international schools, so  
14 British style international schools overseas.

15 Q. There is a reference there under Mark Pyper's tenure to  
16 the importance of checking List 99, and appropriate  
17 guidelines that -- school guidelines to ensure there was  
18 no reason not to employ.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Prior to that, from your researches of the school  
21 records, can you say what level of checking was being  
22 done prior to the 1990s?

23 A. Not to any significant extent, I'm afraid. The records  
24 aren't --

25 Q. Is your impression as much as anything else there may

1           have been references, but it is very much a small world  
2           where everyone probably knows everyone else and it's  
3           an assessment whether someone is a good chap or not?

4           A. That would be my impression.

5           Q. With Simon Reid, Mark Pyper's successor, obviously this  
6           is a time of ever increasing regulation, we heard about  
7           this in terms of the GIRFEC and SHANARRI which you  
8           obviously missed when it came in?

9           A. I saw it from a governance perspective.

10          Q. Absolutely, but from day-to-day running --

11          A. Yes.

12          Q. This is the era where things started in the mid-1990s  
13          under Mark Pyper, in Simon Reid's time, we will come  
14          back to governance, don't worry, this is where things  
15          really begin to speed up, is that your sense?

16          A. I think this is the era when we see the development of  
17          the things that are much -- that are at the heart of how  
18          we manage pastoral care now, yes.

19          Q. Could we just talk briefly about different approaches in  
20          terms of corporate punishment and go to page 73 of the  
21          same document. Gordonstoun has had its own particular  
22          brand of punishment in the sense you have mentioned  
23          walks. Can you explain that?

24          A. Sure. So this does speak to Gordonstoun being a very  
25          different kind of boarding school, so not one set up to

1 educate the children of Empire builders but rather one  
2 set up in order to develop young people of character in  
3 the fact of fascism, and Kurt Hahn stance against  
4 fascism, and he believed it was possible to have  
5 a completely different kind of education that was not  
6 just about academic ability and attainment,  
7 but developing one's sense of self and character through  
8 this breadth of curriculum.

9         Alongside that, as I have mentioned, a real  
10 commitment to compassion as an overriding character  
11 characteristic of the school, and he did not believe in  
12 corporal punishment. I would say from what I have read  
13 as an organisation the school did not ever believe in  
14 corporal punishment. The kind of punishments that  
15 Kurt Hahn would impose would be to ask a boy to walk to  
16 the watch tower, walk to the coast and back, to reflect  
17 on what they had done.

18         I think it is quite interesting that that  
19 self-reflection that was encouraged in pupils now sits  
20 at the heart of the regulation of education,  
21 self-evaluation and reflection. So it was walking  
22 punishments, and the students were trusted to do those  
23 walking punishments.

24 Q. There was also I think penalty drill --

25 A. Running around. So not a walking punishment, a running



1 punishment, yes.

2 Q. Yes. I think we see the continuation of that on page 73  
3 under the assessment of Mr Kempe's regime where, as the  
4 reports says, it seems a harsher, more conventional  
5 boarding school culture was allowed to develop, but  
6 having made the point, discipline in houses was very  
7 much the responsibility of housemasters to find  
8 solutions --

9 A. It was, yes. In that period, yes.

10 Q. So there is evolution, and perhaps going back to what we  
11 were talking about before, but, himself, Kempe was  
12 explicitly anti-corporal punishment and is recorded as  
13 saying:

14 "I am opposed to this, though I think it might be  
15 unwise to say that we have abolished it. Housemasters  
16 should ask me if they wish to beat a boy and I hope that  
17 this will be very seldom. I cannot see that it has ever  
18 reformed a boy."

19 He was also of the belief the penalty drill of  
20 running around a field should only be used for the most  
21 serious of offences, other less serious offences should  
22 be dealt with in-house.

23 So this is perhaps at odds with the sector view of  
24 life in the 1960s and 70s where corporal punishment was  
25 still very much the norm, would that be your

1           understanding?

2           A. Yes, it would.

3           LADY SMITH: What exactly was involved in penalty drill?

4           A. From my understanding it was a number of laps to be run  
5           around the South Lawn.

6           MR BROWN: Within a period of time I think. I think we  
7           should add fagging, which I think is understood as  
8           a norm in boarding schools, in fact didn't take place  
9           formally --

10          A. No, it did not.

11          Q. -- at Gordonstoun.

12          A. That is not to say there wasn't unkindness between older  
13          and younger pupils.

14          Q. But it wasn't part of the regime?

15          A. It wasn't part of the culture.

16          LADY SMITH: Of course fagging as a concept didn't need to  
17          involve unkindness, as I understand it, although it was  
18          a system whereby a younger boy had to provide service,  
19          assistance, help to the older boy, and a lot would  
20          depend on whether the older boy was inclined to treat  
21          the younger boy harshly or not.

22          A. Yes. I wouldn't profess to be an expert on fagging, but  
23          certainly when I have read Mark Pyper's testimony he was  
24          concerned there might be some younger pupils being asked  
25          to do things at the request of older pupils but it

1           certainly wasn't part of the culture.

2           MR BROWN: The culture I think as you said was one of --  
3           going back to Kurt Hahn -- service. So there was  
4           an expectation on all pupils to perform services within  
5           the school, is that correct?

6           A. Yes, services within the school to their house, to their  
7           school, and most importantly actually to the community.  
8           Hahn basically believed, and we continue to believe  
9           today, that one's sense of self-is developed by being of  
10          service to others. So not what one can get out of life,  
11          rather what one can put into life.

12          Q. I think in the context of what would be more  
13          traditionally understood by fagging and younger pupils  
14          performing services, in Gordonstoun perhaps the  
15          expectation was that everyone carried out services?

16          A. Yes, keeping the boarding house clean and tidy, helping  
17          with the gardens and the grounds, or something like  
18          being part of the coastguard service or the fire service  
19          or the community service.

20          Q. So perhaps a less vertical system of being -- having to  
21          do things for people further up the tree, it was  
22          horizontal?

23          A. Yes.

24          Q. That culture though I think as we see, and again it's  
25          just interesting in terms of the fact of a given

1 headmaster, one sees on page 74, looking at  
2 Michael Mavor's leadership period, his focus was to  
3 raise academic standards primarily?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Do you know, was he brought in with that purpose in  
6 mind?

7 A. I don't -- I can't recall for certain whether I have  
8 seen this anywhere. I suspect that if that was his aim  
9 he would have expressed that at interview.

10 Q. But I think as we go on to read:

11 "The general perception was to raise the school's  
12 academic standards and it was in this period that the  
13 school's culture seems to have been most at odds with  
14 its ethos."

15 So within Gordonstoun there had been periods where  
16 there was tension between the two?

17 A. Yes, and that would be consistent with what we have  
18 reported to the Inquiry --

19 Q. Absolutely --

20 A. -- to peer to peer bullying, yes.

21 Q. -- yes. So the school's culture, rehearsing a point  
22 which we have already discussed, makes the point  
23 forcefully. The culture at that period was determined  
24 by the individual and that can have profound effects on  
25 the ethos and the school as a whole?

1 A. Yes, absolutely.

2 Q. As we see, trust system -- again can you explain the  
3 trust system?

4 A. So the trust system was part of the founding ethos of  
5 the school where each child had a training plan, things  
6 they needed to do for themselves. And it is really --  
7 it looks really enlightened when you read it now: I need  
8 to make sure I shower regularly, brush my teeth, but  
9 I also need to take regular exercise, undertake my  
10 studies and so on, and each child would have the plan of  
11 how they were going to develop as a student and as  
12 an individual and they were trusted to get on and do  
13 that themselves. They had to engage in significant  
14 self-reflection.

15 Actually it was one of many ways in which I think  
16 the Gordonstoun ethos was very much ahead of its time.  
17 Morning runs being another, even cold showers, one might  
18 argue, now very much in fashion. But the trust system  
19 was about trusting each child to fulfil their training  
20 plan, but also trusting if a punishment, a walking  
21 punishment in particular, was given to that child that  
22 they would do it themselves.

23 Q. Again at this time Gordonstoun has a Colour Bearers  
24 system, again can you summarise that?

25 A. So Colour Bearers are Gordonstoun's prefects. They were

1 originally chosen only by pupils but are now chosen by  
2 pupils and staff collectively. They take significant  
3 responsibility for the running of the school. Every  
4 student at Gordonstoun is expected to help and be  
5 responsible for themselves and for others, but  
6 Colour Bearers are particularly significant. They meet  
7 the head of the senior school weekly, talk through  
8 issues, bring things to the attention of staff, but also  
9 will be involved in responsibilities. For example  
10 during COVID, our Colour Bearers have been responsible  
11 for marshalling the lunch queues to make sure physical  
12 distancing has been observed.

13 Q. But as we see, again looking at Michael Mavor's period,  
14 he dismantled the Colour Bearer system and introduced  
15 effectively the standard prefect system. It makes the  
16 point this was a democratic selection by the pupils, but  
17 that was altered to allow staff interference  
18 I suppose --

19 A. Checks and balances maybe.

20 Q. And selection. What then became as you say the  
21 hierarchy between seniors and juniors familiar in  
22 boarding schools across the UK, but not much present  
23 within Gordonstoun in early years, was evident at this  
24 time and this was very much a hierarchy?

25 A. Yes, I think that was consistent with what Mark Pyper

1 found when he arrived that there was a very unwelcome  
2 hierarchy. For anybody involved in pastoral care, the  
3 slightest sniff of hierarchy in any boarding  
4 establishment is an early warning sign and something we  
5 are always incredibly on the watch out for.

6 Q. The page closes, as you will see:

7 "The seniors in the boarding houses were in charge  
8 of the juniors and the conventional boarding school  
9 dynamic developed of a senior dominance over juniors."

10 This is suggestive that what is standard in boarding  
11 schools is dangerous. You would agree with that?

12 A. I think what was standard in boarding schools at that  
13 time was dangerous, yes. Hierarchy is to be avoided at  
14 all costs in boarding.

15 Q. Yes. From your knowledge of the sector, has that really  
16 changed?

17 A. Yes, completely.

18 Q. Within Gordonstoun?

19 A. Absolutely.

20 Q. How is there no longer a hierarchy?

21 A. We go back to the ethos, and actually I would refer back  
22 to Delyth Lynch's report again at this point. One of  
23 the things she talks about is the most important way to  
24 avoid abuse happening actually, or one of the most  
25 important ways, is to make sure all children are well

1           cared for. So hierarchy is avoided by a real sense of  
2           as you said earlier service, so older students being in  
3           service of younger students, not the other way round,  
4           and of every child being appropriately supported by  
5           I would call it a matrix of staff, and every child  
6           having multiple trusted adults to whom they can turn if  
7           there are problems.

8           Q. The reason I ask, you have talked about the colour  
9           system and how it operates. There would still  
10          objectively sound to be a hierarchy in Gordonstoun in  
11          the sense there are people who are in dominant positions  
12          because of age and experience?

13          A. I think there is a difference between responsibility and  
14          hierarchy.

15          Q. All right.

16          A. I think it is also true in -- sorry, my Lady.

17          LADY SMITH: Go on.

18          A. I think it is also true in staffing, I think. So  
19          I mentioned earlier about benevolent dictators in  
20          staffing. I would say that the kind of historic  
21          practice in schools has been for there to be a very  
22          hierarchical staffing structure. That is not the case  
23          now, and something that I work particularly hard at with  
24          my team, to make sure that every voice of every member  
25          of staff is heard, just as staff make sure that every



1 voice of every pupil is heard.

2 MR BROWN: What I was coming on to is the continuation of  
3 that paragraph, which is:

4 "It was exacerbated by the standard teenage - and  
5 boarding school - 'conspiracy of silence' where students  
6 didn't 'tell' if there were problems in the peer group."

7 Then you go on to say:

8 "Consequently, we know of instances where some of  
9 the internal running of the school was not always in  
10 line with the standards set as a whole."

11 Is this making the point it is not just one thing,  
12 it's a whole range of aspects that have to work together  
13 to provide a safe school?

14 A. Absolutely. It is really complicated. So good  
15 regulation doesn't keep children safe, PVG alone doesn't  
16 keep children safe, good staffing. There is great  
17 complexity and a whole range of things need to work  
18 together. The telling culture is very important, but  
19 staff training is really important, and I think one of  
20 the most helpful changes has been training staff to  
21 notice what are the signs when something is wrong.  
22 Obviously I have been watching the evidence the Inquiry  
23 has heard in recent days and I know you have asked about  
24 quiet children. Actually the greatest area of risk is  
25 a change in a child. So we are really well set up and



1 part A of the response which is GOR.001.001.0003 at  
2 page 68. There is a full set out, as with other parts  
3 of your response, setting out at considerable length and  
4 detail the make-up of the governing body.

5 Again consistent with other schools we have already  
6 heard about, no doubt we will hear of from ones yet to  
7 come, has governance in your experience both from what  
8 you have seen as a governor but also from what you have  
9 read, as you clearly have about Gordonstoun's past, has  
10 governance become a much more serious business in terms  
11 of the way that a board will operate?

12 A. It certainly seems to me from having been involved in  
13 researching our submission to the Inquiry that governors  
14 at Gordonstoun have always been quite involved and quite  
15 active, but I think it would be fair to say that the  
16 seriousness with which trustees take their  
17 responsibilities has sharpened. As a governor myself  
18 from the late 1990s, I was obviously a governor in  
19 an era by which time the formalisation of the importance  
20 of things like child protection had very much already  
21 come into being, so certainly when I was a governor it  
22 was a pretty onerous responsibility.

23 Q. To come back to your experience, you have a longevity of  
24 governance experience at number of schools which may be  
25 useful for the Inquiry. The onus on a governor or

1 trustee only increases as time passes because of  
2 regulation, because of discovery, of things that perhaps  
3 should have been thought about but were not.

4           Going back to the inception, the school governors  
5 were no doubt appointed because they were local and had  
6 skills that were thought relevant to the school  
7 and could assist, perhaps the (inaudible) presumably of  
8 all boards. But at the beginning I suppose it would be  
9 much more focused on the financial operation of the  
10 school, rather than welfare or education. Those were  
11 the remit of headmasters?

12 A. I would have thought so, yes.

13 Q. Is that the sense you get from having looked at such  
14 board minutes as you have?

15 A. Yes, I think so. That is -- the breadth of  
16 responsibility that governors now hold, with child  
17 protection being the most important, and then all the  
18 other aspects which is now very much like a cable that  
19 has lots of bits at its core, I think that breadth  
20 probably -- it certainly wasn't there to the same extent  
21 earlier on.

22 Q. Thinking of your experience of board attendance  
23 for example, is the expectation now that if you join  
24 a board you will play a part?

25 A. Absolutely, and that has always been my experience as

1           being a governor in the 1990s.

2           Q. Again, from your own experience specifically --

3           A. Yes, of course -- (overspeaking)

4           Q. I suppose, speaking generally, was it a slightly more  
5           laissez faire approach? If they turned up, they turned  
6           up, if they didn't, they didn't, and no one would  
7           particularly be concerned?

8           A. I suppose that is possible. Given I am under oath  
9           I wouldn't want to speculate. I don't have the  
10          knowledge to comment on that.

11          Q. All right. In terms -- we heard of other schools that  
12          it would be a given that membership of the board would  
13          be made up of old boys or girls. Where does Gordonstoun  
14          sit in that structure?

15          A. Gordonstoun's board I would say reflects the diversity  
16          of its student body other than in ethnicity actually, in  
17          that certainly all the time I have been involved in the  
18          board there has been a desire and a recognition of the  
19          helpfulness of having alumni on the board, both male and  
20          female, but that the -- that whilst that has been  
21          benefits, it is important to recognise that what we are  
22          doing is governing today's school, not the school of the  
23          past, so it's only one element of a governing body. And  
24          added to that one would have parents who are governors,  
25          also those who have professional expertise that they can

1 bring, so in our case a lawyer who is a specialist in  
2 child protection or a surveyor or an accountant, or in  
3 our Chair, someone who is an expert in the leadership  
4 development. So a whole range of skills, the board  
5 really having a diverse range of skills so they can act  
6 collectively in the best interests of the charity.

7 Q. In terms of timescale of appointment, we can see from  
8 your report there is no minimum or maximum tenure, but  
9 it's envisaged that governors will serve for five years,  
10 subject to satisfactory performance. Who makes that  
11 assessment?

12 A. Primarily made by the Chair of governors, but would be  
13 in consultation with her Deputy Chair, and we have  
14 a subcommittee of the board called the board executive,  
15 which is made up of the Chair of all of our various  
16 committees, so the education committee, development  
17 committee, finance committee, and that board executive  
18 meets more regularly than the main board which meets  
19 three times a year, so it will be looking at those sorts  
20 of issues. And then we have a nominations committee  
21 that would also be looking at the board succession.

22 Q. When was the nominations committee set up, do you know?

23 A. I can't remember off the top of my head.

24 Q. Was it in place when you were appointed?

25 A. No. So actually one of the jobs I performed as a

1 governor was a review of committees and governance, and  
2 the establishment of the nominations and remuneration  
3 committee was part of that piece of work.

4 Q. Remuneration in what context?

5 A. Remuneration of the school executive, so the board sets  
6 the remuneration of the principal and the bursar.

7 Q. The point being that as a trustee there is no  
8 remuneration --

9 A. No, indeed.

10 Q. It is voluntary?

11 A. It is voluntary.

12 Q. They will take on the onus, and it is an increasing  
13 heavy onus?

14 A. That's right.

15 Q. Because they want to. Yes.

16 One other aspect before we turn to look at your  
17 career as a governor, although this may touch on your  
18 experience as well obviously. We have heard about in  
19 some schools there is an increasing use of governors to  
20 be responsible for house for example, visiting that  
21 house, being another tier of oversight. Is that  
22 something that you have seen happen at Gordonstoun?

23 A. You are right that each school will have its own way of  
24 doing things. Certainly governors are very connected  
25 with the running of the school, but I think it is

1 important to distinguish between being connected with  
2 the running of the school and running the school. So  
3 for example our governors, when they come for board  
4 meetings, they will stay with an HM, so they will spend  
5 a couple of days, the weekend, living in the boarding  
6 house effectively. It's a really great way of them  
7 getting a sense of the school, and have supper with  
8 students or whatever.

9 But I think in addition to having skills on the  
10 board that one can draw upon, for example I talked about  
11 a child protection lawyer, we have other skills that we  
12 can draw on, I think it is really important that the  
13 board can check the work of the executive. If the board  
14 is doing the work, there is no one to check the work,  
15 and so that balance between governance and management is  
16 something that we are always keeping an eye on because  
17 it is so important that having appointed people to do  
18 the job who are properly qualified, properly trained,  
19 trained on an ongoing basis, that the board of governors  
20 really can provide checks and balances.

21 Q. That is a difficult balance to achieve I am sure  
22 sometimes?

23 A. It is, but that is the case. Pastoral care is  
24 difficult. Running a school is difficult. That dynamic  
25 needs to be constantly addressed.



1 LADY SMITH: Lisa, it is self-evident that a board is there  
2 not to do the work but check the work. In the case of  
3 Gordonstoun, how does the board go about checking the  
4 work of the executive?

5 A. The first thing they need to do is have an awareness of  
6 the really important issues that are pertinent.  
7 For example, they will all be child protection trained,  
8 so they will have the base knowledge. They will check  
9 the work by scrutiny through the main board and its  
10 subcommittees, so receiving reports, interrogating those  
11 reports asking for data to back up those reports. Being  
12 in and around the school, you get a really good sense of  
13 a school by being there, so they will come to the school  
14 for a weekend three times a year.

15 LADY SMITH: Do any of them ever ask to see your paperwork?

16 A. Yes.

17 LADY SMITH: So the executive's paperwork?

18 A. Yes, they will do, for example -- I beg your pardon.

19 LADY SMITH: Go on.

20 A. For example in relation to COVID, for example, all of  
21 our risk assessments were scrutinised by our audit and  
22 risk committee. And if we had a child protection  
23 incident, we would -- the paperwork would be available  
24 for governor scrutiny.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1 MR BROWN: I am obliged, my Lady. I was coming on to that.

2 The issue I suppose is the last thing the executive  
3 wants is too much interference, but equally the board  
4 should be concerned, for example, if it is not getting  
5 enough information, it should be proactive in getting  
6 that sort of information out of the executive. And  
7 presumably should there be in the context of, say, child  
8 protection, any issue, would one understand that the  
9 board would be alerted to that.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Immediately by the executive?

12 A. Yes, it's part of my contract of employment that I must  
13 alert the Chair of governors.

14 Q. You have talked already, and we will come to this in  
15 a moment, about the requirement as a contracted teacher  
16 that you must tell, and if you don't you may be  
17 dismissed?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Is the same true of the distinction between teacher and  
20 school management, and management and board?

21 A. Yes, it is.

22 Q. There is an obligation to share --

23 A. There is an obligation yes.

24 Q. Presumably in a real sense, if there was a safeguarding  
25 issue they hadn't been told about and it came out, then

1           you would properly expect them to be all over you?

2           A. Absolutely, I would.

3           Q. By the sounds of it, you spend your time trying to avoid  
4           that scenario?

5           A. Of course. I suppose the other comment I would make is  
6           that you asked about the tension there. I think if that  
7           tension is there, it probably means one is getting the  
8           balance about right.

9           Q. You mentioned training. Training, I think again your  
10          report is full about this. All, you say at page 71:

11                 "... have received child protection training from  
12          the school's wellbeing and child protection co-ordinator  
13          and refresher training provided by the GIRFEC child  
14          protection consultant and members of the current board  
15          of governors also recently attended joint staff/governor  
16          child protection day."

17                 That is obviously going back to 2017. Is that  
18          an annual event?

19          A. The actual events that will take place will be on  
20          a dynamic basis. But in addition to that in-person  
21          contact, which has obviously been more difficult to  
22          provide during COVID, we now have an online child  
23          protection training device whereby not only governors,  
24          this is also undertaken by members of staff, they have  
25          to complete the training, they have to pass a test to

1 show -- it is not just a matter of sitting at the back  
2 of a room listening to someone talk for a few hours, it  
3 is actually really engaging with the topics and making  
4 sure one has a real understanding of child protection.

5 Q. And if you fail?

6 A. You have to -- you have to go back and resit it and  
7 develop your understanding, and any time you take the  
8 test your line manager will be alerted to how you have  
9 got on.

10 Q. In the context of the board, is the line manager the  
11 Chair?

12 A. Yes, it would be the Chair.

13 LADY SMITH: What about the content of the child protection  
14 training and the content of the test? Can you give me  
15 any idea what is involved.

16 A. Absolutely, I am very happy to make the test available  
17 to the Inquiry if that would be useful, but it would  
18 cover things like how to recognise signs of abuse and  
19 the role of individuals in reporting, and the importance  
20 of reporting, reporting and recording and following up.

21 LADY SMITH: If I could see the test that would be  
22 interesting, thank you.

23 A. Of course.

24 MR BROWN: One aspect I think, just to finish on governance,  
25 is the lack of length of tenure. It's not fixed. It

1 can roll and roll and roll. Is that a matter of concern  
2 simply on the basis of everyone has to retire, one sees,  
3 retire annually, but they can simply be reappointed. Is  
4 there a limit to how many times people can be  
5 reappointed? No, by the sounds of it.

6 A. I think in this case it is important to distinguish what  
7 is in the articles of association and how things are  
8 actually run. So although the articles won't hold  
9 a particular limit on tenure, that is something that is  
10 managed by the Chair. I think the flexibility not to be  
11 bound by particular dates can be important.

12 For example, one might have been in the position where  
13 let's say our child protection lawyer was due to step  
14 down at the end of a fixed-term determined by the  
15 articles, and a successor had been identified, if that  
16 successor perhaps then couldn't for whatever reason take  
17 up their post, and one was constrained by the articles  
18 in enabling the incumbent to continue, that would be  
19 undesirable and the Chair might at that point in her  
20 discretion invite that governor to stay on another year  
21 until a successor had been appointed.

22 Q. So a degree of flexibility but also a recognition of the  
23 risk of staleness perhaps?

24 A. Yes. Staleness isn't something I have experienced in my  
25 time on the board. I think actually in some ways the

1 importance to ensure one doesn't lose corporate memory  
2 is very important.

3 Q. To look briefly at your experience as a governor. You  
4 started you said in your 20s?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. That seems very young to be a school governor.

7 A. Yes, I think it probably is quite unusual.

8 Q. If I may ask, what was the connection with the given  
9 school?

10 A. I was a former colleague of the Deputy Chair of  
11 governors, and I had relocated to Kent as part of my  
12 career, and they were looking to improve the diversity  
13 of the board of governors and they wanted more women and  
14 more young people, and from his knowledge of my  
15 professional background he asked if I would be willing  
16 to consider it.

17 Q. So a combination of a number of factors, obviously your  
18 experience presumably being a part of it?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And what you could bring to the board?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. This was the 90s?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Have you been a board governor of a school ever since,  
25 effectively, or have there been periods where you

1 haven't?

2 A. There are periods I have not been. 1999 to -- I haven't  
3 got that right. 2001 to 2006 I wasn't a governor, but  
4 I have had a number of other non-executive posts. So  
5 governing charities, arts charities. I have also been  
6 a regulator of both co-regulation and self-regulation  
7 professional regulation.

8 Q. Just briefly, did you -- were you aware of the  
9 transition, was it very obvious there was a transition  
10 going on in what was expected of a school governor from  
11 when you started to where you were before you were  
12 appointed as principal?

13 A. I think when I became a governor at Gordonstoun, having  
14 had a bit of a gap from my previous school and the  
15 school I was at before, and this is no poor reflection  
16 on that school which was an excellent school,  
17 I certainly think that my connection as a governor with  
18 the safeguarding was much stronger.

19 Q. How long were you governor at Gordonstoun?

20 A. 2006 to 2016.

21 Q. So a decade. In that time when you started,  
22 safeguarding was a bigger issue than it had been at your  
23 previous school. How would you describe the transition  
24 of board responsibility or involvement in the ten years  
25 you sat on the board?

1 A. I suppose initially we might have received more written  
2 reports, but towards the end we were receiving more  
3 in-person reports from the pastoral team and child  
4 protection team, and obviously the advent of formal  
5 training for governors in child protection was towards  
6 the end of my time as governor.

7 Q. Were there any concerns about the absence of training in  
8 child protection? Was that driven by the school or  
9 driven by the state or driven by the board itself,  
10 saying "We want training on this"?

11 A. I can't recall that. I couldn't make a particular  
12 distinction. Probably a growing awareness across all of  
13 those. Certainly looking at inspection, there was  
14 a recognition from the 2000s onwards of the importance  
15 of broader training for everyone involved in schools in  
16 child protection, including in fact senior pupils, but  
17 also all staff, and governors I suppose would have been  
18 part of that natural evolution.

19 Q. Just to be clear, in terms of there being a governor  
20 specifically responsible for child protection  
21 safeguarding, when that was that introduced?

22 A. From recollection, there was such a governor during my  
23 tenure, and there had been one I think in eras gone by.

24 Q. Thank you. You have just mentioned obviously the  
25 development of policies and you talked about being aware



1 of the introduction of GIRFEC, for example, and SHANARRI  
2 from your time as a governor. Was that something that  
3 featured large in governors' meetings?

4 A. Quite significantly, yes, it would be part of the  
5 principal's report to the board of governors and I think  
6 would form part of the discussion. The lion's share of  
7 governors' meetings were taken up with discussing the  
8 principal's report, which was a pretty detailed report  
9 of several dozen pages, going into how the school was  
10 operating from the results of X sports team to the  
11 behavioural experiences of particular children in  
12 particular year groups.

13 Q. As well as presumably finances, buildings, all the other  
14 standard things --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- that boards were more interested?

17 A. In yes.

18 Q. So in that sense over your ten years, did the emphasis  
19 shift away from those fundamentals, or is it just board  
20 meetings have got longer?

21 A. They haven't got longer, I think they have got more  
22 focused on risk and identifying what are the key risks.  
23 Because it is quite interesting to sit around and chat  
24 about how the rugby team might be doing, but that is not  
25 what the matter of governance is about. First and

1           foremost it's child protection, which is why it's the  
2           first item on every board agenda, but it's also about  
3           identifying where are the risks in the organisation.

4           Q. Again just to understand from your experience, who  
5           drives the assessment of risk? Is it board or is it the  
6           headmaster?

7           A. I suppose like all of these things, the board will look  
8           to the leadership of the school to propose the matters  
9           for discussion, and then through interrogation and the  
10          expertise and the scrutiny of members of the board the  
11          piece of work will be developed.

12          LADY SMITH: Who is responsible for keeping your risk  
13          register up-to-date? I take it you have one?

14          A. We have one. Ultimately it is me, but it is devolved on  
15          a day-to-day basis to our bursar and she would work very  
16          closely with the chairman of our audit and risk  
17          committee on that.

18          LADY SMITH: Thank you.

19          MR BROWN: Presumably the risk register is something that is  
20          a fixed point in every board meeting, something that  
21          will be reviewed?

22          A. It will be reviewed as part of the report of the audit  
23          and risk committee's report to the main board.

24          Q. Is that at every main board meeting?

25          A. Yes, all the subcommittees report to the board at every

1 meeting.

2 Q. My point is simply at every board meeting the issue of  
3 risk is discussed?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. It is not something that can be lost sight of?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Thank you. We have talked already this morning, pre the  
8 break session, in many ways, about a number of policies  
9 that have changed, and again I don't wish to dive into  
10 the detail of the various policies because your written  
11 submissions make them clear. We have talked for example  
12 about recruitment and the transition there. From  
13 I think what you accepted, word of mouth might be as  
14 good as any decades ago, and now we are in a very  
15 different position. Your principal concern I take it  
16 would be to follow good practice?

17 A. Yes, and safeguarding practice in that regard, yes.

18 Q. I think you recognise that in the past there have been  
19 times where teachers have been allowed simply to  
20 progress on from Gordonstoun despite there being  
21 concerns?

22 A. Yes, that is a matter of great regret, absolutely, that  
23 referencing in the past was not of the standard that it  
24 would be today.

25 Q. You have talked about mandatory reporting and that is an

1 issue that which might be considered discretely by the  
2 Inquiry at some stage, but obviously it is  
3 an interesting issue in itself. Looking though at  
4 references, obviously you will have been aware working  
5 in the business of the not insignificant use of  
6 compromise agreements and settlement agreements on the  
7 one hand, having a reference that simply confirms  
8 someone who worked at a school between a given set of  
9 times is a fairly good flag there is something  
10 underlying. What is the school's current position about  
11 giving references to teachers if there had been  
12 an issue? What would one expect?

13 A. The first part of our referencing policy is that only  
14 members of the school executive may give a reference, so  
15 if you write to the head of a particular department  
16 asking for a reference it will be referred up, so that  
17 is myself, the bursar, head of senior school, head of  
18 junior school are the only people authorised to give  
19 a reference.

20 The next part of the policy is that child protection  
21 trumps everything, so regardless of a compromise  
22 agreement if there is a matter that needs to be reported  
23 or flagged, it would, it would be reported or flagged.  
24 Our referencing -- so we might agree a reference with  
25 somebody but then a reference request might come through

1 and it will ask particular questions. Some schools will  
2 have a pro forma reference that you need to fill in, so  
3 regardless of whatever you might have agreed with  
4 somebody you to have to fill it in, and that might ask:  
5 have any concerns, even unsubstantiated, ever been  
6 raised? And we would always answer that question  
7 honestly.

8 Q. Can you say, you have been at the school now for  
9 15 years, has that always been the position since you  
10 joined the board in 2006 or is that something that has  
11 developed?

12 A. I would say -- I would go back a little further and say  
13 I am aware of instances in the past where a compromise  
14 agreement has been signed and reference has been agreed,  
15 which is not truthful, I don't think it ever had to be  
16 followed up on, but that was unacceptable. In my time  
17 I think there have been occasions where references have  
18 been agreed, and where I have had to go back  
19 retrospectively and give a fuller reference.

20 Q. Voluntarily?

21 A. Voluntarily.

22 Q. All right.

23 LADY SMITH: You referred to the current practice as part of  
24 your referencing policy, Lisa, and I am sure there is  
25 a lot more to it than the child protection part although

1 I take what you say about child protection trumping  
2 everything. Have you any feel for how many of the  
3 school policies have some element in them that is  
4 directed at child protection?

5 A. We have a huge number of policies.

6 LADY SMITH: I am not expecting an accurate number, I was  
7 just interested in how often it would appear as a matter  
8 covered --

9 A. We have obviously a very extensive child protection  
10 policy which covers a whole range of school areas of  
11 operation, I would expect child protection would be  
12 referred to in a significant number. Maybe not always  
13 in those words, but things that we would understand as  
14 being part of creating a safe environment for children.

15 LADY SMITH: Would you agree that in a school in 2021 that  
16 provides residential care for children, you would want  
17 to see that theme weaving its way through probably the  
18 majority of the school policies, wouldn't you?

19 A. Yes, and we have developed a set of values with our  
20 staff at Gordonstoun and we have asked them what are the  
21 things that should be -- the values we all live and  
22 breathe every day, and they have come up with safe,  
23 positive and improving, and safety -- keeping children  
24 safe is the single most important thing that all of us  
25 do all the time.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MR BROWN: My Lady, I don't think we can put it up on  
3 screen, but this is something that, again, since Lisa  
4 has agreed to provide more information, is a document  
5 that might usefully be updated. With the part C  
6 response was an appendix number 4, which (inaudible) how  
7 much was shared, and it's school policies of interest to  
8 the Inquiry, including review dates. That lists  
9 a number of policies, all of which are extant, and just  
10 to run through them, just to get a sense and then to  
11 follow up with a question, which will be: do these all  
12 include concerns about child protection? Grievance  
13 policy and procedure, harassment policy, investigation,  
14 disciplinary and dismissal policy and procedure,  
15 Disclosure Scotland checks policy, references policy,  
16 staff dismissal policy, recruitment and selection  
17 policy, volunteer workers policy and procedures,  
18 complaints storage, public disclosure, whistle-blowing  
19 policy, employee relations policy, employed or  
20 self-employed policy, capability policy and procedure,  
21 appraisal policy, visitors policy and school security.

22 A. All of those would have that theme weaving through them.

23 A number have been updated since.

24 Q. The document you sent in 2017 makes the point that all  
25 were updated in either May or April 2017. Presumably

1           they are -- all policies are subject to review?

2           A. Yes.

3           Q. How often?

4           A. By practice, annually. In reality, some may not be  
5           given the number of policies we have. But the key ones  
6           would be updated annually and would be subject to board  
7           scrutiny as well.

8           Q. Although the reality of that presumably is a paper from  
9           the executive saying this is what we think requires to  
10          be done?

11          A. Yes. That would then be followed up, because we would  
12          try and circulate the paper significantly in advance of  
13          the meeting. Governor comments may be received in  
14          writing ahead of the meeting, allowing the Chair of the  
15          relevant committee to assimilate those comments into  
16          a discussion that genuinely gets to the heart of the  
17          issues rather than focusing on more minor issues.

18          Q. One of the concerns you will have picked, listening to  
19          exchanges with the relevant witnesses is, and this was  
20          obviously focusing on the introduction of GIRFEC and  
21          SHANARRI and the resultant requirement of schools to  
22          produce policies to satisfy those Introductions, we have  
23          made mention of policy fatigue, is that something that  
24          you are conscious of and concerned about in looking  
25          first of all at the context of the number of policies



1           you are now operating?

2           A. I don't think -- policies don't keep children safe.  
3           It's good practice, good training, it's -- as I said  
4           earlier, it's the combination of factors. I don't think  
5           anybody would see the development of things like GIRFEC  
6           and SHANARRI as anything other than enormously helpful  
7           in improving the care we offer to young people. And  
8           I genuinely believe that the education -- the inspection  
9           framework, the Scottish Government guidance on matters  
10          like GIRFEC and SHANARRI, and the work being done in  
11          schools individually but also collectively through SCIS,  
12          and I am sure at Local Authority level as well, that  
13          that does create this virtuous cycle, and I think the  
14          requirement for self-reflection and self-evaluation that  
15          these policy initiatives have created has been  
16          enormously helpful in improving education and improving  
17          childcare.

18                 My experience of inspection, and let me say very  
19          clearly I wholeheartedly and we as a school  
20          wholeheartedly welcome inspection, I would have the  
21          inspectors in every year if I could, because we always  
22          learn and -- things are always better as a result of  
23          inspection, but I think we have heard earlier in the  
24          inquiry about pragmatism. I think all of these things  
25          are tools, tools for conversations, tools for

1 inspection, tools for improvement. Following that  
2 through the school development plan or through the work  
3 an inspector will do when they were coming in as part of  
4 the Care Inspectorate's regular review or something more  
5 significant. They are all tools as part of this whole  
6 web of things that we all do to keep children safe.

7 I think all professions have their own language, and  
8 I think it is far better for us to have this kind of  
9 framework whereby evidence and best practice informs  
10 self-evaluation and improvement than to have some kind  
11 of a tick box inspection exercise that says because you  
12 have got these policies, your children are safe.

13 I really believe that in lots of ways the things that we  
14 are doing, things in schools, are helping to make  
15 children safer.

16 LADY SMITH: You are talking about embracing a growth  
17 mindset. The organisation as a whole, am I right?

18 A. Yes, and the sector as a whole, yes, absolutely.

19 MR BROWN: Is that growth reflective of the fact that people  
20 were concerned about tick box mentality?

21 A. I don't think I have enough experience of working in the  
22 sector directly, but I think even as far back as the  
23 1990s we see self-evaluation as a key tool for  
24 improvement being developed in Scotland, and I think it  
25 is one of the ways in which the Scottish education

1 system is really head and shoulders above many others in  
2 that respect.

3 Q. Is there not an inherent danger in self-evaluation?

4 And I suppose the answer is it will be discovered at the  
5 inspection stage, of schools being content that they are  
6 doing things well? There is not enough proper  
7 self-analysis because they don't want to see the  
8 failings?

9 A. It is possible, but I don't think anybody goes into  
10 education and boarding education to do anything other  
11 than make sure children achieve their full potential.  
12 So I really do believe in the professionalism of  
13 teachers and those working in care, in boarding, about  
14 always wanting to do the best. And I suppose if we  
15 think about abuse in particular, a real belief that  
16 unless you have in your mind it could happen here, then  
17 it might. And by thinking that it could happen here,  
18 you do everything you possibly can all the time to make  
19 sure that it doesn't.

20 An example I would give of that is a couple of years  
21 ago there was a really horrific video published on  
22 social media of initiation ceremonies at a boarding  
23 school down south for young boarders going into  
24 a boarding house and I made every one of our HMs come  
25 and sit in a room and listen to and watch the video.

1           Because when these things first come out, there is  
2           a moment you think, gosh, I am glad that is not here.  
3           But unless you sit and listen and think, what do we have  
4           that stops that happening here, then it might.

5                     And it is that culture of never resting, things  
6           never being enough, you can never do enough to make sure  
7           every child achieves their full potential, you can never  
8           do enough to make sure every child is safe. So you need  
9           to be on it the whole time as a school, an inspection  
10          regime, a government -- police, whatever. No level of  
11          scrutiny can be too much.

12         Q. In a nutshell, there has to be cross-checking at  
13          a number of levels to prevent against self-satisfaction,  
14          but also communication and acceptance, there is a wider  
15          world beyond your school?

16         A. Absolutely, yes. And Gordonstoun is geographically  
17          isolated but I don't think it's sectorally isolated,  
18          from our engagement with GTCS from 2014 onwards, our  
19          engagement through SCIS as members of HMC, we are trying  
20          to share and learn from best practice wherever we can.  
21          A good example of that might be the Wellbeing system,  
22          our IT system.

23         Q. I was coming to that.

24         A. I beg your pardon.

25         Q. This is the point: there are a number of oversight

1 bodies, SCIS being the obvious one within the Scottish  
2 context. BSA, we've talked about the Headmasters'  
3 Conference, et cetera?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You are learning best practice from Scotland?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You are learning best practice from the private sector  
8 UK-wide, particularly in the boarding context. How does  
9 Gordonstoun, for example, if it thinks -- and this is  
10 where we are going to come on to what you just mentioned  
11 and I stopped you -- but you think, I imagine, that some  
12 of the things you do are very good. Do you share them?

13 A. Yes, we do. We can share them informally and we can  
14 share them formally. So the Wellbeing system would be  
15 an example. So Wellbeing is a bespoke IT system that we  
16 developed eight years ago which allows the recording --  
17 so recording, reporting, recognising and responding are  
18 the four key things in relation to abuse.

19 So Wellbeing is a recording, first of all it's a  
20 recording system, so any concern in relation to a young  
21 person is recorded. And Wellbeing can also create  
22 an automatic report of a concern. That, when meshed  
23 with the matrix approach to staffing that I talked  
24 about, means we have a net, that means things don't slip  
25 through it. And the visibility of what is recorded on

1 Wellbeing is bespoke to the role that a member of staff  
2 has, so an example -- it is great at connecting the  
3 little things. I talked earlier about change being the  
4 thing that you have to notice. So a teacher might  
5 notice that a child is unusually quiet or perhaps  
6 unusually disruptive in a lesson, and they would record  
7 that on Wellbeing. And then somebody might notice that  
8 that child hasn't been at lunch, so our refectory staff,  
9 who are child protection trained, they would notice they  
10 hadn't seen so and so at lunch and they would record  
11 that. Then the housemaster or housemistress would be  
12 able to put these jigsaw pieces together and that might  
13 lead to a conversation.

14 LADY SMITH: Talk me through actually how this works.

15 First, who can record a concern on Wellbeing?

16 A. Any member of our teaching or pastoral staff and key  
17 members of our facility staff.

18 LADY SMITH: So I record, for example, that a child was  
19 unusually disruptive at lunchtime, unusual for that  
20 child.

21 A. Yes.

22 LADY SMITH: Where does that information then get  
23 transmitted to by the system?

24 A. So if it is something that the person recording thinks  
25 needs to be transmitted, then you tick a box. So if it

1           was a serious matter you would tick a box that says the  
2           tutor or the HM or the chaplain or the child protection  
3           co-ordinator needs a flag on this, so it can be  
4           transmitted. Otherwise what is done is it's recorded  
5           and held as a piece of data that can, depending on the  
6           levels of access set, be accessed by the people who are  
7           in charge of the care or the academic progress of that  
8           child.

9           I can see the whole school. So I have a screen and  
10          I can go on, and it is colour-coded by boarding house,  
11          colour-coded by the type of concern or the level of  
12          concern. The HM will have the whole house on there.  
13          A tutor, who is responsible for a smaller subsection of  
14          the house, will have their tutees on there. It also  
15          helps them to pick up any academic concerns and drawing  
16          themes together.

17         LADY SMITH: If when I went to record my concern, or,  
18                 rather, at the time I went to record my concern this  
19                 wasn't actually the first time anybody had recorded  
20                 a concern about this child, suddenly out character,  
21                 behaving disruptively. Would the system tell me that  
22                 there are other similar records on the system?

23         A. It would depend on your role in the school.

24         LADY SMITH: Right.

25         A. Because it may be that you are a teacher -- so it's

1 getting the balance right between information-sharing --  
2 who needs to know what. What is important is that  
3 everyone can record, and the people who need to  
4 assimilate the information can do that.

5 LADY SMITH: I was just wondering whether that might be  
6 useful for me to know, when making my decision on what  
7 boxes, if any, to tick for transmission of the  
8 information, and I might think differently if I realised  
9 I wasn't the first person who had recorded a similar  
10 concern.

11 A. Transmission is really about an urgent concern.

12 LADY SMITH: I see.

13 A. Whereas it's the way the data is stored and then the  
14 access each person has to their personal dashboard that  
15 is key. And of course, if there is a serious concern,  
16 the most important thing is actually to respond in  
17 reality, not virtually.

18 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

19 MR BROWN: I think, in fairness, your written responses do  
20 set much of this out, but it would be useful again if  
21 the systems have been updated and there is, for example,  
22 a current written guidance in the system, if that might  
23 be shared if appropriate so it can be understood.

24 A. We might be able to organise a remote demonstration of  
25 the system.



1 Q. Yes, at leisure. I think we can see that progressively,  
2 and this is over your time as a governor I think, more  
3 and more information levels have been added to the  
4 system.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Is it still developing or do you think you have now got  
7 it?

8 A. You have never got anything.

9 Q. We're back to --

10 A. Constant improvement.

11 Q. All right. Because in that regard, I think you have  
12 talked before that the first child protection policy was  
13 set up in 1995?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And things have grown since then. I suppose one of  
16 the anxieties is the more detailed the system becomes,  
17 you really are very reliant on (a) people putting in  
18 material, and is that a state of mind, a culture that  
19 has to be built up?

20 A. Yes, it does have to be built up, and I think staying on  
21 top of that is important, but I think this is where the  
22 balance between -- an IT system doesn't do it, policies  
23 don't do it, good staff training doesn't do it. It is a  
24 combination of all those factors that helps keep  
25 children safe.

1 Q. Just thinking of life as it is, at the end of a long,  
2 bad day, are you confident that teachers can be bothered  
3 to put in that someone was troubled at lunchtime?

4 A. Our experience is they don't wait until the end of the  
5 day, they would do it at the time. Because it is  
6 integrated to our management information system which is  
7 used for recording whether students are in class,  
8 for example, or a credit slip for when a student  
9 delivers a particularly good piece of work.

10 So it is sort of integrated, it's not "I have to sit  
11 down and do my wellbeing entries", it's very dynamic.

12 Q. It is also terribly subjective?

13 A. It is subjective, but that is why it's important that  
14 there is not just one person in charge of the care of  
15 a child. So every student will have their tutor, they  
16 will have an HM, an assistant HM, a matron, their key  
17 stage leader, deputy head pastoral, two assistant heads  
18 pastoral, the chaplain, a whole range of people that  
19 they can talk to. And everybody is -- and obviously  
20 their teachers and coaches and so on. There is a whole  
21 range of people looking after children, so it's not just  
22 about one person.

23 Q. The concern that instinctively pops into my mind is you  
24 will assume someone else will do it?

25 A. That is not our experience. I think people take their

1           responsibilities really seriously.

2           Q. The other factor is you enter a concern. How does it  
3           flag up? When does it flag up?

4           A. If it is a child protection concern it will flag up, and  
5           regardless of what box you have ticked an email will be  
6           generated. But I go back to the point I made earlier  
7           that it's one part of a system. Our staff are trained  
8           that you don't rest on your laurels. Just because you  
9           put something on Wellbeing, it doesn't mean that is your  
10          responsibility discharged. Your responsibility is to  
11          look after the child, particularly if it is a serious  
12          matter.

13          Q. I suppose what this goes back to is what you mentioned  
14          earlier: it is a condition of teachers' contracts, or  
15          anyone's contracts?

16          A. Anyone's contract.

17          Q. This will be part of the training, presumably it's  
18          rammed into their heads: you must, and if you don't, bad  
19          things --

20          A. Gross misconduct.

21          Q. And you will lose your job?

22          A. It's certainly a possibility.

23          Q. Potentially. When did that provision come into play?

24          A. 2015 I think. Can I just check?

25          Q. Please. (Pause).

1 A. I think it will be on this document here. It's not on  
2 that document. I think it is 2015 but if that is  
3 inaccurate I will let you know.

4 Q. Sure.

5 In terms of best practice, though, and this is not  
6 pejorative, it's simple curiosity, has anyone else  
7 followed your lead that you are aware of?

8 A. It is a condition of signing the BSA's Charter, the  
9 Boarding Schools' Association Charter, that one reports  
10 any suspicion of abuse, so a very large number of  
11 boarding schools also have that.

12 Q. That is the requirement to report. But in terms of the  
13 system you are operating, is that something that remains  
14 exclusive to you?

15 A. Do you mean the Wellbeing system?

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. That particular systems remains exclusive to us, but my  
18 understanding is a number of other schools have  
19 developed similar systems.

20 Q. It's just in terms of sharing best practice through  
21 SCIS, through BSA ... whatever. Is that something you  
22 have positively pointed out to them, saying "Look this  
23 is something we are doing, and we think it is a good  
24 idea"?

25 A. Yes, and we have had many schools visit us to look at

1           the system, and obviously our inspectors have also  
2           looked at it.

3           Q. So you would expect that sort of thing to be reflected  
4           in inspection reports?

5           A. Yes, it has been reflected in inspection --

6           Q. Which of course are public documents?

7           A. Indeed, yes.

8           Q. We touched on this earlier, the idea of notifying. You  
9           have just talked about, by the sounds of it, teachers  
10          are bound to notify the Wellbeing system. From your  
11          perspective though, moving on to notifying other bodies,  
12          again you will have heard in other evidence, certainly  
13          on the inception of GIRFEC, one headmaster saying "I was  
14          having a very busy day because of the weather, because  
15          of this, because of that, and I didn't notify you  
16          immediately". Is that something you understand, for  
17          a start?

18          A. Notification is obviously really important. The  
19          statutory notification requirement for the  
20          Care Inspectorate is within 24 hours, so we have  
21          a pretty well-honed system to complete that  
22          notification. There are, as you have identified,  
23          a number of other areas of notification that need to  
24          take place, and in some areas those are quite subjective  
25          decisions about whether and when to notify.

1 Q. Does that cause you, as principal, difficulty, that  
2 subjectivity?

3 A. I think it causes me concern because we always want to  
4 do the right thing.

5 Q. When you say the right thing, who are you looking at  
6 primarily?

7 A. I think in terms of notifications -- so doing the right  
8 thing is obviously about looking after the child, but  
9 one obviously wants always to make sure one is complying  
10 with regulatory responsibilities. So in answer to that  
11 particular question, I mean doing the right thing by way  
12 of regulators and registrars and so on.

13 And I think it would be possible through some  
14 co-ordinated work for there to be some kind of an apex  
15 regulator, some sort of system whereby those matters  
16 were co-ordinated. Because obviously reporting to the  
17 Care Inspectorate doesn't mean that something is  
18 reported to PVG, or that it's report to the BSA, or that  
19 it is reported to SSSC, or the GTCS, or the Registrar,  
20 so ...

21 Q. You talked about an apex reporting. One source -- one  
22 contact. I suppose the difficulty is, and her Ladyship  
23 raised this, about the issue of anonymity of teachers,  
24 the scenario of a malicious allegation or a misconceived  
25 allegation to be more gentle. How does one deal with

1           that? Coming back to your mandatory reporting idea, is  
2           that where you are heading in terms of your thinking,  
3           that you just report come what may, as long as there are  
4           protections for the individual concerned in terms of  
5           anonymity?

6           A. In terms of reporting a suspicion or a matter of  
7           concern, what I am largely thinking about at the moment  
8           is in relation to social work and the police, because of  
9           the approach that we take. There isn't a connected  
10          approach between other regulatory and registration  
11          bodies in terms of what that reporting looks like. But  
12          if we believe as a society that it is important that  
13          mandatory reporting is in place, I do think we need to  
14          do better, and I don't have in my pocket what that  
15          solution looks like, but I do think we need to do better  
16          at being able to report suspicions without the fear --  
17          because it is inevitable; you are reporting suspicions,  
18          not all of them will be substantiated. A small number  
19          might be malicious.

20                 There will always be a reason why an allegation is  
21          made and actually our responsibility is to get  
22          underneath that reason. It might be that a child or  
23          member of staff has a concern in another area, but  
24          I would like to think we could do better than the system  
25          we have at the moment.

1 Q. But in terms of if you have a concern that a report may  
2 not be accurate, would that ever dissuade you from,  
3 for example, reporting to the Care Inspectorate within  
4 the timeframe, or would you wish to be able to carry out  
5 your own investigations first? Has that scenario ever  
6 happened?

7 A. It wouldn't dissuade us from reporting, because that is  
8 our responsibility. I do think you have hit on  
9 an important point, though, which is what we don't have  
10 in Scotland is any kind of advisory service, any kind of  
11 centrally co-ordinated advisory service in relation  
12 to child protection, and in this sense I am not just  
13 talking about schools. In my evidence so far I have  
14 talked on several occasions about where I think Scotland  
15 is really leading in its approach. I think this might  
16 be an area where we might learn something from England  
17 and the LADO system, Local Authority Designated Officer,  
18 who is an expert in child protection that sits within  
19 each Local Authority who you can phone for advice,  
20 guidance, a check.

21 We have heard some schools talking about having to  
22 hire a consultant. These are really complex issues and  
23 the person on the end of the phone on Police Scotland  
24 101 might not be an expert in this area. But if you  
25 have a system akin to the LADO, then whether you are



1           running a boarding school or you are secretary of the  
2           local swimming club, you would have someone who was  
3           an expert in this area to whom you could turn to for  
4           advice.

5           LADY SMITH: Can you tell me again what LADO stands for?

6           A. Local Authority Designated Officer.

7           LADY SMITH: And designated for the purposes of giving  
8           advice on child protection?

9           A. Yes. Certainly I think it is something, when heads move  
10          from England to Scotland, such as for example our head  
11          of junior school has recently done, it is a notable  
12          absence in the systems we have in Scotland.

13          MR BROWN: When was it set up in England, do you know?

14          A. I don't know, sorry.

15          Q. I am sure we can find that out.

16                 You mentioned dialling 101. Have you come across --  
17          and I ask this obviously because you heard another head  
18          expressing some anxieties, thinking about the interests  
19          of the child, whether phoning the police was in fact the  
20          best thing to do. Do you understand that --

21          A. I do understand that concern, yes.

22          Q. Have you had a similar anxiety about whether bringing in  
23          the police would be the best thing?

24          A. I would say I have certainly had experiences where  
25          a child's best interests may not have been served by the

1 involvement of the police.

2 Q. Is that not potentially the downside of mandatory  
3 reporting? You may feel because of the nature of the  
4 child protection issue you have to report to the police?

5 A. It is the downside of mandatory reporting when the rest  
6 of the system is not set up to support it.

7 Q. So how would the system be set up to support it and  
8 preclude the use of the police in your --

9 A. I don't think it is about precluding the use of the  
10 police. The police are incredibly important --

11 Q. At that stage --

12 A. Well, a LADO system, for example, that would be  
13 an example. It might not be the only example, it is one  
14 that I have found out about.

15 Q. All right. I am just interested what you anticipate the  
16 LADO would tell you to do because presumably -- I am  
17 having a little difficulty myself wondering what the  
18 advice would be other than to contact the police.

19 A. It might be -- I don't think the LADO in itself is  
20 a silver bullet, I think it is about thinking about how  
21 that LADO might then engage with the police so one is  
22 not simply working with whoever happens to be on duty at  
23 the time, who might not have the experience or  
24 expertise, and might be put in a position that, for  
25 them, is also deeply uncomfortable.

1 Q. So what it's really about perhaps is building  
2 a structure within all the relevant organisations that  
3 you speak to the right person who is suitably trained  
4 and understanding?

5 A. Exactly.

6 Q. Thank you. Do you see, from your experience over the  
7 last five years as principal, any suggestion that that  
8 is practically happening? We have heard obviously about  
9 link inspectors, you have contact with the  
10 Care Inspectorate. Is this happening naturally because  
11 there is a general recognition that it's better to talk  
12 to someone who knows about it than not? We don't have  
13 a LADO system, but is there any sense from your  
14 perspective it is happening anyway?

15 A. I certainly would say link inspectors, both in Education  
16 Scotland and the connection that we will have through  
17 our designated inspector within the Care Inspectorate,  
18 that is an incredibly valuable approach to take, and it  
19 does allow discussion to happen on a quite natural  
20 basis, there will quite often be sort of checks and  
21 balances, "This is what I was thinking of doing, what do  
22 you think?" It is enormously helpful, and I do think  
23 that the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland serve  
24 us very well in that regard.

25 Q. You mentioned videos of initiation at another school.

1           Again I have been asking other teachers about the impact  
2           of social media, which presumably in the boarding  
3           context can be a very good thing, because it allows  
4           contact with parents or anyone, I suppose, but there is  
5           a very dark side to it, and one can see that in some of  
6           the responses that you have produced for individual  
7           peer-on-peer: social media is used to bully, it's used  
8           in a very sexual way in terms of imaging, getting people  
9           to do things?

10          A. Yes.

11          Q. When did you, thinking of your experience as governor  
12           and principal, within the Gordonstoun context, when did  
13           it begin to become a problem?

14          A. It's hard to put a date on that. I think it is  
15           something that has developed over time, initially maybe  
16           texts and then social media. I think what it does do is  
17           it speaks to that need to be constantly evolving in  
18           relation to pastoral care and, importantly, pastoral  
19           education. It puts me slightly in mind of the fact that  
20           a punitive approach to pastoral management is unlikely  
21           ever to be successful. It might seem rather easy to  
22           say, well, if X does this with their mobile phone and is  
23           involved in cyber bullying, then we will punish or we  
24           will expel or we will do this.

25                    But we know from evidence that punitive measures

1 don't work even with adults, so why would we think a  
2 solely punitive approach would work with children?  
3 Actually what we are thinking about all the time is how  
4 do we educate, how do we restore, and do we need to  
5 punish?

6 So in relation to social media, because it can be  
7 good and evil, one has to be thinking really carefully  
8 all the time about how one addresses it.

9 Q. As you just said, it is constantly evolving.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. You are constantly trying to catch up, I take it?

12 A. Yes, absolutely.

13 Q. In terms of restorative -- one thing that is striking in  
14 the material you have produced is the use of I suppose  
15 one would call gating?

16 A. Yes, removal of privileges.

17 Q. Removal of privileges. Is that something that you see  
18 Gordonstoun as distinctive in its approach as compared  
19 with the rest of the sector?

20 A. I'm not sure about that, but I would say gating and  
21 removal of privileges are not restorative, they are  
22 effectively a punishment. Restoration is about how do  
23 we help young people to put things back to how they  
24 were.

25 Q. Yes.

1 A. An apology might be involved, cleaning the graffiti  
2 might be involved, or doing something in service of the  
3 community.

4 Q. My impression from reading some of the papers is there  
5 is a combination of both?

6 A. Yes. Well, it's three actually. It's educate, restore,  
7 punish.

8 Q. Yes. But by gating, people are removed, and there may  
9 be a period of self-evaluation I suppose?

10 A. Yes, and we have found removal of mobile phones is  
11 a very effective punitive measure. A great incentive to  
12 behave well.

13 Q. It is the use of guardians, and periods, quite lengthy  
14 periods, where education is continued but there is  
15 isolation from the rest of the school.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. In a practical sense?

18 A. Yes, that can be very effective.

19 Q. That is something that is still used, presumably, by the  
20 school?

21 A. It is. Although I have been really pleased that over  
22 the last year or so we have seen the number -- we call  
23 them rustications, where you remove a child from the  
24 school for a period either wholly or partially in the  
25 manner you are talking about. We have really seen that

1           reducing, the number of times we have had to resort to  
2           that severity of punishment.

3       Q. Why do you think that is?

4       A. I would like to think it is because we are doing better  
5           at the educating and restoring bit.

6       Q. Does one go up as the other goes down?

7       A. Possibly.

8       Q. Possibly. It's not something you have analysed?

9       A. Not in detail. There have been quite a lot of other  
10           things to deal with over the last 12 months.

11      Q. Indeed. In terms of perhaps acknowledgement by the  
12           pupils of their failings by rustification or whatever,  
13           could we turn briefly to part B of your report, which is  
14           the retrospective acknowledgement and admission.

15            You have been very candid throughout, is it fair to  
16           say in summary, looking back at the world that was,  
17           things have not worked, and I suppose with hindsight one  
18           is astonished at the lack of systems, the lack of  
19           oversight, and as a result bad things have happened.  
20           There is no argument about that?

21      A. There's no argument about that. I think those of us  
22           working in Gordonstoun today, and I'm sure the same is  
23           true of fellow heads and staff in other schools, have  
24           been deeply affected by what they have read, and it has  
25           been very upsetting to read of the experiences that

1 pupils who were in our care have had, whether as  
2 a result of staff or peer-on-peer bullying.

3 I was thinking about this last night and thinking:  
4 if I find this hard to read, how must it be for the  
5 survivors who had to experience it?

6 Q. If we could look at page 2 of part B, when there is  
7 consideration of systemic failures. I don't think there  
8 is any argument from you that Gordonstoun's systems  
9 clearly failed?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. If they were there at all, I suppose.

12 A. Yes, I think we were very clear that the behaviours of  
13 some individuals and some patterns of individuals in  
14 some boarding houses, particularly in the eras we have  
15 talked about, was completely unacceptable.

16 Q. In the first paragraph there you say:

17 "In undertaking the review for this response, we  
18 have identified that the sector's historic reporting,  
19 record-keeping, and referencing practices which were  
20 also adopted at Gordonstoun were not of the rigorous  
21 type required today."

22 Again further down:

23 "What is the organisation's/establishment's  
24 assessment of the extent of such systemic failures?

25 "In undertaking the review of this response, we have



1 identified that the sector's historic reporting,  
2 recording-keeping and referencing practices, which were  
3 also adopted at Gordonstoun, were not of the rigorous  
4 type required today."

5 On the one hand Gordonstoun obviously, as it was set  
6 up, as it has progressed, would like to think of itself  
7 as unique. I take it you are not suggesting or not  
8 trying to recognise Gordonstoun's failures by reference  
9 to the sector's failures because, on one view, the  
10 sector doesn't reflect the way Gordonstoun has  
11 approached things over the last 70 years?

12 A. No, absolutely, and my apologies if that is clumsily  
13 expressed in any way. The responsibility for our  
14 failings is entirely ours.

15 Q. Although I think from what you have been saying, the  
16 importance of the sector collaborating, speaking to one  
17 another for best practice, can't be understated?

18 A. The periods in which we are talking about abuse are  
19 periods where I think that positive collaboration will  
20 not have been happening, whether at a school's level or  
21 at an inspector level or whatever. So as I say, the  
22 failings that we have identified are ours.

23 Q. I think for completeness if we go on to page 3, which is  
24 "Acknowledgement of Failures, Deficiencies and  
25 Response", that is the heading. If we move on to

1 page 4, where you set out what has taken place at  
2 Gordonstoun, and we mentioned this earlier, it began in  
3 2013 --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- when a closed alumni Facebook group began to talk  
6 about abuse, and the response of the then headmaster was  
7 to go wide and ask people to engage?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And that was repeated in 2015?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And has been repeated, I think it is fair to say,  
12 repeatedly by you --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- through the lifetime of the Inquiry. It's all set  
15 down there. Reference is made to Gordonstoun engaging  
16 in 2016 with CELCIS, the Centre for Excellence for  
17 Looked After Children in Scotland. Briefly tell us  
18 about that?

19 A. So I think we are thinking about how the school  
20 executive and governors responded to the allegations.  
21 Obviously it is important, as you have identified, that  
22 we reached out to our alumni community to understand  
23 what it is that we didn't know. But that doesn't seem  
24 to be enough. Just to know that something happened  
25 isn't enough; one has to learn from that, you know, what

1           could we do better today, and that is about informing  
2           pastoral care. But also how do we better support those  
3           students who did experience abuse? How do we better  
4           support survivors in our response now than we did then?

5           We are not experts in this. We might be experts in  
6           running a boarding school but we're not experts in  
7           supporting survivors of abuse, and the board and the  
8           executive were very clear that we wanted to make sure we  
9           responded appropriately to those survivors who came  
10          forward to make disclosures. Which is why we went  
11          through the process of working with the Centre for  
12          Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland and  
13          Professor Kendrick, and we invited alumni to come  
14          forward and take part in that research so that we could  
15          make sure that, on an ongoing basis, we were I guess  
16          doing right by then. It was a very instructive process.  
17          And in our memorialisation, which is a rather more  
18          contentious approach in which there is a significant  
19          diversity of views, we have adopted all of the  
20          recommending from CELCIS.

21        Q. We see from the fifth or the penultimate bullet point  
22        1,183 alumni participated in the research?

23        A. So the research in which that number participated was  
24        a separate piece of research conducted by the University  
25        of Edinburgh into the lifelong impact of

1 out-of-classroom learning experiences at Gordonstoun.  
2 It's not the CELCIS research. The CELCIS research was  
3 a very focused piece of work on -- it was qualitative  
4 rather than quantitative research because it had to be  
5 handled so sensitively.

6 Q. What is ongoing now?

7 A. In terms of supporting survivors?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. If you visit our alumni page of our website at the  
10 moment we have the possibility of pointing people to  
11 different support organisations, because we recognise we  
12 are not best placed, we are not a survivor support  
13 organisation, we need to make sure we can respond  
14 appropriately, which is why I talked earlier about  
15 the training we give to our call-handlers and our alumni  
16 response team which sits within the Gordonstoun  
17 Association but also the main school. Where we can, we  
18 appoint survivors to support organisations. We have  
19 reached agreement with Barnardo's for them to provide  
20 a support service, which has unfortunately had to be put  
21 on hold during COVID.

22 Q. But there is signposting, clearly?

23 A. Signposting, sensitivity, apology. But recognising that  
24 quite understandably some survivors remain very angry,  
25 and I really do understand why that is the case, and we

1 will not be best placed to support those survivors.

2 Q. Obviously in the next phase, as it impacts on  
3 Gordonstoun, we will hear from some of these survivors.  
4 I think you understand it would be helpful if you would  
5 return?

6 A. Of course.

7 Q. And I take it you will be listening to their evidence?

8 A. Of course.

9 Q. Is there anything at this stage you would wish to add,  
10 and clearly you have been reflecting in terms of your  
11 evidence about a wide range of things, and how you have  
12 talked about apex reporting. So (a) is there anything  
13 you would wish to say at this stage of the Inquiry, and  
14 (b) is there anything that you have thought of that may  
15 assist the Inquiry in its later stages reviewing all of  
16 this?

17 A. I think given where we have got to in our conversation,  
18 maybe some of the more particular ideas around  
19 regulation I might just write to the Inquiry about  
20 separately. Because it would feel insensitive to do  
21 anything at this point other than to restate personally  
22 what our QC said last week in our opening statement,  
23 which is to offer a very sincere apology to anyone who  
24 suffered abuse either at Gordonstoun or at  
25 Aberlour House because we have really learned over the

1 last few years the deep impact that has on people. It's  
2 horrifying to us to imagine that that happened at  
3 Gordonstoun. We must acknowledge that it did. And if  
4 we don't acknowledge that it did and learn from it, then  
5 we won't do our very best in that most important  
6 endeavour of making sure that the children we look after  
7 today are as safe as they can be and that they achieve  
8 their full potential.

9 MR BROWN: Thank you. Unless there is anything else,  
10 my Lady, that is the end of my questions.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 I have no other questions for you, Lisa. Let me  
13 just check if there are any outstanding applications for  
14 questions. (Pause). Silence. You will appreciate  
15 there are people connected to this hearing who are not  
16 physically here.

17 So I am now able to let you go, but you go with my  
18 thanks for all the work that Gordonstoun has put into  
19 responding to us thus far and the efforts you have put  
20 in to coming here today to answer our questions. I am  
21 very grateful to you for that. So thank you very much,  
22 and we will see you again later.

23 A. Thank you, my Lady.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

25 (The witness withdrew).

1 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

2 MR BROWN: My Lady, that is the end of today's evidence. We  
3 reconvene next Tuesday and hopefully we will be hearing  
4 from Merchiston and Keil, followed by QVS on Wednesday,  
5 and that will conclude phase 1.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. I will rise now until  
7 Tuesday morning and I wish you all a very good weekend  
8 in the meantime. Thank you.

9 (1.02 pm)

10 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on Tuesday,  
11 30 March 2021)

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