

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Case Study no. 9: Volume 4

The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children at **Queen Victoria School**, Dunblane, between 1951 and 2021

Evidential Hearings: 31 March 2021 to 11 November 2021



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| Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

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Queen Victoria School: former pupils, staff, and governance witnesses

In order to provide the reader with a clear understanding of applicants and other witnesses whose names feature throughout these findings, I have included quick reference tables, Table 1 (former pupils) and Table 2 (former and current staff, as well as those in governance positions).

Table 1: Former pupils who provided evidence to SCAI

Name	Time at QVS
'Bob'	1951-5
'Andrew'	1965-7
'Ann'	1965-70
'Andy'	1966-72
'Hamish'	1968-75
'Joe'	1977-85
'Martin'	1978-85
'Alex'	1979-83
'James'	1979-86
'Keith'	1983-91
'Noah'	1984-90
'Hector'	1984-91
'Clifton'	1984-92
'Douglas'	1984-93
'James'	1985-92
'Harry'	1988-94
'Felix'	1989-92
'John'	1989-96
'Barry'	1989-98
'Peter'	1990-6

Table 2: Former and current staff who provided evidence to SCAI, and those in governance roles

Name	Period of employment	Role(s)
Steve Laing	1984–2019	Technical studies teacher, assistant housemaster, and housemaster (1991–2004)
Graeme Beattie	1984–2022	Primary teacher, assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster (1986–90 and 1993–2012), assistant principal, and principal teacher of learning support (1999–2022)
Alice Hainey	1992–2002	Assistant headteacher (pastoral)
Glenn Harrison	1989–91	Science teacher and housemaster (1990–1)
Brian Raine	1993–2006	Deputy head (1993–4) and headteacher (1994–2006)
‘Grant’	1996–present	Computing and business teacher
‘John’	1997–2012	Teacher
‘Mark’	1998–2006	English teacher and assistant housemaster
‘Elsie’	1999–2004	Housemistress
Evelyn Smith	2002–5	Assistant headteacher (pastoral)
Donald Shaw	2006–present	Head of maths (2006–12), senior deputy head (2012–16), and headteacher (2016–present)
Alan Plumtree	2006–2022	HM Commissioner since 2006 and chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners (2012–22)
Wendy Bellars	2007–16	Headteacher
Ronald Boyd	2010–present	Chaplain and housemaster
Colonel Clive Knightley, RA	2012–21	Deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (DCYP and DCS) ¹

¹ DCYP stands for ‘Directorate, Children and Young People’, which was replaced by Defence Children Services (DCS) in 2021.

Foreword

These are the thirteenth of my published case study findings and they relate to the provision of residential care for children at Queen Victoria School (QVS), Dunblane.

During the public hearings in the overall boarding schools case study, I heard evidence about many aspects of the boarding provision for children at these schools that amounted to dreadful abuse. It showed that boarders and day pupils were subjected to abuse, that both the boarding and day school environments were ones where there were numerous abusive practices perpetrated by members of staff and other pupils, and that these went unchecked.

QVS, in common with four of the other schools in the boarding schools case study, continues to offer boarding provision, and I heard evidence about the residential care for pupils there up to the closing date of the hearings. The evidence of applicants, whilst relating to experiences within the overall period specified in SCAI's Terms of Reference – from within living memory to 17 December 2014 – inevitably extended beyond December 2014. It would have been artificial and, I decided, quite wrong to curtail it. Hence the dates specified on the cover of this volume.

I am very grateful to all who have provided evidence to the Inquiry, whether former pupils, former and current staff, or others. The cooperation and assistance of, and contributions from, all the witnesses about their experiences at the school, as well as their wider experiences, learning, and ideas

in relation to the provision of education and residential care in Scottish boarding schools have been invaluable.

In reaching the stage of publication of these findings – from detailed analysis of all the evidence ingathered to the final document – I have once more had the benefit of being supported by the exceptional teamwork that has become the hallmark of this Inquiry. I am very grateful to the Inquiry counsel who led in the case study and the members of staff involved at each stage; their diligence and commitment has been remarkable.

Applicants and other witnesses continue to come forward to the Inquiry with relevant evidence about boarding schools and this will be considered as part of a continuing process.

I would encourage anyone who has relevant information on any aspect of our work to get in touch with our witness support team. We want to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Smith'.

Lady Smith

Preface

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)

SCAI's Terms of Reference (ToR) require it to 'investigate the nature and extent of abuse of children in care in Scotland' during the period from within living memory to 17 December 2014 and to create a national public record and commentary on abuse of children in care in Scotland during that period.

The requirement is to investigate sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse and, at my discretion, other types of abuse including unacceptable practices (such as deprivation of contact with siblings) and neglect. There is also a requirement to make findings about the impact of abuse.

SCAI is also to consider the extent to which any form of abuse arose from failures in duty by those with responsibility for the protection of children in care. In particular, SCAI is required to consider whether any abuse arose from systemic failures and the extent to which any such failures have been addressed. It is to make findings and recommendations for the effective protection of children in care now and in the future.

A copy of SCAI's ToR is at [Appendix A](#).

'Applicant' is the term SCAI uses for any person who tells SCAI they were abused in circumstances that fall within the ToR.

Public hearings

In common with other public inquiries, the work of SCAI includes public hearings. They

take place after detailed investigations, research, analysis, and preparation have been completed by SCAI counsel and SCAI staff. That stage can take a long time. The public hearings of SCAI include – importantly – the taking of oral evidence from individuals about their experiences as children in care and the reading of a selection of evidence from some of their written statements. The evidence also includes accounts of the impact of their having been abused as children in care, including in boarding schools. During and following the evidential hearings into case studies, applicants and other witnesses may come forward with further relevant evidence and such evidence will be taken into account.

Children were abused in a substantial number of institutions in Scotland and were also the subjects of an inherently abusive child migration system that resulted in many of them being abused at their destinations. It is not, however, realistic to present every institution and instance of abuse at a public hearing; were SCAI to do so, an Inquiry that is, of necessity, a lengthy one would be unduly prolonged. Accordingly, with the assistance of SCAI counsel, I will continue to identify particular institutions and matters that are representative of the issues being explored by SCAI and thus appropriate for presentation at public hearings of evidence.

Section 21 responses

Under section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005, as Chair of this Inquiry, I have the power to

require persons to provide evidence to SCAI. Institutions targeted by SCAI as part of its investigations have been issued with various section 21 notices. These notices include a requirement for them to respond in writing to questions posed by the SCAI team. These questions are divided into parts: Part A – Organisation; Part B – Current Statement; Part C – Prevention and Identification; Part D – Abuse and Response. These are referred to as the ‘Parts A-D section 21 notice’.

Queen Victoria School (QVS) responded to its Parts A-D section 21 notice. The responses to Parts A and B are dated 26 February 2019² and those to Part C and Part D dated 30 May 2019³ and 29 October 2020⁴ respectively. Updates to Parts A, C, and D responses were also received on 29 October 2020,⁵ and the Part D response was further updated in February 2021⁶ and October 2021.⁷

Written statements

Applicants and other witnesses can tell members of the SCAI team about their experiences as children in care and any other relevant evidence. Applicants may do so at a ‘private session’.⁸ Other witnesses may do so at an Inquiry interview. All witnesses are supported by SCAI’s witness support team. Written statements are prepared covering those matters spoken about which are relevant to the ToR. Applicants, or other witnesses, are asked to check the statement carefully and to sign it as being the truth if satisfied that it is accurate, but only if and when they feel ready to do so.

This case study

The scope and purpose of this case study was to consider evidence about:

- the nature and extent of any relevant abuse at QVS
- any of QVS’s systems, policies, and procedures, their application, and their effectiveness
- any related matters.

Leave to appear

Leave to appear was granted to the following in relation to this case study, in whole or in part:

- the Secretary of State for Defence, on behalf of QVS
- the Care Inspectorate
- the Scottish Social Services Council
- the General Teaching Council for Scotland
- Police Scotland
- the Lord Advocate
- the Scottish Ministers.

Numbers

The former pupils who have provided evidence to SCAI in relation to their time at QVS do not represent every person who has made a complaint over the years relating to their experiences at the school. It must also be appreciated that many former pupils have

2 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002.

3 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036.

4 QVS, Part D response to section 21 notice, appendix, at MOD.001.001.0074.

5 QVS, [Part A response to section 21 notice, addendum to appendix](#), at MOD-000000540; [Part C response to section 21 notice, addendum to appendix](#), at MOD-000000541; and Part D response to section 21 notice, appendix, at MOD-000000542.

6 QVS, [Part D response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD-000000636.

7 QVS, Part D response to section 21 notice, appendices, at MOD-000000651 and MOD-000000652.

8 www.childabuseinquiry.scot/giving-evidence-applicant

described not only what happened to them, but also the treatment they witnessed being afforded to other children. [Appendices D](#) and [E](#) set out, in relation to QVS, the numbers of:

- children who have boarded at QVS
- complaints of alleged abuse received by QVS
- civil actions raised against QVS
- relevant SCAI applicants to the dates specified in [Appendix E](#).

The evidence of a number of former pupils who have come forward since the evidential hearings has been taken into account because of its relevance to other evidence I had already heard. It is referred to in these findings. The evidence of other former pupils who have come forward since the evidential hearings began is not specifically referred to in these findings, but it has been and will continue to be carefully considered by SCAI as part of a continuing process.

Witnesses representing QVS

Mr Donald James Shaw, the current headteacher of QVS; Colonel Clive Knightley, then deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding; and Mr Alan Plumtree, then chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners of QVS, provided evidence to SCAI on behalf of the school on 31 March

2021. Additionally, Mr Shaw and Colonel Knightley provided further evidence to SCAI on behalf of the school on 27 October 2021.

Queen Victoria School

I find that children who boarded at QVS were exposed to risks of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse which, for many, materialised into actual abuse whilst in QVS's care. There were applicants, including those who had been abused, who also spoke of positive experiences and demonstrated pride in their school.

This case study as compared to my findings in previous case studies

The abuse I find to have taken place at QVS is, in many respects, similar to the abuse I found to have taken place at other boarding schools, including Loretto School, Morrison's Academy, and Gordonstoun, and two boarding schools run by male religious orders, the Benedictines and the Marist Brothers. There were also similarities in relation to causative factors such as staff who lacked the appropriate skills and training; inappropriate recruitment policies; and insufficient oversight of pupils and teachers. Accordingly, I will at times use language in these findings similar to the language used in the findings of previous case studies. The military background of the school has, however, introduced some unique aspects.

Terminology

Many children in care were, within the period covered by SCAI's Terms of Reference – and, in the case of QVS, beyond that – abused sexually, physically, and/or emotionally through the conduct of other children. Details of such abuse are set out in case study findings. It may have involved coercion, threats, aggression, all forms of bullying, and, typically, an imbalance of power – with that imbalance arising from a difference in age, ability, status within the institution, physical size, and/or physical strength. It often occurred in an environment where the culture facilitated rather than prevented such conduct or behaviour.

Sometimes it will have involved children specifically targeting other children. The terms 'children abused by other children', 'children who suffered abuse meted out by other children', 'children who engaged in abusive behaviour', and/or 'children who engaged in abusive conduct', and similar expressions are used in this volume when referring to such conduct and/or behaviour.

I recognise that the abusive conduct may have taken place against a background of the child who abused another child having exhibited harmful behaviour which had not been recognised and/or addressed and which may also have been harmful to that child. I also accept that, in some cases, a child who abuses another child may have suffered prior trauma. But it does not mean

that the child who was abused did not suffer or was not harmed.

The term 'relationship' may be used in this volume where an abuser engaged in sexual conduct with a child in circumstances where they are said to have had a 'relationship'. That is not to be taken as indicating that what happened was appropriate or did not constitute abuse. Such 'relationships' may have been the result of grooming.⁹ Further, any willingness to engage in the relationship on the part of the child, whether apparent or otherwise, or evidence that there were positive aspects to it, are not to be taken as indicating that it could not have constituted abuse.

Many applicants described abuse of a type that could have amounted to a criminal offence. Some of it plainly did amount to a criminal offence. The language in these findings reflects the words they used in evidence. The abuse of children in boarding schools may have amounted to the common law offence of lewd, indecent, and libidinous practices and behaviour, an offence which involved the abuse, including on occasions penetrative conduct, of children under the age of puberty, then taken as 14 for boys and 12 for girls. Today, sexual offences involving children would be prosecuted under the provisions of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, and any penetrative conduct involving a child, be it vaginal, anal, or oral, using a penis, is likely to be described as rape.

⁹ For discussion and examples of grooming, see Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Roundtable no. 1: The Psychology of Individuals who Abuse Children](#) (June 2022), p.17.

Part V of the 2009 Act introduced a new offence of 'sexual abuse of trust', an offence that may be committed in different ways, including where a person who is responsible for looking after children under 18 in a boarding school engages in sexual activity with them.

Other terminology used in these findings includes the words 'clipe' and 'cliping'. Cliping, or clyping, is the act of informing on someone or, to put it colloquially, telling tales. Those who clipe are breaking an unwritten code of silence and may be isolated by their peers for doing so.

Summary

- Children were abused at Queen Victoria School.
- Children were physically abused, they were emotionally abused, and they were sexually abused.
- The school was constituted by a Royal Warrant initiated by Queen Victoria but enacted by her son, King Edward VII, who signed it in 1905. The school was founded in memory of those who had died in the Boer Wars of the late nineteenth century; some of them had sons who had thereby become fatherless. The initial aim was to provide support and education, in a stable boarding environment, for sons of Scottish servicemen of ranks other than officers. Its establishment was funded by subscriptions from serving personnel, local authorities, and businesses across Scotland. It was a boys-only school until 1996, when it became co-educational.
- In due course, pupils whose parents were officers were also admitted to the school but, for the most part, such parents had 'come through the ranks'.¹⁰
- Through much of the school's history there was an emphasis on preparing pupils to follow in their fathers' footsteps, with their education being based on firm discipline, training, and drill rather than matters academic.
- The governance structure of QVS reflected its original aims, with oversight and management carried out by HM Commissioners who were, and are, largely made up of senior military officers of the services of which pupils' parents are members.
- It was mistakenly assumed that, with that background and governance, the school would provide appropriate residential care. From at least the 1950s, that assumption was ill-founded, and, in fact, there were children who were abused.
- Factors that enabled abuse to occur included inadequate management and oversight, not enough staff, and undue adherence to a robust military culture.
- The culture of the school was such that pupils were subjected to initiation ceremonies, there was a hierarchy that enabled abuse of power by senior pupils, differences were not tolerated, and pupils were, at times, not treated as the children they were.
- A culture of silence was the norm. Staff encouraged pupils not to clipe or report, and some ignored obvious abuse.
- House staff were not adequately supported before 1991; they relied too heavily on senior pupils selected from a small pool, some of whom should not have been trusted to wield power over other children.
- Violence was allowed to prevail at QVS.

10 [Queen Victoria School, Dunblane \(Military Covenant\)](#), Hansard, HC Deb 14 June 2011, vol. 529, col. 248WH.

- A small number of teachers abused children physically and emotionally under the guise of corporal punishment, using belts, slippers, a cricket bat, and heavy wooden dusters, and instilling fear.
- Two members of staff were particularly cruel. Mr Malkowski, a languages teacher, had a belt he named 'Johnny Debasher'. He used it on boys excessively, inappropriately, and in situations where corporal punishment should never have been contemplated, including academic failure. Mr Urie, a technical drawing teacher, belted pupils for lacking ability and threw heavy wooden board dusters at children's heads. Both men were known for their behaviour within QVS, but nothing was done about it by the school.
- Some housemasters were apt to lose control then physically abuse children. One master slipped a pupil for reporting abuse inflicted by another pupil which had left him bleeding. Another teacher assaulted a pupil and kicked him downstairs for no reason.
- Such behaviour was an aspect of the tough culture and mentality that was an intrinsic aspect of life at QVS. Boys were expected to resort to physicality. The 'magic circle', a clearing in woods in the school grounds, was a recognised spot for fights to take place between pupils to resolve disagreements. That practice was known about and broadly accepted by staff.
- Some teachers failed to intervene when they saw violence in the boarding houses; they chose to look the other way.
- Violence by older boys towards younger boys was endemic. It included unofficial punishments by boys in authority, either prefects or monitors, especially up to the 1980s.
- Cruel and terrifying behaviour by older boys towards junior boys was commonplace in the senior boarding houses. It included tying boys to chairs, putting bags over their heads, and, in one case, threatening to throw a child down a lift shaft. Boys would be 'crucified'; a broom handle was put through the arms of the blazers they were wearing, and they were then left hanging high up in the laundry room. Some were pushed into a kit bag and left in a locker. Younger pupils were made to run a gauntlet of senior boys who would then hit and throw things at them.
- Sexual abuse by pupils happened, both before and after the school became co-educational in 1996.
- Well into the 1990s, anyone thought to be homosexual was mistreated and humiliated. There was also some sexual abuse by older boys. In one case in the 1960s staff ignored obvious signs of distress, including self-harm. In the 1980s, by contrast, efforts to address such abuse, including the provision of psychological input for both the abuser and his victim, were made by the then headteacher, Julian Hankinson. Staff involved with both boys were not, however, so forward-thinking.
- After 1996 some allegations of sexual abuse were reported to the appropriate authorities by QVS.
- Two teachers sexually abused pupils, in different decades.
- Ben Philip, a teacher at QVS between 1973 and 1993, groomed and then abused

multiple P6 boys, principally by touching them in the classroom. He also sometimes abused boys when they were in years beyond P6. He used a mixture of kindness and intimidation towards vulnerable children to present himself as a father figure. His behaviour and use of innuendo was well known throughout the school, as was his nickname – ‘Bender’ – yet the school took no action.

- James Clark, a drumming instructor, abused seven female pupils between 2011 and 2019, including by means of indecent assaults. He groomed them openly and patiently so as to seek to normalise sexualised behaviour. When his conduct became known about, it stunned QVS; a system for child protection had, by that time, been established but the existence of that system did not prevent the occurrence of significant abuse, nor did it give rise to the abuse being promptly detected.
- Two further male members of staff behaved inappropriately in their relationships with female sixth-form pupils in the late 1990s. One of these relationships was undoubtedly abusive.
- Emotional abuse was inherent in the traditional QVS culture. Banter was regarded as normal and good-humoured, but its propensity to progress to harmful bullying, which could go on long term, was not recognised nor guarded against.
- Children were abused by other children by means of verbal abuse often based on the victim’s perceived weakness or their differences. Prior to 1991 teachers did not generally intervene despite being aware of it happening, even if children were in obvious distress.
- One child threatened to jump from the roof of the school as a result of the emotional abuse he suffered, and another tried to take his own life – also because of being emotionally abused by other boys – by jumping off a windowsill with a curtain round his neck.
- Homophobia and sectarianism thrived.
- Theft of personal property was common and used as a weapon to upset, to humiliate, and to generate false allegations of theft.
- A few teachers humiliated and denigrated children.
- Some applicants spoke positively about aspects of their experiences at the school and some are proud of it.
- In 1991 a concerned teacher, Glenn Harrison, wrote to the press and to parents to expose his genuine anxieties about bullying and violence, which he described as ‘a dark side of the school’. His actions were well intended and led to profound change being achieved at QVS.
- There were applicants and other staff who, in the course of evidence provided at the hearings, did not recognise the scale of the problems described by Glenn Harrison.
- The Commissioners did not ignore Glenn Harrison’s concerns. They had already noticed there were problems with morale and behaviour at the school and had been planning to discuss their concerns at the next board meeting. Instead, the police and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) were, appropriately, called in immediately. A full inspection followed. Care was improved and an assistant head (pastoral) was appointed in August 1992.

- Staff tensions and misplaced loyalties occurring since 2000 have nonetheless diverted attention away from the protection of children and their wellbeing.

- The current senior leadership, HM Commissioners, and the MOD now understand that there is no room for

complacency given the abuse that has taken place since 2010 despite new child protection systems and policies having been implemented.

- QVS apologised for the abuse experienced by children who had been entrusted into its care.

1 Introduction

At the close of the case study, I undertook to publish my case findings as soon as practicable. This, I now do.

The findings that I am able to make on the evidence presented in this part of the case study are set out in this document. I am doing so to make applicants, witnesses, and members of the public aware that I have concluded that children were abused at the school.

Anonymity and identification

Where applicants have not sought anonymity, I have normally used their real names. Otherwise, in accordance with my General Restriction Order, they are referred to by their chosen pseudonym.

I have decided, in the meantime, to preserve the anonymity of some living persons whom I find to have abused children. I have not done so where, for example, they have been convicted of abusing children or I am otherwise satisfied that disclosure of their identity is appropriate. Also, the norm will be that where persons against whom findings of abuse have been established are deceased, they will be named.

When a current or former teacher or other member of staff is mentioned, the likely dates they were at the school, based on the available evidence, are provided.

The dates for the periods during which applicants attended the school, again based on the available evidence, are provided.

While great care has been taken to compile the information in relation to the dates that former pupils and staff were at the school, it may be incomplete or inaccurate due to the limitations of the records currently available. Where there is conflicting information about such dates, the most contemporaneously recorded source has been relied on.

Children were abused at Queen Victoria School

Children were exposed to risks of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. For many those risks materialised and children were abused whilst in the care of QVS. The nature of that abuse is detailed in these findings.

Investigations have been carried out in relation to QVS in furtherance of what, in terms of SCAI's Terms of Reference (ToR), I am directed to do, and, as a result of what has been uncovered, I have no difficulty in finding that children were abused at QVS in a variety of ways. Also, children were abused by teachers whose abusive practices were such that they must or at least ought to have been obvious to those in positions of responsibility. Further, they were abused by senior and other pupils, some of whose practices must or ought to have been obvious to those in such positions.

Positive aspects

There were children who were not abused, children who had positive experiences, and children who, although they were abused, also had positive experiences. However, as explained in the [Foreword](#), SCAI's ToR require me to investigate not only the nature of the abuse of children who were in residential care in Scotland, including those who were at boarding schools, but also its extent. This includes addressing questions such as whether or not abuse was the universal experience, how prevalent it was, and whether a child who was abused also experienced positive aspects and outcomes. The fact that children also had positive experiences and that there were children who were not abused at all in no way compensates for or diminishes the dreadful reality of the abuse that occurred. The fact that they had positive experiences also shows that it was possible to provide non-abusive care, thereby begging the question of why the school did not ensure that that was the standard of care consistently afforded to all children.

I have, at times, made specific findings about the positive experiences of applicants and other witnesses. Some of them spoke of positive aspects – and of their pride in QVS – notwithstanding that they also spoke of having been abused at the school and/or having suffered from having witnessed others being abused. The willingness of such applicants to do so supported the credibility of their evidence about being abused. Examples of this included 'Barry', who

said: 'Now that QV is co-ed, I would send my children there if my wife would agree, although I don't think she would. My overall experience was a positive one';¹¹ and 'Noah', who stated that QVS

was a very rewarding experience in that I grew up very quickly and became independent. It left me with, through necessity, an ability to engage with people a lot quicker than perhaps I would have done had I not attended boarding school. As much as I didn't do well academically I always think about how badly I would have done if I had stayed with my parents and moved around schools. I'd not have had the security of being in the one place throughout my childhood.¹²

Evidence

In these findings, reference is made to some parts of the evidence of individual witnesses where I have found them to be particularly illustrative of the main aspects of what was happening. They are, however, of necessity, a limited selection. The fact that a particular piece of evidence is not referred to or discussed does not mean that it has not been accepted or that it has not helped to build the overall picture.

The period covered in evidence ranged from about 1934¹³ to 2021.¹⁴

All oral evidence was given on oath or under affirmation. Where the evidence relied on is drawn from a written statement prepared by the Inquiry, the statement was signed after

11 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.27, paragraph 147.

12 [Written statement of 'Noah'](#) (former pupil, 1984-90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.30, paragraph 103.

13 Written evidence ranges from 1930 to 2021. See QVS, Minutes of HM Commissioners' meetings, January 1929-December 1939, at MOD-000000006. The oral evidence ranges from 1951 to 2021. See [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.2-18.

14 See [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.87.

having been reviewed by the witness and confirmed as being a true account.

In describing what happened at QVS, I have quoted from some of the evidence of former pupils that I have accepted as establishing what happened to them and the nature of their experiences there. I do this because they are representative of voices that now ought to be heard.

Standard of proof

In making these findings, I have applied the standard of proof explained in my decision of 30 January 2018, namely that:

when determining what facts have been established in the course of this Inquiry, it is appropriate that I do so by reference to the civil standard of proof, namely balance of probabilities. I will not, however, consider myself constrained from making findings about, for example, what may possibly have happened or about the strength of particular evidence, where I consider it would be helpful to do so.¹⁵

The criminal standard of proof is a higher standard of proof, namely proof beyond reasonable doubt. For the avoidance of doubt, I have not applied the criminal standard of proof in making these findings.

15 Standard of Proof – Decision by the Rt Hon. Lady Smith, Chair of SCAl, 25 January 2018.

2 History and background of Queen Victoria School

Queen Victoria School is a co-educational, non-denominational,¹⁶ non-selective boarding school in Dunblane, Perthshire, owned and operated by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), formerly the War Office, a UK Department of State. QVS is the only remaining MOD school in the United Kingdom.¹⁷

QVS is the only remaining MOD school in the United Kingdom.

The Royal Warrant

QVS opened in 1908 at Dunblane, chosen because it was almost equidistant between Glasgow and Edinburgh. The idea of the school was first proposed to Queen Victoria long after similar military schools had opened in Ireland and England under earlier monarchs.¹⁸ She initiated the school's Royal Warrant before she died in 1901, but it was enacted by her son, King Edward VII, who signed it in 1905, establishing 'in Scotland an Institution for the reception and education of the sons of Scottish Sailors (and subsequently Airmen), to also act as a

National Memorial in Scotland to Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria'.¹⁹

The school was also to be a memorial to the Scottish soldiers and sailors who had died in the Boer Wars in South Africa and to provide support, education, and a stable and secure boarding school environment for boys who had been left fatherless.²⁰ The QVS Constitution included an undertaking by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for War that the 'School and Chapel shall be maintained in perpetuity'.²¹



Queen Victoria School, front entrance

The school was built with the assistance of subscriptions from serving personnel, soldiers (who gave up a day's pay), support

16 HMle, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 February 2005, at MOD-000000101, p.1.

17 [Written statement of Colonel Clive Knightley](#) (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at MOD-000000632, p.2, paragraph 5.

18 The Duke of York's Royal Military School, Kent was founded in 1803 by Royal Warrant of 1801. The Royal Hibernian Military School, Dublin was founded as a co-educational establishment in 1769. It relocated to Kent in 1922 and merged with the Duke of York's Royal Military School in 1924.

19 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.1.

20 QVS, [Our History](#); QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.10; House of Commons Defence Committee, [Educating Service Children: Eleventh Report of Session 2005-06](#), p.132.

21 QVS, Constitution of the Queen Victoria School, 1905, at MOD-000000038, p.4.

from local authorities, and contributions from across Scotland, including from businesses.

QVS's Constitution and Royal Warrant specified that the school would be for boys only but, under a Royal Warrant dated 1992,²² it became co-educational and girls were first admitted in 1996.²³ Until recently the children of officers were not included amongst its pupils²⁴ in recognition of the fact that 'the greater difficulty lay in the more junior ranks who were obviously paid less to provide for an education in those challenging circumstances of both mobility of families but also the deployment of parents on operations'.²⁵ In the case of pupils whose parents were officers being admitted to the school, for the most part such parents had 'come through the ranks'.²⁶

The school has evolved and the primary goal of QVS is now to provide stability and continuity of education for *any* child of UK service personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or are in a Scottish regiment. The school has met and continues to try to meet that goal.

One applicant said: 'My parents sent us to boarding school for the stability, because obviously by that time I had been to four or five different primary schools.'²⁷ That was a common experience amongst almost all the witnesses, many of whom had parents

who had been posted to the Far East and Germany during the Cold War, or, more recently, to the Gulf and Afghanistan. The availability of a forces school is an example of the Armed Forces Covenant which states that 'service personnel and their families are treated fairly in comparison with their non-service peers and suffer no disadvantage in comparison with those peers by dint of their military service and association'.²⁸ The QVS Constitution provides that 'The character of the School shall be strictly non-sectarian' and that 'the "Senior Chaplain" is to be a minister of the Church of Scotland, but opportunities are provided to all pupils to attend worship as well as receive instruction and visitation according to their own religious observance'.²⁹

Admissions

From the outset children were admitted to QVS through application by eligible parents/guardians following the admission procedures laid down in the Royal Warrant.³⁰ The QVS admissions panel have always offered school places in accordance with the eligibility and prioritisation criteria directed in the relevant Royal Warrant.

The criteria have been reviewed and revised over the years 'to ensure compliance with periodic revisions of the Royal Warrant, and changes in educational legislation'.³¹

22 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, pp.7 and 10.

23 QVS, [Our History](#).

24 Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 29 January 2016, at MOD-000000122, p.5.

25 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.16.

26 [Queen Victoria School, Dunblane \(Military Covenant\)](#), Hansard, HC Deb 14 June 2011, vol. 529, col. 248WH.

27 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Peter' (former pupil, 1990-6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.125.

28 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.18.

29 QVS, Constitution of the Queen Victoria School, 1905, at MOD-000000038, p.7.

30 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.10.

31 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, pp.4-5.

The current criteria state:

Admission to the School shall be open to the children of Service personnel in any regular branch of the Armed Services who are serving or have served in Scottish regiments or at Service bases in Scotland on regular engagements, of Scotsmen and Scotswomen who are serving or who have served in any regular branch of the Armed Services and of Scotsmen and Scotswomen who while serving in any other of the Armed Services have been employed on active service ...

In selection of pupils for admission, preference in general shall be given:

1st To orphans.

2nd To those whose fathers or mothers have been killed in action or died in service.

3rd To those who have lost a father or mother but whose other parent is still serving.

4th To other eligible compassionate cases.

5th To those whose fathers or mothers are still serving and are liable for foreign service.

6th To other eligible children.

7th To any other children that may become eligible.

8th Notwithstanding the eligibility criteria ... to any other children of a serving parent, should the School otherwise be unsubscribed.³²

As Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21) said, 'the admissions process throughout the years has always given considerable weight to orphans of service personnel'.³³ The school also tries to ensure that no child is restricted from attending the school by virtue of finance alone.³⁴

The admission criteria are recorded in the relevant Royal Warrant and in the school's Boarding School Arrangements documentation, and are now published on the school's website.

Ethos

The school states that its ethos is for students to be 'well exercised not only physically but also intellectually, morally, socially and culturally',³⁵ and that it aims to provide children whose parents are in the armed forces with 'stability, continuity and an excellent education'.³⁶ According to its vision statement, it seeks 'to provide a unique, thriving boarding and educational community in which all pupils and staff work to support and respect one another in realising their full potential'.³⁷

The school's statement of purpose is this:

We exist to provide a caring but stretching learning environment, valued by the military families whom we serve. We embody and promote values of honesty, integrity, compassion and empathy. Queen Victoria

32 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, pp.11-12.

33 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.13.

34 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, p.9.

35 QVS, [Vision, Mission and Values](#).

36 QVS, [Vision, Mission and Values](#).

37 QVS, [Vision, Mission and Values](#).

These are laudable and appropriate aspirations, but they have not always been achieved.

School has a long tradition of ceremonial excellence; we take pride in this and all that our School has to offer.³⁸

These are laudable and appropriate aspirations, but they have not always been achieved, and children have, as a result, suffered, as these findings explain.

Governance and leadership

The school's military foundation has always been evident in its governance and leadership. Originally, under the terms of the Royal Warrant, a 'commandant' (a military term traditionally denoting an officer in charge of a military unit)³⁹ was responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. The commandant was assisted by a headmaster who was also a military officer and drawn from the Army Educational Corps.

Governance of the school was vested by Royal Warrant in a Board of HM Commissioners to whom the commandant was responsible for the control and general administration of the establishment and for the wellbeing and discipline of its staff and boys. The commandant acted as Secretary to the Commissioners and as 'interpreter of the school's needs', not only to the Board but also to the various government agencies

through which the school was funded.⁴⁰ 'Bob' was a pupil at the school in the 1950s and remembered this: 'The commandant was in charge of the school, then there was the headmaster and various teachers. The people in these positions changed quite frequently from what I can remember. We very rarely saw the headmaster or the commandant. The teachers were Royal Army Educational Corps officers.'⁴¹



Queen Victoria School crest

The head was responsible to the Commissioners for the school's educational programme, the control of the teaching staff, the running of the boarding houses, and school discipline.⁴² Until 1973, as with the head, many of the teachers were also drawn from the Royal Army Educational

38 QVS, [The Victorian Magazine](#).

39 In the case of QVS, the commandant was normally a former officer of a Scottish regiment.

40 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088, p.4.

41 See [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, p.3. The Army Educational Corps became the Royal Army Educational Corps in 1946.

42 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088, p.5.

Corps. Army involvement decreased rapidly thereafter.⁴³

The relationship between commandant and headmaster was set out in a letter of 1929 as follows: 'The Headmaster, or Chief Educational Officer, in his capacity as such, has had full scope since the inception of the School to develop the educational side of the work and with regard to this, the Commissioners and the Commandant have always given him their whole hearted support.'⁴⁴

However, in 1990 a decision was taken to remove the post of commandant and place full responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school on the headmaster, supported by a bursar appointed by the Secretary of State for Defence. In 1992 the Royal Warrant was amended to reflect these changes.

Alan Plumtree, an accountant who became chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners for QVS in 2012, spoke of having a longstanding connection with the school and remembered that:

the last Army Educational Corps headmaster was in 1972 when Lieutenant Colonel Evans was appointed, and that was the first person within the school that I knew. There were then a series of headmasters who were not from the Army but they were still ranked below the commandant. It was when the commandant

changed and became the bursar that the head took over the role of being properly the headmaster.⁴⁵

From 1992 to 2005 QVS was an agency of the MOD. That gave the headmaster more autonomy:

My understanding is that from 1992 until 2005 the School was run on an Agency basis, for the Ministry of Defence, by Her Majesty's Board of Commissioners, with the involvement of the school Bursar (now School Business Manager) and the Head Teacher. Prior to that time it was, I think, directly funded ... To that point, HM Board of Commissioners and the Head Teacher administered an annual budget allocated by the Ministry of Defence. HM Board of Commissioners would report annually to Parliament with a budget request.⁴⁶

From 1992 to 2005 QVS was an agency of the MOD.

As an agency of the MOD, 'the headmaster, as Chief Executive, [was] responsible through the Board of Her Majesty's Commissioners to the Secretary of State for Defence or the Adjutant General acting on his behalf'.⁴⁷

In 2010 the Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) was formed and assumed responsibility for QVS.⁴⁸ This meant the Secretary of State for Defence

43 [Written statement of Alan Plumtree](#) (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at MOD-000000630, p.2, paragraph 9.

44 QVS, Letter from the Commissioners to Sir William Peyton, 18 January 1929, at MOD-000000602, p.10.

45 [Transcript, day 218](#): Alan Plumtree (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at TRN-8-000000009, p.22.

46 [Written statement of Alan Plumtree](#) (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at MOD-000000630, p.2, paragraph 9.

47 HMle, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 February 2005, at MOD-000000101.

48 [Written statement of Colonel Clive Knightley](#) (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at MOD-000000632, p.1, paragraph 2.

delegated responsibility for the School to Commander Home Command (Comd HC), who provided the school's annual budget and in turn delegated everyday management, including staff employment, to DCYP. The head was responsible for school leadership and safeguarding of the pupils.⁴⁹ Further change followed in 2021 after 'a decision was taken to split the delivery and policy responsibilities held by the former Directorate Children and Young People, so the Defence Children Services team have taken on the delivery element, which includes the ownership of MOD schools and thus includes QVS'.⁵⁰

'High level policy issues related to families and children and their safeguarding' were now dealt with by the Head of Defence People.⁵¹

The head is responsible, through the Board of HM Commissioners, to Comd HC for the overall leadership and performance of the school, and is also responsible for reporting regularly to HM Commissioners.⁵²

QVS has been led by ten commandants over the period 1929-90 (Table 3) and four headteachers from 1990 to the present (Table 4).

Table 3: QVS commandants, 1929-90

Name and regiment	Period of service
Colonel S.A. Innes, Black Watch	1929-39
Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Hall, Royal Scots	1939-40
Major W.L. Clarke, Army Educational Corps	1940-3
Major W.F. Hawkins, Army Educational Corps	1943-4
Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Hall, Royal Scots	1944-50
Lieutenant Colonel R.F. Nason, Seaforth Highlanders	1950-6
Brigadier A.M. Finlaison CBE, DSO, Cameronians	1956-64
Brigadier M.R.J. Hope Thomson, DSO, OBE, MC, Royal Scots Fusiliers	1964-74
Brigadier H.H.M. Marston MC, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	1974-85
Brigadier O.R. Tweedy MC, Black Watch	1985-90

49 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, p.7.

50 [Transcript, day 241](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000032, p.82.

51 [Transcript, day 241](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000032, p.82.

52 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638.

Table 4: QVS headteachers, 1990-present

Name	Period of employment
Mr J.D. Hankinson MA*	1990-4
Mr B. Raine BA (Hons), PGCE	1994-2006
Mrs W. Bellars BA (Hons), PGCE, DipEd, MA (Ed Man)	2007-16
Mr D. Shaw BSc, PGCE, MSc	2016-present

* Julian Hankinson became the first civilian head of QVS in 1990, after serving as headmaster for the previous 10 years under the last Commandant, Brigadier Tweedie.

The buildings and campus

The QVS campus extends to 45 acres and includes accommodation for staff. At its core is the large main building. There is also a chapel, a swimming pool, a hospital, a gymnasium, the 'Play Hall', a library, and a science room, all of which had been built by 1914. As can be seen from two aerial photographs, construction since the Second World War includes a more modern annexe building, Wavell House, and a sports hall, both built in the late 1950s. More recently, Trenchard House was built for junior pupils.

Despite being a small school in terms of numbers, some applicants spoke of being struck by the scale of the main building and the grounds.

Some found it intimidating. 'Hamish' said: 'It was a very grey day and the school looked very much like a prison to me.'⁵³ 'Andy' described the main building as 'like Colditz ... I always remember my first impression coming round the corner from the bus stop and suddenly seeing this great monolith, as it looked to me. I mean, it wasn't really that high. And the lights on the windows ... it



Aerial view of the school, 1947



Aerial view of the school, 2006

53 [Written statement of 'Hamish'](#) (former pupil, 1968-75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.4, paragraph 15.

‘My first impression was that it looked like a castle but also a prison.’

looked a little foreboding.⁵⁴ ‘Joe’ agreed: ‘My first impression was that it looked like a castle but also a prison.’⁵⁵

Sport was always important at QVS, and the facilities were good, as ‘Martin’ remembered: ‘The grounds of the school were massive and included rugby, football and cricket pitches as well as tennis courts.’⁵⁶ He went on: ‘The school had its own swimming pool which we used regularly. We were given the opportunity to obtain a number of swimming awards (certificates and badges).’⁵⁷ ‘Douglas’ said: ‘Sport played a big role in the school. We had great big playing fields and good facilities within the school.’⁵⁸

There has always been a medical facility on site, now called the Health and Wellbeing Centre, previously the Medical Centre and before that the Hospital. Until 2006 QVS employed one full-time nurse. Since 2006, staffing has increased, with care now provided on a 24/7 basis by three full-time nurses.⁵⁹

Boarding houses

All pupils were and are boarders. There are now four boarding houses, each named after famous senior military officers,

namely Trenchard House, Wavell House, Cunningham House, and Haig House.⁶⁰ Trenchard is currently the junior house.⁶¹ Historically, Wavell House was the junior house for children in Primary 6 and Primary 7,⁶² and many applicants spoke of being placed there on arrival at the school. ‘Joe’ recalled that:

The primary school was housed in a building, Wavell House, separate from the main school ... There were three houses in Wavell House: Lyndoch, which was on the ground floor; Abercrombie, which was on the middle floor; and Moore, on the top. There were inter-house competition events and we wore colours to signify which house we belonged to. Moore was green, Abercrombie was red, and Lyndoch was blue.⁶³

‘Martin’ said: ‘At the school Primaries 6 and 7 were in what was called Wavell House. There were two houses for the middle-age students, which were first, second, and third year, called Cunningham House and Trenchard House. The older students (fourth, fifth, and sixth year) were in Haig House.’⁶⁴

Each house had a housemaster who lived in a separate part of the accommodation with his family. There was also a matron who had

54 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.10.

55 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.47–9.

56 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.103.

57 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.110.

58 Written statement of ‘Douglas’ (former pupil, 1984–93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.18, paragraph 70.

59 QVS, Part A response to section 21 notice, addendum to appendix, at MOD-000000540.

60 Transcript, day 218: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.25.

61 QVS, Boarding.

62 Transcript, day 218: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.26.

63 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.48.

64 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.102.

her own accommodation in the boarding house.

QVS has used both vertical (pupils from different year groups) and horizontal (same year groups) house systems in the past. Currently, three of the houses are vertical houses. S1 to S6 boys are in Haig House and Cunningham House, and S2 to S6 girls in Wavell House.⁶⁵ Under the current system, pupils will remain in these houses for the rest of their time at QVS.⁶⁶ Trenchard House is a 'horizontal house' for Primary 7 pupils of both genders and S1 girls.⁶⁷ Boys move to a senior boys' house after one year in Trenchard House, whereas girls spend two years there before moving to a senior girls' house.⁶⁸ Older girls visit Trenchard House to perform a 'big sister' supporting role. Each house has a housemaster or housemistress and a team of residential and non-residential staff who, between them, provide 24/7 cover during term time.⁶⁹

Donald Shaw recognised that

there are pros and cons of both approaches. The vertical house system just now means ... you have senior role models for the young boys and girls who move into the house in the first place and you have an ethos and a culture of a school that can be modelled by those young people, and that is very much the way I see it working just now. But you could also

say, in terms of abuse, that you do have the prospect of an S6 boy living with an S1 boy in the same corridor, or ... corridor area ... but I am entirely content with the one we currently use. But ... it is constantly under review, not for reasons of abuse, just constantly under review as to what is best for those young people and how are the circumstances that they could best live in.⁷⁰

Dormitories

Living accommodation for pupils was originally in large dormitories. From the late 1980s there was a gradual move to rooms housing one to four pupils depending on their ages.⁷¹ Reflecting on these changes, 'John' said: 'I was in Wavell House when I first started ... The dormitories were open plan with about 16 or 17 boys sharing. You had a bed and a locker. There was not much privacy.'⁷² He continued:

I moved to Trenchard House and Cunningham House for S1 to S3. The living accommodation was also a long dorm sectioned off with wardrobes by bunk beds. Again, there was not much privacy. In the summer between S1 and S2, they modernised the house. Instead of one long dorm, there were smaller cubicles that took two or three boys. There were no doors on these but there was much more privacy. I think the house captain got a room to himself. I moved to Haig House for S4 to

65 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.26.

66 QVS, [Boarding](#).

67 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.26.

68 QVS, [Boarding](#).

69 QVS, [Boarding](#).

70 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.27.

71 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.9.

72 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'John' (former pupil, 1989–96), at TRN-8-000000029, p.186.

‘In S5 to S6, we got our own rooms with a lockable door and much more privacy.’

S6. In S4, there were about 11 of us sharing an annexe with our own space. In S5 to S6, we got our own rooms with a lockable door and much more privacy.⁷³

Pupil numbers

In 1930, there were 250 pupils at QVS. This figure had risen to 277 by 2014, with all pupils aged between 10 and 18, reflecting the increasing demand for school places from eligible parents.⁷⁴ It is estimated that, from its founding up to 2019, approximately 4,200 pupils have been accommodated at

QVS.⁷⁵ Currently the school is capable of housing up to 275 young people.⁷⁶

School rolls

The school roll has been relatively constant since the 1930s, as shown in Table 5.

Legal status

QVS was established under a constitution incorporating a Minute of Agreement between the ‘Subscribers to a Fund raised by voluntary contribution for the purpose of

Table 5: Pupil numbers, 1946–2014

Date	Senior school	Primary school	Total
July 1946	143	115	258 ⁷⁷
1966	179	84	263 ⁷⁸
1985	177	79	256 ⁷⁹
1992			263 ⁸⁰
2014			277 ⁸¹

73 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘John’ (former pupil, 1989–96), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.186–7.

74 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, pp.8 and 9.

75 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.9.

76 Transcript, day 218: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.14.

77 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 27 July 1946, at SGV-000067153, pp.18–19.

78 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, November 1966, at SGV-000067150, p.15.

79 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088.

80 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104.

81 Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 29 January 2016, at MOD-000000122.

establishing in Scotland an Institution as a Queen Victoria Memorial School'⁸² and the War Department which agreement, in turn, incorporated a Royal Warrant.⁸³ As explained above, these provide, amongst other matters, for QVS being established 'in perpetuity'. QVS's sister school in England, the Duke of York's Royal Military School, was established under different provisions and is now funded by the Department for Education, having become a state boarding school under the Academy Programme.⁸⁴ As Colonel Clive Knightley noted, 'when the Secretary of War in 1905 signed the Minute of Agreement, his legal staff clearly failed to explain to him that committing himself and his forebears in perpetuity to maintaining a school and the buildings meant just that'.⁸⁵

That important aspect was also commented on by Anne McGuire, MP for Stirling, in the course of the first specific debate on QVS in the House of Commons, in 2011, when she said:

I am sure that the Minister has looked over the Royal Warrant. It is an impressive piece of drafting, which is designed to make the warrant watertight against the exigencies of future pressures, whether financial or otherwise. I can imagine that at more than one point in the school's history, the warrant has been pored over with great precision by MOD

lawyers to try to discover whether there is a get-out clause.⁸⁶

Unlike other UK service schools, QVS was, in 2000, recognised by a House of Commons Defence Committee as 'an anomaly but an exceptionally worthy one'.⁸⁷

Governance and administration

That ongoing MOD engagement involves two layers of oversight. Governance arrangements are stipulated in the Royal Warrant and, while ultimate responsibility for QVS lies with the Secretary of State for Defence, the school's affairs are also overseen by HM Commissioners, as guided by the HMC Governance Manual, first issued in 2010.⁸⁸ It provides 'direction for the management of the School, its relationships with the Ministry of Defence, and the responsibilities of Her Majesty's Board of the School's Commissioners and the Head'.⁸⁹

The make-up of the Board of HM Commissioners has developed over time. Prior to devolution in 1998, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Lord Justice General were standing members of the Board,⁹⁰ with the Adjutant General and the head of the Army's Educational and Training Services (and their successor posts) representing the Secretary of State.⁹¹ Other

82 QVS, Constitution of the Queen Victoria School, 1905, at MOD-000000038, pp.3-4.

83 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.4.

84 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.19.

85 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.20.

86 [Queen Victoria School, Dunblane \(Military Covenant\)](#), Hansard, HC Deb 14 June 2011, vol. 529, col. 248WH.

87 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.20.

88 The current version is dated Feb 2020 and is found at MOD-000000638.

89 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638.

90 QVS, Letter from the Ministry of Defence to the First Minister, 21 July 2005, at SGV-000007968.

91 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.15.

Commissioners were serving military officers, including the commanding officers of Scottish regiments, appointed to the Board by the Adjutant General. More recently, governance has diversified. The Royal Warrant of 1999 specified that the Board should include 'six persons with expertise in education, business, finance and the professions',⁹² a change reflected by the evidence of 'John' in which he mentioned that 'we had two ex HMIs, Her Majesty's Inspectors, [and] an ex senior management from Mary Erskine's'. 'John' continued: 'rather than have the military, we would bring out people specifically with a view of helping the school in the areas that were important' but added: 'I don't know how much it was noticed by the teaching staff [but] it was appreciated by the SMT [senior management team]'.⁹³

Currently the Board of HM Commissioners consists of:

- a. Ex officio:
 - (1) The Lord Justice Clerk
 - (2) The Governor of Edinburgh Castle
- b. Not more than nine persons, at least five of whom should have expertise in education, business, accountancy/finance and the professions to be nominated by HMC and approved by Comd HC.
- c. Two persons to be nominated by the Army Board of the Defence Council.

d. One person to be nominated by the Admiralty Board of the Defence Council.

e. One person to be nominated by the Air Force Board of the Defence Council.⁹⁴

Comd HC appoints up to two persons to represent him at meetings of the Board. One of these appointees is from DCYP – superseded in 2021 by Defence Children Services (DCS) – or a nominated representative.⁹⁵

The Board meets each academic term and at least three times per year, always at QVS, and there are also various committees.⁹⁶ An expansion of the number of committees began in 2010, according to Alan Plumtree, with a distinct Safeguarding and Child Protection Committee in existence from 2018, although HM Commissioners had, he said, understood 'without question' the importance of that subject long before.⁹⁷

In the discharge of their duties, HM Commissioners visit the boarding houses at least three times per year. In Alan Plumtree's experience:

Commissioners have always been allocated to houses, so they will have a responsibility to visit their house. The Commissioners also have a responsibility to the school as a whole ... when we have our termly Board meetings we join the children in the dining room and try to spread ourselves as far as possible. It's a very good way of talking to the children, it introduces us to them and them to us, and

92 QVS, Constitution of the Queen Victoria School, 1905, at MOD-000000038, pp.6-7.

93 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.34.

94 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, pp.1-2, paragraph 8.

95 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, p.2, paragraph 10.

96 They are the Waivers Committee, the General Purposes Committee, the Education and Admissions Committee, the Health and Safety Committee, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Committee, and the Trust Funds Portfolio Management Committee.

97 [Transcript, day 218](#): Alan Plumtree (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at TRN-8-000000009, pp.50-1.

certainly from my point of view I have always found it a very useful way of relating to the children.⁹⁸

Written reports of the visits are made and retained, and a number have been made available to me.

As with staff, HM Commissioners are now PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) registered and undertake induction training on appointment.⁹⁹ They also subscribe to a Code of Conduct.¹⁰⁰

The most recent Royal Warrant dates from 2018. The Schedule states:

The intent is that the Board should operate as the School's executive board that holds the strategic vision, the direction and responsibility to bring the School to life, in order to produce the very best possible learning environment for the students and to deliver the student outcomes. The decisions of the Board are to be the driving force of the School and supported by Comd HC.¹⁰¹

The Board has a responsibility to advise the head and Comd HC of any matters of which it has become aware concerning the education and pastoral care of children attending the school, and to bring to their attention any issues considered to be adverse to the good governance of the

school. The Board's key areas of work are defined in the 2018 Schedule and include strategy; education; performance; staff appointments; the Queen Victoria School Fund;¹⁰² communication; local engagement; and risk management.¹⁰³

**'DCYP in MOD schools
provide us with a high level
of safeguarding expertise.'**

Further oversight of QVS is now provided by the MOD through DCS. Donald Shaw said: 'I am held to account for my actions very, very clearly by HMC and ... the safeguarding and child protection committee, but I am equally held to account by my employers, the MOD, who have regular meetings with me and ask for reports on incidents.'¹⁰⁴ He went on:

We are double-whammied, I suppose you might call it. We have ... HMC on one side and DCYP on the other, and actually DCYP in MOD schools provide us with ... a high level of safeguarding expertise ... they have a chief safeguarding officer. So if I had a safeguarding issue, I would of course let [the chair of the Board] know, but I would actually expect to take advice from the Ministry of Defence civil service systems, defence business systems, etc.¹⁰⁵

98 [Transcript, day 218](#): Alan Plumtree (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at TRN-8-000000009, pp.57-8.

99 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.15.

100 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, pp.12-13.

101 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, p.7, paragraph 4.

102 QVS states on its [website](#) that this fund is used to improve life directly or indirectly for its pupils by providing non-essentials that the MOD would not fund, for example money for house events and luxury items.

103 QVS, Board of HM Commissioners, Governance Manual, February 2020, at MOD-000000638, pp.7-8, paragraph 7.

104 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.65.

105 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.54.

QVS also has the same duties to report to the relevant Scottish authorities as do other boarding schools.

Colonel Clive Knightley explained the background to MOD involvement:

the Army held the responsibility on behalf of all the armed forces for service children and young people, and ... the adjutant general, the most senior personnel officer in the Army, has routinely played a part in the governance of the school ... assisted ... by the Army's education services as the ... professionally trained and qualified educators within the Army. And that worked fine really until the demands of the Children Acts, the Children Act of 1989 but specifically the Children Act of 2004, when it became clear that there were significant duties ... and it was no longer felt that it was appropriate for the Army's education staff to lead on that ... that is why the Directorate ... was formed in 2010, and a previous Director of Children's Services and the Local Authority was recruited directly in, as a two-star and Major General-grade equivalent civil servant, to head up that Directorate ...

We then put in place the appropriate aspects of the requirements on a Local Authority ... a formal MOD-level children and young people plan, forming an MOD children's board ... so that the MOD could hold itself to account against the requirements of the Children Acts, but also ... [to] actually hold to account all those other Government departments and

the devolved administrations who also had responsibilities for and to service children and young people ...

It ensured that we were and remained compliant and were able to adopt and implement changes in statutory direction, statutory guidance and best practice ... that is why we have excellent links with the education departments in Westminster and the devolved administrations, and they are used to being held to account by DCYP ... for how they deliver their statutory responsibilities for service children and young people.¹⁰⁶

That duplication of supervision is broadly seen as positive: 'Certainly from the MOD perspective it was that multi-layering, and therefore reducing the chances of anything slipping through cracks, that has always been a strength of the system.'¹⁰⁷

As Donald Shaw sees it, there is a 'very slight tension in the double aspects of governance, but there are many more positives ... than there are negatives'.¹⁰⁸ Efforts to streamline processes, so the head does not have to say the same thing twice, had, he felt, been achieved 'as my line manager from the DCYP ... is now a member of the Admissions and Education Committee, along with the Commissioners'.¹⁰⁹

Finance

QVS is a state-funded school¹¹⁰ and the only boarding school funded by the MOD.

106 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012–21), at TRN-8-000000009, pp.38–41.

107 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012–21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.56.

108 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.64.

109 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.65.

110 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.2.

‘Links with the military in the teaching staff have all but disappeared.’

Originally, its funding was by way of ‘grants of money to be voted by Parliament as part of and included in the General Army Estimates, now the Defence Vote’,¹¹¹ but currently the Secretary of State for Defence delegates responsibility to Comd HC which approves and provides the school’s annual budget.

The state funding afforded to the school has always meant that many families who could not otherwise afford the fees are able to send their children there. They have, however, always had to pay a financial contribution which has, typically, been a small proportion of the full costs. In 2011 it was noted, in the course of the House of Commons debate referred to above, as being about 10% of the fees plus the cost of any extras, and on the school’s website, it is indicated that the standard termly bill payable by parents for the academic year 2021/2022 was about £455.

Staffing

Until 1973 the head was always drawn from the (Royal) Army Educational Corps, as were many teachers. Now, all the teaching staff are civilians.¹¹² Donald Shaw said: ‘there is one current active reservist, but links with

the military in the teaching staff have all but disappeared, certainly in the last I would say 10 to 20 years’.¹¹³

In 1930, 26 staff were employed at QVS in some capacity, while by 1980 the total had grown to 80. In terms of non-teaching staff the ‘ratio was 7 non-teaching staff to 250 pupils in 1930, rising to 20 non-teaching staff to 277 pupils in 2014’.¹¹⁴ This accords with applicants’ recollections. ‘Peter’ said: ‘I would hazard a guess that there were about 20 to 25 academic staff and there were also house staff, military staff, medical staff, maintenance people, tailoresses, electricians, carpenters, cleaners, and kitchen staff. There were probably 40 to 50 staff in total.’¹¹⁵ ‘Peter’ also thought all housemasters were teachers.¹¹⁶

That accords with other available information. For example, ‘in March 1979 staff ratio [was] 1 master to 12 boys’¹¹⁷ and in 1985 ‘the teaching staff was 22 full-time and 2 part-time teachers, including the Headmaster. This resulted in a pupil-teacher ratio of just under 11.4 to 1. In boarding schools in the independent sector, this is usually under 10 to 1.’¹¹⁸

Currently, all staff at QVS are MOD employees and so

111 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.2.

112 [Written statement of Alan Plumtree](#) (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012–22), at MOD-000000630, p.2, paragraph 9.

113 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.21.

114 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.14.

115 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.128.

116 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.129.

117 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 20 March 1979, at MOD-000000574, p.99.

118 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088, pp.4–12.

MOD recruitment rules apply. Defence Business Services (DBS) act as recruiters in relation to civilian staff (including teachers). All teaching staff are civil servants and subject to many of the same terms and conditions as other MOD civil servants. The MOD has overarching responsibility for employment issues (recruitment, retention, management and discipline) at Queen Victoria School.¹¹⁹

That said, the MOD recognises that QVS is a Scottish school and follows the Scottish approach, including the Curriculum for Excellence.¹²⁰

Education, training, and qualifications

Teaching staff provided by the (Royal) Army Educational Corps inevitably came from both military and educational backgrounds. Since the 1970s and the introduction of civilian staff, recruitment practices have in many ways mirrored the other schools in this case study. Thus, since 2003, all non-teaching staff have been registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC); since 2011

all staff have been PVG registered; and since 2014 all teachers have been registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS).¹²¹

Donald Shaw explained that, in its boarding houses, QVS has

boarding tutors from the business support staff now ... historically, and even I think when I arrived in 2006, all tutors were teachers, but because we introduced a new model where every tutor had a smaller group to work with, we went into the business support staff of the school to get more tutors, and each of those tutors had to get their level 3 SSSC childcare qualification. That also applied to our drumming instructor, piping instructor, dancing instructor. Anyone who couldn't be GTCS-registered became SSSC-registered.¹²²

Colonel Clive Knightley considers that vetting, as part of the MOD employment process, provides 'an additional level of reassurance'.¹²³ I accept that it should provide that, in theory at least.

119 [Written statement of Colonel Clive Knightley](#) (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at MOD-000000632, p.3, paragraph 13.

120 [Written statement of Alan Plumtree](#) (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at MOD-000000630, p.4, paragraph 15.

121 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002, p.13.

122 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.34.

123 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.43.

3

The Queen Victoria School regime

Introduction

Queen Victoria School was founded to provide education for children of parents in the military, and a military culture had been established long before the period to which this investigation relates. That culture and its inherent ethos dominated many aspects of life at QVS well into the 1990s. It was a robust culture.

A military culture is not, and need not necessarily be, synonymous with an abusive one. However, many applicants did in fact suffer serious physical and emotional abuse, perpetrated principally by other children but also, in some cases, by staff. Children who did not fit in or were perceived to be different in whatever way were liable to be bullied dreadfully. Some staff were physically violent, and there were some predatory paedophiles who abused vulnerable children.

Many applicants did in fact suffer serious physical and emotional abuse.

The prospect of the abuse being discovered was extremely limited given the culture of silence that was the norm for QVS pupils for decades. Some parents endorsed that approach, and it was made worse by a number of staff turning a blind eye to what

was happening or naively assuming all was well. The devolution of too much authority and responsibility to senior pupils made matters worse. One applicant explained:

It was run on a very military basis. There were unwritten rules with the students, within the peer group. If anything happened, then no one told. If there was a fight between two pupils, and even if a teacher came in, then no one saw anything, and if you did then the rest of that year group would turn on you for being a grass. Everything was kept within dormitories. I think that culture was set by the adults. Certainly, looking back on it, every adult in that school was aware of what was going on, but chose not to be involved because that's how it managed itself. In terms of two hundred and forty students boarding, the amount of teachers around at any given time was pretty small, really. I guess they relied on that way of students self-managing to a certain degree.¹²⁴

In 1991 a teacher made complaints and changes began to be implemented. Steve Laing, a teacher at the school between 1984 and 2019, reflected on the changes that occurred during his time there:

When I first started, it was a school of all boys ... It was a fairly similar background that they came from. It's changed over the years, especially when we became co-educational. The girls altered the environment somewhat. The hard edges were knocked off the boys

¹²⁴ Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.7, paragraph 22.

'It was military, military, military all the time.'

and it is a more pleasant place to be. I think bullying if anything has become less prevalent. Nowadays children come from parents who have much more varied backgrounds ... there are different cultures within the school. In the past, a fair number of parents were stationed in England, Ireland, or Germany. In the early days of QVS, there were children who were effectively orphaned.¹²⁵

marching, pipes and drums, which were all part of the curriculum.'¹²⁸

'Keith', who was at the school between 1983 and 1991, explained: 'When I was at QVS in the 1980s, it was still seen as a military school. There was a chain of command ... There was a hierarchical structure ... with the Haig boys, the senior boys, ruling the roost'.¹²⁹

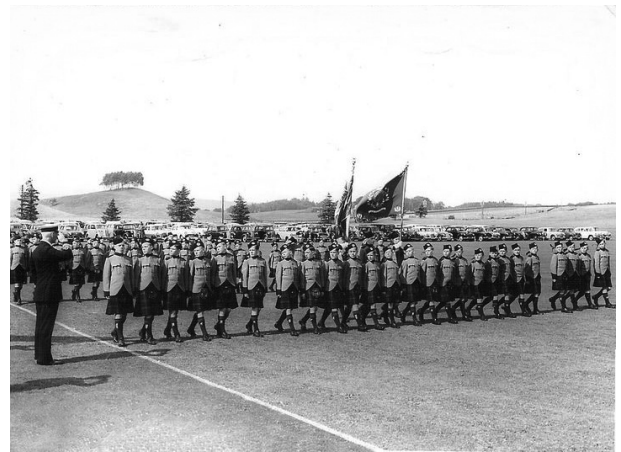
The period prior to 1992

Military influence

The oldest applicant was 'Bob', who was born in 1941 and sent to the school when he was nine years old. His experience was that the school 'was based on military training. We got our normal education lessons but we also learned to march and look after our kit. The school was built on an army basis'.¹²⁶ He went on:

We had to keep our kit clean, our bedding clean. We had to make our beds in the morning, box-shaped with the sheets and blankets ... It was military, military, military all the time ... we learned to salute, we learned to call our seniors 'Sir'. We were taught to respect older people and property.¹²⁷

Many other applicants made the same point. 'Joe', who was sent to the school in 1977, had 'always wanted to be a soldier and wanted to make my dad proud'. He found that the 'main difference in Queen Victoria was the military side of things. There was a lot of sport,



Marching

'Clifton', who was sent to the school in 1984, aged nine, and joined the military after QVS, referred to the basic training he received in the army:

The parallels between Queen Victoria School and basic training ... I recognised them immediately. Day 1 of basic training, where you're making up your bed block, was just like day 1 at Queen Victoria School ... I joined the army young ... but at some stage during

125 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Steve Laing (former technical studies teacher, assistant housemaster, and housemaster, 1984-2019), at TRN-8-000000031, p.104.

126 [Transcript, day 236](#): 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, p.3.

127 [Transcript, day 236](#): 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.5-6.

128 [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.57-8.

129 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Keith' (former pupil, 1983-91), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.180-1.

‘The ceremonial military side ran over into everyday school where there was blind obedience to officialdom.’

that basic training we were allowed duvets and it was like moving from Primary 6 to Primary 7.¹³⁰

And for many, like ‘Harry’, life at QVS ‘felt normal ... as we all came from a military background. There was a sort of rank structure and we all respected that.’¹³¹

The culture and regime at QVS continued to reflect its military background into the twenty-first century. Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002–5) felt that:

the ceremonial military side ran over into everyday school where there was blind obedience to officialdom e.g. staff would never question a decision by the Commissioners ... and would be appalled when anyone did.

Similarly pupils often lied to avoid being in serious trouble as they were aware that a suspension/exclusion would mean a black mark on the record of a parent in the military as their commanding officer may be made aware of problems on the home front. The headmaster told me this in my early days at the school in an attempt to help me understand the different nature of this school compared to others I had taught in. This was held over them by some parents.¹³²

Daily routine

The routine and the language of the boarding houses reflected military life. ‘Bob’ said:

I was in a dormitory with 20 or 30 boys ... around my age. There was always a senior boy ... who looked after each dormitory. We slept in army bunk beds which were next to each other ... Our kit and lockers would be inspected ... there would be snap inspections.¹³³

‘Andrew’ was sent to the school in 1965, aged 10, and stated: ‘The bugle would sound in the morning at 6 ... there was an inspection and the staff would check that your bed had been made correctly and that you could see your face in the reflection of your polished shoes’.¹³⁴

‘We slept in army bunk beds.’

‘Hamish’ said: ‘In the early days we would make beds and polish the floors with the buffers at least once a week, called bull shine days or evenings, but this was considered important especially if there was an inspection due by the Headmaster or a visiting dignitary.’¹³⁵

130 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.20–1.

131 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘Harry’ (former pupil, 1988–94), at TRN-8-000000029, p.183.

132 Transcript, day 239: read-in statement of Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002–5), at TRN-8-000000030, p.142.

133 Transcript, day 236: ‘Bob’ (former pupil, 1951–5), at TRN-8-000000027, p.5.

134 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Andrew’ (former pupil, 1965–7), at TRN-8-000000027, p.22.

135 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.5, paragraph 20.

'Douglas' also referred to the bugle: 'At certain times you would have to listen out for a bugle which would tell you what time it was or where you needed to go.'¹³⁶

'Ann', who was sent to the school in 1965, thought

we all toed the line in terms of, you know, we wanted to be the best dormitory, we all wanted to be the cleanest dormitory, the tidiest dormitory for lockers and beds ... we used to make up our beds every day ... we used to strip our beds and fold the blankets and sheets and then somebody would come around and inspect it every day.¹³⁷

'We used to make up our beds every day ... we used to strip our beds and fold the blankets and sheets and then somebody would come around and inspect it every day.'

Failure to comply with the school's expectations led to punishments being imposed by other pupils and by staff. 'Joe' remembered:

If you didn't perform well in the inspection and lost points, there would be a quick punishment from the other boys. It was usually a Queen Victoria School scrum. The boys in your dormitory would form a scrum and you would be the ball in the middle getting kicked by everyone. You just stayed there until

everyone stopped kicking. It didn't last long. You just took the kicking and that was that. It was just tradition. You'd have bruises but it was no worse than you'd get playing rugby. It only happened to me once. I don't know if the housemaster or duty master would have been aware that this was happening. The dormitory leader would have been the one who called for the scrum.¹³⁸

As for punishments by staff, 'James' said:

A blitz happened whenever the teachers thought the house standards were falling. If one dormitory failed an inspection and then another dormitory failed an inspection you got the idea that a blitz would be coming. The teachers would rag everyone with inspections for two or three days and aim for the miscreants who would then get a smack with the plimsoll. Then it would calm down again and go back to the normal routine ... This happened quite often and at the time it was perfectly legal.¹³⁹

After 1986, by which time corporal punishment had ceased, there was a focus on encouragement by means of a points system. The dormitory awarded the most points for being clean and tidy would be rewarded by, for example, the pupils being allowed to stay up later one night to watch a film.¹⁴⁰

Discipline and punishment

Discipline was strict and was based on army rules and regulations¹⁴¹ which is unsurprising given that many of the staff were either

136 Written statement of 'Douglas' (former pupil, 1984-93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.10, paragraph 44.

137 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.42.

138 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.52.

139 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.98.

140 Written statement of 'Barry' (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.8, paragraph 44.

141 Transcript, day 236: 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, p.9.

serving or ex-military during this period. Indiscipline led to corporal punishment, as 'James', who was sent to the school in 1985 at the age of 11, explained:

It was at the school that I was first confronted with the plimsoll as a means of dishing out punishment. The teachers had a choice of items they could use until corporal punishment was outlawed but the plimsoll was the go-to implement in primary school. They had the tawse which was available as a wide strap or a narrow strap. I never got the tawse but I certainly got the plimsoll.¹⁴²

'Hector' said:

The basic punishment was the whack, which was a shoe over your arse. You put your hands on the radiator and the teacher whacked you on the bum however many times. On my first night there, about 20 of us had to stand in a big line to get the whack. You had to say what you were there for and there was a kid who lost his school towel and he still got whacked for that.¹⁴³

'You put your hands on the radiator and the teacher whacked you [with a shoe] on the bum however many times.'

'Hector' also remembered the tawse: 'The belt was for more serious stuff and the

cane was unheard of. It was for things like bullying. There was a fight in the school chapel when I first started and I heard the senior boys were given the cane, but that was a rarity.'¹⁴⁴

'Clifton' was sent to the school in 1984 and placed in Wavell House. Corporal punishment was used as a form of punishment during his first two years at the school. It included the cane and the slipper in his first year but only the slipper thereafter.¹⁴⁵

The use of corporal punishment was regulated. It appears from the terms of a 1961 report that the school standing orders set limits. It was to 'be limited to a maximum of six strokes with an ordinary rattan cane on the trousered seat'.¹⁴⁶ The headmaster was to decide which staff were allowed to administer such punishment, written records of any such punishments required to be kept, and they had to be open to review by HM Commissioners. It was also specified that 'corporal punishment shall not be inflicted by Monitors or Prefects'.¹⁴⁷

Corporal punishment was used abusively by some teachers, but its use diminished as the decades passed. By the early 1980s HM Commissioners reported that corporal punishment should

not [be] used in the classroom or in connection with academic work ... [and that it] is used sparingly and any punishment is

142 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.97.

143 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.165-6.

144 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.167.

145 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.17.

146 QVS, Report by a Committee appointed by a General Board of Commissioners, May 1961, at MOD-000000032, p.107.

147 QVS, Report by a Committee appointed by a General Board of Commissioners, May 1961, at MOD-000000032, p.107.

‘There was very little in the way of serious misdemeanours, probably because the school was very highly disciplined.’

recorded ... Boys and staff are in favour of its retention on the grounds that it is a ‘salutary smack’, both preferred and more effective than other forms of punishment!¹⁴⁸

After the cessation of corporal punishment in 1986, punishment by means of detentions and gatings became the norm. Gating was ‘practically no free time at all. On a scheduled interval you’d need to go to the Porter’s Lodge to sign in.’¹⁴⁹ Some pupils, such as ‘Peter’, felt that detention was the worst form of punishment and ‘was a sickener ... It was on a Saturday after you had already been in class and you’d have to go to the library and do lines for an hour or more.’¹⁵⁰

‘Martin’, who was sent to the school in 1978, said:

The ultimate sanction was to be expelled, which some boys were after being caught stealing drink from the commandant’s tent the night before Grand Day. Other boys were expelled for going into Dunblane and breaking into cars. Some time in the middle of my time here there was also an isolated issue concerning glue sniffing or aerosol sniffing, which led to some being expelled.¹⁵¹

There was an emphasis on good behaviour, and that may have helped to limit the need for punishment. ‘Martin’ thought ‘there was very little in the way of serious misdemeanours ... probably because the school was very highly disciplined’¹⁵² and new staff could be struck by the difference in classroom behaviour at QVS compared with their previous experiences of teaching teenagers. ‘Grant’, who took up a teaching post at the school in 1996, said: ‘I think that’s always been the case as compared with a sort of traditional state school. The pupils are very well-behaved at QVS. They’re outstanding in that aspect.’¹⁵³

‘John’, a teacher from the state sector who took up employment at the school in 1997 and then worked in a leadership role there until 2012, made other significant observations about the level of discipline at QVS. One was that the pupils came from what he referred to as ‘one group rather than the diverse group that you would get in a state school’,¹⁵⁴ in that they were the children of soldiers, sailors, and airmen, and the impact of that was that ‘their parents would have been much more willing to ensure that they behaved’.¹⁵⁵ Another was that ‘you had very few discipline problems or low-level

148 QVS, Report by the commandant and the headmaster to HM Commissioners for the period November 1981–March 1982, at MOD-000000071, p.267.

149 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.19.

150 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.138.

151 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.114.

152 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.114.

153 Transcript, day 241: ‘Grant’ (teacher, 1996–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.29.

154 Transcript, day 240: ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.13.

155 Transcript, day 240: ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.14.

‘Military discipline ... is not acknowledged as necessary, or even desirable, in any other sphere of adult life. It is even more out of place when it comes to dealing with boys.’

discipline problems, which is the bane of a state school teacher’s life’.¹⁵⁶

Further, the presence and influence of a military commandant – usually a retired brigadier or colonel – as the person in charge of the school until 1990 had, of itself, a disciplinary effect since that individual ‘had an easy pathway to parents’¹⁵⁷ which was seen not as a threat, but potentially a stick. That was so particularly because, in that era, the feeling amongst pupils was that if they misbehaved, that might adversely affect their parents’ military career.



Ceremonial activities

Applying a military approach to discipline at QVS: appropriate or not?

As early as 1954 the appropriateness of the military approach being applied at QVS was under discussion. Lieutenant Colonel

R.F. Nason, the commandant, wrote to HM Commissioners, stating that:

a system has been followed which is largely based on that of the Army and particularly on that of the Infantry Battalion. Military discipline is, however, a very special product, invented for the needs of the soldiers, to assist in preparing them for the hazards of battle, and is not acknowledged as necessary, or even desirable, in any other sphere of adult life. It is even more out of place when it comes to dealing with boys, whose needs are very different from those of adults ... Military discipline, among other things, aims at producing absolute, and if necessary, unquestioning obedience, under all circumstances. With boys, what is necessary above all is that they should understand the why and wherefore, in other words that they should be ‘educated’. It is therefore felt very strongly that the present system in use in the Queen Victoria School, under which the pseudo military ‘Companies’ are substituted for the ‘Houses’ of a normal boarding school ... should be discontinued as soon as possible, and that they be replaced by Housemasters.¹⁵⁸

Change followed, and there was some softening of the military regime in the decades thereafter. Nevertheless, the military influences were never lost, and they contributed to there being an abusive culture within the houses. ‘Mark’, appointed as a

156 Transcript, day 240: ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.14.

157 Transcript, day 240: ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.15.

158 QVS, Paper prepared for HM Commissioners, 15 January 1954, at MOD-000000570, p.1.

member of staff in 1998, was disturbed by the military ethos: 'I suppose it is quite troubling in terms of the regime ... everything was scheduled and timed ... you're trying to fit little lives and emotions and education within that and ... and it jarred.'¹⁵⁹

'The Guard chucked me in jail with proper holding cells for military personnel.'

Pupils at QVS could be exposed to the military when involved in activities outwith the school campus. Those occasions could involve them being abused. For example, 'James' experienced abuse when competing at a school shooting competition at Bisley, in Surrey:

We were put into Pirbright Guards depot because [our Sergeant Major] had just retired from the Guards. We were in a pub having a pint. I suppose most ... thought it was great to be doing that but I didn't feel comfortable ... so I went back to the camp early and alone. The guard ... asked me for identification and I explained I was from QVS ... At that point the guard ... said, 'I've got him', and ... chucked me in jail with proper holding cells for military personnel. They took the shoelaces out of my trainers. I was scared witless. I was put to work late at night. I was given a buffer, an old-fashioned floor polisher, and told to polish the floor but not to wake any prisoners. I was petrified. The skin came off the palms of my hands because I was gripping the buffer so tight. The cells were filled with drunks. I found them intimidating even though some were asleep. I came to the end of the corridor

I was polishing and the guard NCO called me over and said, 'Well done. Welcome to the real world' and he gave me my shoelaces back. I was profoundly upset when I left. I was miserable. I went back to my sleeping quarters ... The next day when the Sergeant Major found out he just laughed.¹⁶⁰

'James' was a schoolchild but was treated as though he was a serving soldier. The punishment meted out to him was unjustified or, at the very least, excessive, and it was plainly abusive both physically and emotionally. It is a good example of what Commandant Nason was so concerned about in the 1950s. It is remarkable that this type of treatment by adults responsible for the care of QVS pupils – such as their senior NCO – was still taking place in the 1980s. Proper oversight by the school was lacking; rather the school appears to have accepted as appropriate an application of military discipline which was, for its pupils, entirely inappropriate.

The school appears to have accepted as appropriate an application of military discipline which was, for its pupils, entirely inappropriate.

Parents of QVS children

The parents of children at QVS, serving in the military or military spouses, generally understood, accepted, and even encouraged the military ethos their children experienced. Parents, up to the 1950s at least, would attend public expulsions. 'Bob' still vividly remembers one such occasion:

159 Transcript, day 239: 'Mark' (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998–2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.44.

160 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985–92), at WIT-1-000000447, p.24, paragraph 103.

‘It was quite a horrifying thing to see. It must have been terrible for the parents involved as well.’

A couple of boys had been playing with each other, for whatever reason. I don’t know if it was homosexuality ... All the boys were marched into the drill hall. The parents involved were sitting at the back. The children or child involved would be brought onto a stage. The headmaster would read out what was going on and why he was being publicly expelled. The boy might also receive four or six strokes of the cane across his buttocks. It was quite a horrifying thing to see. It must have been terrible for the parents involved as well. It was supposed to set an example, to make sure anybody who was thinking about doing whatever they had been doing didn’t do so.¹⁶¹

Some parents echoed the school’s expectation that children would sort problems out themselves. An example was when ‘Andy’ told his father about being chased and threatened by an older boy:

I think it was very much ... you have to be self-reliant, stand on your own two feet, you know. But even my father kind of instilled that into me because I did tell him once about being beat in the secondary school, so my first year, and I was chased by an older boy and I had to kind of lock myself away in one of the toilets when he was threatening to batter me for no reason whatsoever other than, you know, to get himself up the pecking order ... and the advice of my father was, ‘Just stick one on him’, you know. I always call it the John Wayne school of education.¹⁶²

Preparation for entry to the armed forces

QVS was commonly regarded, until the 1940s at least, as a place where children would be prepared for entry into the armed forces.¹⁶³ Even without that expectation, many boys still enthusiastically followed their parents into the services, and the school facilitated this. ‘Joe’, a pupil at QVS from 1977 to the early 1980s, stated that his time there ‘prepared us for a career with the armed forces. We used to gather in the theatre and forces personnel would come and talk to us about their experiences ... I think about 40 to 50 per cent of pupils joined the forces back then.’¹⁶⁴



Combined Cadet Force training

Even in the early 1990s, ‘Clifton’ felt that the whole purpose of the school was still ‘to

161 Transcript, day 236: ‘Bob’ (former pupil, 1951–5), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.9–10.

162 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.34.

163 Transcript, day 240: ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.24.

164 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.67.

breed the next generation of military personnel'.¹⁶⁵

The whole purpose of the school was still 'to breed the next generation of military personnel'.

When children were first offered a place at QVS, it was made clear that the school only bound itself to keep them until they reached the age of 16. That would usually be at the end of their fourth year in the senior school after they had completed six years in total (from entry at Primary 6). This encouraged pupils to join the military at that stage. Some children went back for a fifth year to do Highers but very few would go on to do a sixth year. 'Martin' explained how it was understood that

any further stay at the school would be on account of your merits, principally academically but also with regards to your performance on the military and sporting life. The sixth year was a very small exclusive club ... because of the school accommodation and I think there were only about a dozen in sixth year. They were chosen primarily for academic excellence but also because they were going to be monitors and prefects who assisted with the discipline of running the school.¹⁶⁶

The general requirement to leave at the end of fourth year was a bone of contention for some applicants. 'Clifton' said: 'I realised in my final years at the school that my choices were limited. I didn't feel steered towards anything else ... for the majority it felt like your choice was go off to join the Forces.'¹⁶⁷

The uncertainties about what would happen when they reached fourth year were often difficult to cope with. 'Peter' explained that

from the day you start at QVS, you don't know whether the school will take you back after fourth year. It was their decision, made behind closed doors ... and you had no say in it. Essentially ... the bottom 15 per cent would be booted out ... to either go to another school or to enrol in college ... Knowing that the school had that power was always in the back of your head and it was spoken about a lot amongst the boys. We knew that if we didn't toe the line, they wouldn't keep us ... I don't think it's fair for any child to go to a school and not know if they will be back with their friends ... after fourth year. I think teachers holding that power is disproportionate and can have a massive impact on children ... I reflect on it regularly ... it was that power that Ben Philip used to intimidate us and to groom us.¹⁶⁸

'I don't think it's fair for any child to go to a school and not know if they will be back with their friends after fourth year.'

Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21) accepted that:

Initially ... one of the purposes was to prepare the boys, as they were then, for careers in the armed forces. That was included in the initial [Royal] Warrant. But ... that has gradually changed over the years, and certainly by the end of the Second World War there was no

165 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.27.

166 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.124.

167 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.27.

168 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Peter' (former pupil, 1990-6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.150 and pp.152-3.

As in military life, new boys were called ‘rookies’.

overt intention that the school was some ... initial sort of recruiting activity or preparation for the armed forces, and that is absolutely the case nowadays. It is not viewed in that way by the MOD.¹⁶⁹

There does appear to have been a move away from that intention, at least by the 1980s, judging by the terms of an inspection report dated 1985:

At first the school was run very much on military lines in the expectation that the pupils would eventually enter the services. In more recent years the school has gradually changed its character, which now resembles that of an independent boarding school whilst retaining certain military traditions and customs. About half of the boys still join the armed forces, but no pressure is put upon them to do so.¹⁷⁰

That said, it is clear that many applicants did think, and continue to think, that the purpose of QVS was to prepare its pupils for a career in the armed forces.

The junior school

For most pupils, life at QVS started in the junior boarding house, which for all applicants was Wavell. As in military life, new boys were called ‘rookies’¹⁷¹ and were assigned a more senior pupil, usually a Primary 7 boy, as a mentor.

There were no published rules. As ‘Peter’ explained: ‘We would learn the rules pretty much immediately from the Primary 7 boys in our dorms. They would tell us where to be, how to act, and how to behave, what was allowed and what was not allowed.’¹⁷²

The school tried to provide the rookie with a mentor whom he already knew or with whom there would be a regimental link through their parents. ‘Clifton’ explained:

What they tried to do was pick someone who you kind of knew ... I was given the son of an Argyll, who I knew of ... I didn’t have a kind of relationship with him, I [was] just ... more comfortable with him than with any other stranger, just because of that link across families and the Argylls.¹⁷³

‘Ann’ was positive about this arrangement: ‘If I had any problems, I could always go and talk to [my mentor] ... If I had problems and he couldn’t solve them, then they would be solved elsewhere, either by matron or a teacher or the person who looked after the Wavell House.’¹⁷⁴

However, there was, inevitably, a measure of luck involved, as was recognised by ‘Andy’ who regarded himself quite fortunate in his allocation of mentor, whilst commenting that he did not ‘think that was always the case, but in my case it was’.¹⁷⁵

169 [Transcript, day 218](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012–21), at TRN-8-000000009, p.24.

170 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088, p.1.

171 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.8; read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.51.

172 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.138.

173 [Transcript, day 238](#): ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.10.

174 [Transcript, day 236](#): ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.40–1.

175 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.8.

The mentoring system did have its downsides. For example, it emphasised that there was a pecking order in the school. 'Clifton' explained: 'You knew your place ... you were a rookie. Reminded of it constantly ... Just in the way that boys are with each other: I'm older than you, I'm bigger than you, I'm more experienced at this than you, get to the back of the queue kind of thing.'¹⁷⁶

All applicants spoke of there being a clear hierarchy from the outset, even in the junior house. 'Joe' said: 'You didn't make friends with the boys in the years above you. The P7 boys picked on the younger ones. I tried to keep a low profile.'¹⁷⁷

Overall, there do not appear to have been sufficient staff to afford adequate supervision of children in the boarding houses.

The junior house had a housemaster, and a matron who played an active role in the care of the boys. 'John' said: 'She looked after laundry, bedding, and personal care. In P6 and P7, you had your day to go to the matron after you had washed so she could inspect and check you had washed behind your ears and cleaned your nails.'¹⁷⁸ As for the housemaster, supervision was not consistent for, as 'Andy' said, 'we were pretty well left to our own devices ... some of the things that went on in Wavell House were slightly chaotic'.¹⁷⁹ Overall, there do not appear to

have been sufficient staff to afford adequate supervision of children in the boarding houses.

Housemasters in Wavell House were, however, 'supported' in the discharge of their duties by dorm leaders. These were P7 boys. They did not have any formal power to discipline younger pupils, but they could exert influence over staff. 'Hector' explained:

The dorm leader might have been a year or two older than me and I think the teacher must have picked who they thought was most responsible ... It was a bit like 'Lord of the Flies' because they could just put you on report. When you were on report then that was it and you got your whack.¹⁸⁰

'Ann' thought 'it was much nicer in the junior school',¹⁸¹ as did 'Alex' who felt 'You were kind of protected a little bit more ... but up in the higher school it was different ... that's when you were 24/7 ... under the monitors and prefects'.¹⁸²

Senior houses

As the boys progressed to the senior houses (Trenchard, Cunningham, and Haig), with more boys in each house, matrons were unable to provide individual care. 'Ann' explained that they 'took on a slightly different role ... the matron that I had in Trenchard House, most of us didn't like her ... she thought we were old enough to look after ourselves sort of thing'.¹⁸³

176 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.30-1.

177 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.53.

178 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'John' (former pupil, 1989-96), at TRN-8-000000029, p.188.

179 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.14.

180 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.169.

181 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.64.

182 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.88-90.

183 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.61-5.

The same was true of housemasters:

Yes ... there was supervision but you didn't see them that often. I think they'd had enough of us lot by the time they got to ... 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening and wanted to have time at home. Because their home was actually at the end of the corridors of the dormitories.¹⁸⁴

In these circumstances, there were substantial periods of time when boys were supervised entirely by other boys.

There were substantial periods of time when boys were supervised entirely by other boys.

Prefects and monitors

Some boys were appointed prefects and others monitors. They had the authority to punish younger pupils. 'Barry' explained: 'There were prefects and monitors at QV and it was seen as a privilege to be made one ... they had the ability to dish out minor punishments, which were called a "day"'.¹⁸⁵

'Martin' provided some further details:

Monitors and prefects were basically the same thing and wore a plaid on their epaulettes when on parade. I don't recall how many of each there were but there would be a dorm leader and deputy dorm leader and I think prefects were fifth year students, whilst monitors were sixth year.¹⁸⁶

There were not many prefects or monitors, partly because of the limited numbers in the senior years.

'Clifton' explained what happened when they issued 'days' as punishment:

a prefect or a monitor ... could issue 'days', which were a punishment where you would very early in the morning ... go down to the playing fields and the prefect would be there with a list of everybody they were expecting and then set you off to do some laps.¹⁸⁷

In 'Joe's' experience, prefects and monitors could also administer corporal punishment in the senior school:

Prefects dished out punishment ... for things like fighting or talking in prep. I was a prefect and I always gave the pupil a choice. They could choose between a morning punishment of getting up before the bell and running two laps around the entire school in the summer time or gym circuit training in the winter, or getting a smack over the knuckles with a ruler. That's the system the school operated.¹⁸⁸

Likewise, 'Alex' described how 'prefects and monitors could sometimes give you a hiding by way of punishment'.¹⁸⁹

Given the standing orders described above, it seems unlikely this was in any way sanctioned by the school.¹⁹⁰ 'Joe's' option of a smack over the knuckles in the era of corporal punishment might not – depending on the justification relied on and the severity

184 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.61–5.

185 Written statement of 'Barry' (former pupil, 1989–98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.20, paragraph 108.

186 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.115.

187 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.40–1.

188 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.6.

189 Written statement of 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979–83), at WIT.001.002.9378, p.17, paragraph 74.

190 See Report by a Committee appointed by a General Board of Commissioners, May 1961, at MOD-000000032, p.107.

of the blow – have amounted to abuse. However, there was an obvious risk of such punishments becoming abusive. Take, for example, the prefects and monitors mentioned by ‘Clifton’ who ‘would single boys out to do “days” just because they could’ or because ‘they took a disliking to you’.¹⁹¹

A lack of clarity about the nature and extent of the powers vested in prefects and monitors did not help. ‘Andy’ explained that ‘it was never said this is what monitors can do and can’t do. I mean cold showers were given for sure ... there were various other things ... they didn’t beat us or anything like that.’¹⁹² However, as ‘Alex’ said, ‘they could just issue punishments whenever they wanted to. They had carte blanche on what they did.’¹⁹³ Further, ‘Andy’ could not remember any records being kept of these punishments.

By the end of the 1970s some thought was being given to training senior pupils appointed as prefects or monitors. A report seen by HM Commissioners in 1979 made it clear that the headmaster was required to ‘ensure that monitors and prefects are trained in and carry out their duties properly’.¹⁹⁴ However, what, if anything, was actually done to achieve that is not clear.

The absence of communication between the head and seniors was criticised by the Visiting Commissioner in 1987.¹⁹⁵ In relation to a similar visit in 1992, it was commented that the fact there were only five monitors

and prefects would limit the degree of supervision to be expected. Significantly, it was also noted – in line with the growing focus on pastoral care across the school – that monitors and prefects had ‘no proper instructions to date on how they should act with regard to supervision and on the correct methods of exercising their authority’.¹⁹⁶ This was despite the need for them to be trained in relation to these matters having been recognised over a decade earlier.

According to ‘John’, whose career at QVS spanned the period 1997–2012, it was mainly senior management that dealt with disciplinary matters. However,

prefects or the monitors ... could give out a ‘day’, which meant that the kids helped to clear up the dining tables at the end of the meal session ... latterly, I think, that changed because of the Care Commission and the pupils were only allowed to recommend that and it was handed to a duty staff member who then said yes, no, yes, no, yes, no.¹⁹⁷

Hierarchy in the senior houses

Inevitably there was a hierarchy within the senior houses by reason of the range in pupils’ ages. The exception appears to have been Haig House since that was only for the most senior pupils.

One aspect of that hierarchy was initiation ceremonies; such events did not happen in the junior house, but they did feature once boys moved up the school. ‘Joe’ explained:

191 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.43.

192 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.22.

193 Transcript, day 237: ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.97.

194 QVS, School Standing Orders Draft Rewrite, 1 November 1979, at MOD-000000071, p.461.

195 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 2 March 1987, at MOD-000000071, p.62.

196 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 5 May 1992, at MOD-000000072, pp.578–9.

197 Transcript, day 240: ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.26.

‘I was kind of nobody, like the invisible man. I tried not to stand out.’

‘The hardest part of secondary school was starting that first year. As part of the welcome, the older boys hung you out of a window, two floors up, by your ankles.’¹⁹⁸

He went on to say that boys

had to run the gauntlet as well, which was running the length of the dormitory, jumping over beds while a group of kids waited to hit you. It was just dormitory life, back to square one again until you progressed through the years. I carried on just trying to keep a low profile. I was kind of nobody, like the invisible man. I tried not to stand out. To me that was the best way to get on, but I could stand up for myself if I had to. Haig House, which was for the seniors, was much more relaxed.¹⁹⁹

No snitching, no sneaking, no telling, no clipping: a culture of silence

On arrival at QVS as a junior and certainly by the time the boys progressed to the senior houses, it was made very clear, as ‘Ann’ explained, that: ‘You were never to snitch ... If things happened, you just didn’t snitch or, you know, you didn’t tell anybody. Even if you witnessed somebody else beating somebody up ... I didn’t want to get involved anyway.’²⁰⁰

If you did snitch, she went on, there would be consequences: ‘You would be bullied even more ... you wouldn’t have a very pleasant

time ... Somebody would do something to you probably in the dining hall, probably put salt in your tea or something as silly as that.’²⁰¹

‘Andy’ learned about the need for silence whilst on the bus taking him from Edinburgh Airport to QVS for the first time, after he arrived from Malaysia. A senior pupil asked him what he would do if he was bullied at QVS. When he replied that he would try to alert a master, he was given ‘a strict warning that that would not be the path to choose ... If you become a sneak, you’re in trouble. So that was my first kind of lesson that I learnt ... Don’t run to the masters with your complaints.’²⁰²

‘If you become a sneak, you’re in trouble. Don’t run to the masters with your complaints.’

‘Andy’ understood that the senior was trying to be friendly and, even now, believes his advice was sound: ‘I think he was trying to help me out and I believe he did ... help me out, on reflection.’²⁰³ The culture of silence was plainly entrenched, and ‘Andy’ demonstrated that it has had lasting impact. Aged 65 when he gave evidence, he said: ‘Can I just add that even now I still feel like I’m a sneak talking to you guys. It’s terrible, isn’t it?’²⁰⁴

198 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.54.

199 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.55.

200 Transcript, day 236: ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.61–5.

201 Transcript, day 236: ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.61–5.

202 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.6.

203 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.5–6.

204 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.45.

Every applicant confirmed that what has been referred to by the Scots expression ‘no cliping’ in findings relating to other boarding schools was the clear and non-negotiable rule. You just did not do it. ‘Alex’, for example, said it never occurred to him to raise concerns because ‘your life would be made hell if you complained. That was just the way it was ... You had to accept that. If you’d spoke out ... you would end up getting knocked about ... You wouldn’t complain about it ... Oh, that’s something you learn very, very quickly.’²⁰⁵

Referring to this culture of silence, ‘Clifton’ explained that he ‘probably absorbed it through ... collective consciousness, if you like. It’s just not a thing that you do.’²⁰⁶

Lack of intervention by staff

Staff not only knew about the culture of silence but actively encouraged it. ‘James’ very soon became aware of that:

The very first rule ... taught to me informally was: don’t sneak. Whatever happens, you don’t tell. That was a rule that I was taught by the teachers as well when I was only 10 years old. It would have been the housemaster who told me this. Even a good teacher ... said that too. The only one who didn’t say that was Graeme Beattie. I was a sensitive kid so it was natural for me to say something if I wasn’t happy ... But the teachers made it very clear that you don’t sneak. It wasn’t just something as mild as not telling tales that they meant by this. If you were getting bullied, then you would be expected to fight back and not to say anything. I don’t know

why the teachers were like that, maybe they couldn’t be bothered dealing with problems but as a general rule they were complicit in the undercurrent of not saying anything.’²⁰⁷

In the circumstances, his use of the term ‘complicit’ was entirely fair. The teachers were complicit; that was known by pupils and can only have served to facilitate abuse.

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According to ‘Felix’, Graeme Beattie, a teacher who began working at QVS in 1984, discouraged the reporting of concerns on at least one occasion. After ‘Felix’ complained to him about being assaulted by an older boy, the teacher told him: ‘no one likes a snitch’. Yet that ‘was the first time I had gone to a teacher to talk about something that shouldn’t have happened ... After that I didn’t tell anyone because that is the message I’d been given by Mr Beattie.’²⁰⁸

The older boy who was the subject of ‘Felix’s’ complaint was disciplined; plainly the incident was not a trivial one.

Instead of reporting, the mindset in the school, echoing some of the parental advice, was that problems were to be sorted out between pupils. This often meant physically. The place where fights occurred was the ‘magic circle’, a clearing in the woods behind

205 Transcript, day 237: ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.86–7.

206 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.33.

207 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.100–1.

208 Written statement of ‘Felix’ (former pupil, 1989–92), at WIT-1-000000571, p.10, paragraphs 44–5.

Wavell House, which all pupils knew about. Staff encouraged this. 'James' remembered one teacher saying:

if you have something you need to get sorted out, you go down to the magic circle and you sort it out down there. If you had a dispute with someone you were pressured to go to the magic circle and fight the other lad in front of everyone else. The teachers knew this happened and they did very little to prevent it happening. If you were challenged, you were compelled to go. If you didn't, the other boys would give you a hard time over it.²⁰⁹

Staff also turned a blind eye to what was going on in the school. 'Ann' recalled being punched in the face by another pupil and crying, yet no member of staff asked why. Nor did they ask how the eye injury had occurred, or offer medical assistance.²¹⁰ 'Andy' had a similar experience when he had 'a shiner of a black eye' after a fight with another pupil. He was asked what had happened, but

It was kind of left as though I banged myself on the door, it was just accepted ... I mean, it was clearly nonsense when I said it ... and I think I even had a smile on my face, 'Oh, I just walked into a door', you know, but ... there was no way I was going to say that this guy had punched me.²¹¹

'Alex' felt:

They would have actually no interest whatsoever. If you spoke about the fact that, 'I'm in the back of the queue here, I'm not getting in the dining hall' they would tell you

to just shut up and get in line. They wouldn't be interested. That's the custom of the school. They're not going to break that ... They wouldn't intervene. It was - character building it was called.²¹²

The mentality of the majority of staff appears to have been that the boys should simply tough things out. That may have seemed to be in line with similar attitudes shown by parents and by the boys themselves, as well as with the military culture of the school. Whatever the reason, on the evidence, boarding staff did not really want to know what was going on. Silence ruled - there was no comeback and no consequence for the abuser, and children were, accordingly, more likely to be abused.

Silence ruled – there was no comeback and no consequence for the abuser, and children were, accordingly, more likely to be abused.

Further, prior to 1992, no member of staff had an official pastoral role; that made matters worse. As 'Clifton' said: 'if you had just a problem that you wanted to talk to someone about that wasn't grassing anybody up, I never really felt encouraged to talk to anybody.'²¹³ He went on:

I always had the sense that if you wanted to talk to someone you could but I didn't think there was anyone proactively telling us that they were there for us to talk to. I can't recall

209 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.101.

210 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.71-2.

211 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.32-3.

212 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.86-7.

213 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.32.

anyone coming to me and asking if I was okay or if I wanted to talk.²¹⁴

A lack of oversight by the school itself did not help and meant there was no consistency of approach. Documentary evidence confirms that housemasters were 'encouraged ... to develop their own individual styles of house management in keeping with the ages and interests of the boys in their care'.²¹⁵ While understandable to a degree, the reality seems to have been that there was inadequate staff supervision at all levels, inconsistency, and a lack of close working with senior pupils in relation to their responsibilities, all serving to facilitate the perpetration of abuse.

There was no consistency of approach.

Inadequate staffing also seems to have played its part. There were too many boys in the houses for effective supervision by a single housemaster to be possible. That point was made in 1992 by both Visiting Commissioner Major General R. Lyon²¹⁶ and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) inspectors. The latter reported that

management had severe constraints placed upon it in its ability to deploy care and teaching staff ... partly from the small size of the school which meant that staff had to perform multiple roles ... Consequently staff felt a great deal of pressure, especially as the school terms progressed ... At times

there were too few staff to ensure adequate supervision. One pressure point was during prep. Boys in different classrooms were supervised by prefects and monitors who sometimes could not deal adequately with minor incidents and gave punishments which were inappropriate and resented.²¹⁷

A lack of funding and outdated accommodation were also relevant factors, as seems clear from a letter from Julian Hankinson (former headteacher, 1990-4), written in late 1991. Corresponding with a parent about incidents of property theft he complained that while Wavell, the junior house, was

a much more close-knit, contained unit with a higher density of staffing ... the Senior School has by contrast many more and older boys spread over considerable areas with greater freedom of movement which makes the task very difficult ... there is now an upgrading of boarding houses accommodation to intermediate houses planned for summer 1993. It has taken eight years to persuade MOD to provide the money.²¹⁸

His complaint reflects an earlier Commissioner report of February 1985²¹⁹ which discussed overcrowding in the boarding houses, especially in the intermediate houses, Cunningham and Trenchard. Facilities for private study and recreation were described as woefully inadequate. Such accommodation problems also led to discontent amongst staff, and the Commissioner report of October 1991 warned that 'house duties were not seen as

214 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.36.

215 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088, p.10.

216 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 5 May 1992, at MOD-000000601, p.96.

217 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, pp.6-7.

218 QVS, Letter from headteacher to parent, 20 November 1991, at MOD-000000609, p.6.

219 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 25 March 1985, at MOD-000000574, p.48.

particularly satisfying by those involved and some doubt was expressed about the future supply of candidates for Housemaster posts'.²²⁰

Facilities for private study and recreation were described as woefully inadequate.

Even when teachers did try to intervene, the 'no snitching' code proved a hard nut to crack. Glenn Harrison observed:

When I became housemaster I got the whole house together and I told the boys that I knew there were rules and regulations and that it was difficult sometimes to live by these rules but that they were there for a reason. I then told them that if they had any complaints, that they were to come and see me and that it was okay to complain. My door was always open. I laminated what I said and put it on the wall in both the dormitories and outside the dormitory office and other places. I later added the Childline telephone number.²²¹

That did not have any obvious impact and his declaration that he was always open to hearing complaints was not recognised by the pupils. 'Felix', a boy in his house who was very badly bullied, said: 'You know, it wasn't an open-door "This is where I'll be, I'll always be here if you need me". The door was shut.'²²²

Positive aspects

Despite all the shortcomings, there were, for some children, positive aspects of their time at QVS.

'Clifton' said:

My general sense of having been at the school was positive because, for the most part, I felt very safe ... They were my family. They shouldn't have been my family, but that's what it felt like to me. That's where I belonged ... I still have that sense of it having been a more positive experience than negative. But I won't go back.²²³

'John' commented:

I will speak very highly of the school until the day I die. It was life defining. Can I fault it? There were rules I didn't like and there were rules that seemed to be there only for the sake of rules, but on the whole my experience was very enjoyable. It was my home away from home for seven years.²²⁴

'Barry' said:

QV instilled in me quite a lot of self-reliance and confidence ... I found Sandhurst incredibly easy. At QV I had been barracking my bed and doing parades since I was nine. Even for those that went to other places I think having the routine and the self-reliance behind them has a really positive effect.²²⁵

220 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 11 November 1991, at MOD-000000601, p.119.

221 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.59.

222 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.150-1.

223 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.55.

224 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'John' (former pupil, 1989-96), at TRN-8-000000029, p.189.

225 Written statement of 'Barry' (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.27, paragraph 146.

‘I attribute most of my success in my professional life to the positives of being at QVS.’

‘Peter’ explained:

There were ... a lot of positives for me in going to QVS. It taught me to be independent, and once I turned my life around, it gave me the drive to get on. I have done seven operational tours in the army and the mental resilience that I have comes from my time at QVS. I have a good sense of camaraderie and I am able to relate well with other soldiers and I attribute most of my success in my professional life to the positives of being at QVS.²²⁶

Friendships and education

Some children forged good and supportive relationships with others. An example was ‘James’, who

had a close circle of friends. I was with them basically right through my time ... It wasn’t all bad living at Queen Victoria School ... while there were some aspects I didn’t look forward to going back to after the holidays, I was always dying to get back to see my friends. That made up for the bad stuff.²²⁷

Another was ‘Douglas’, who stated that, for him, the impact of his time at the school was

positive. I can well imagine that that might not be the same for the boys who were maybe not academically able, sporty or popular. I can imagine that if you were like that then it

might not have been the best place to be and that would have had an effect. That wasn’t my experience though ... I can say that I had a great time there. So did all of my friends ... the school left me with a lot of lasting friendships ... [It] gave myself and all of my friends a great start and we have done well because of it ... [It] gave me confidence and determination to do well and succeed.²²⁸

Some applicants felt that they had benefited from the education provided. ‘Harry’ said: ‘I look back on my time at QVS with a smile. It does excellent work for young men and women. It meant there was no need to change schools every two or three years ... QVS did me well.’²²⁹

‘Clifton’ recognised that ‘in hindsight ... I came out with, I suppose, a decent education. I think in terms of serving the purpose that my parents were looking for, the stability allowed me to focus on studies. The school regime also allowed me to focus on the studies.’²³⁰

Extra-curricular activities

Some applicants were very positive about their participation in activities beyond school. For example, ‘Hamish’ said:

Once we went to RAF Shawbury and we had half the pipe band there with us which caused quite a stir on the station as they had

226 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.155.

227 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.92.

228 [Written statement of ‘Douglas’](#) (former pupil, 1984–93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.33, paragraphs 123–5.

229 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Harry’ (former pupil, 1988–94), at TRN-8-000000029, p.184.

230 [Transcript, day 238](#): ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.15.

Parents were often away on active service and there was therefore a greater potential for parental death.

seen nothing like it ... We also went sailing on Loch Ard during some weekends as part of the school sailing club which was a great time.²³¹

'Peter' mentioned that he

played in the Edinburgh Tattoo with the pipe band and I went to Canada to play in a Tattoo there ... That sort of thing stays with you your whole life. It was brilliant going to Canada and something I'm really proud of. I still talk about it. Not many people get an opportunity to have that sort of experiences in their childhood.²³²



Queen Victoria School pipe bands at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

Early pastoral and military care

Despite many examples of poor communication and a low standard of care at

QVS, there were instances of early proactive, child-centred pastoral care. This might be explained by the military connections, the significant distances separating children from their parents, and the fact that their parents were often away on active service and there was therefore a greater potential for parental death. It is also noteworthy that at times the risk of terrorist attacks was perceived as real.²³³

'Martin' recently recovered his records from QVS and was surprised to read a letter from the school to his parents dated 22 July 1983. He reflected:

It was interesting ... that when I got my files from the school they seemed to show that the school were looking after my interests better [than] my parents did. I feel that the school actually went out of its way in my best interests and it was my parents who let me down more than the school ... It was the school that recognised that I was perhaps a square peg in a round hole but it didn't suit my parents to make any changes.²³⁴

An extract of the letter reads as follows:

I am writing to you what I hope you will interpret as a helpful and considerate letter ... Clearly several times this last year I have had to protect ['Martin'] from other boys who, though wrong, have lost patience with him

231 Written statement of 'Hamish' (former pupil, 1968-75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.8, paragraphs 33-4.

232 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Peter' (former pupil, 1990-6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.135.

233 See, for example, Report by the Commandant and the Headmaster to HM Commissioners for the period October 1974-March 1975, at MOD-000000071, p.663, reflecting the tension in the mid-1970s between the need for security and an open school.

234 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.128.

and got at him out of sheer frustration at his total lack of response. I am concerned about the relationship between other boys and himself with regards to his own happiness and general well-being ...

More seriously, I am much more concerned as to the degree to which ['Martin'] is beginning to disobey or not cooperate with adults ...

Lastly, and I say this with regard to ['Martin's'] own happiness, I am beginning to question whether you and I are doing the right thing by keeping him in a boarding environment, one in which he himself does not easily fit ...

I invite you to consider with me whether it would be in ['Martin's'] interest if he were to attend the local school and live at home, hence being in an environment where he would be able to more easily be the individual he clearly is. Also, another school, another ethos might create better academic achievement ...

If you should choose to send him to a day school, I would make it very plain that this was a parental choice and in no way was ['Martin'] asked to go. As I have indicated to you, my chief concern is with ['Martin's'] well-being and I am troubled by the possibility that he is increasingly unhappy here.²³⁵

'Keith' and 'Barry' were similarly positive. 'Keith' said:

I was very homesick when I started at QVS. The staff were very caring. I remember my aunt died while I was in P7. The staff were again very caring. I was told about it by my brother. The school chaplain, John Silcox, was there to support us. He kept a close eye on me and

made sure to include me in what was going on that day. He ensured that my peers encouraged me to join in activities like swimming.²³⁶

'I was very homesick when I started at QVS. The staff were very caring.'

'Barry' said that Graeme Beattie

was a very well liked teacher. If someone was homesick he would make a point of coming into the dorm to make sure everyone was okay and he would often tell us a story. The school was losing a lot of its military discipline by that time and Graeme Beattie was one of the first teachers to realise that we were just nine- and ten-year-old boys.²³⁷

'Barry' also recalled the support provided to boys whose fathers went to the Gulf War in 1991:

The school arranged for those pupils to have a long weekend with their parents before their fathers were deployed. Their parents were flown over and the families were each given time with one another. Every Monday morning those pupils were taken aside and given a briefing from someone from the army who came to the school. He knew which regiment those pupils' fathers were in and he gave a brief overview of where they were and what they were going to be involved in. They showed a bit of CNN News and they were given a drink of juice and a biscuit and told which teacher they could go and speak to if they had any problems.²³⁸

235 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.118-21.

236 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Keith' (former pupil, 1983-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.180.

237 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, pp.18-19, paragraph 99.

238 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.19, paragraphs 101-2.

It is regrettable that a school that could act with such care and sensitivity did not, prior to the 1990s, do so consistently.

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1992 onwards

The early 1990s saw the start of a period of regime change for QVS. It pre-dated the reforms introduced by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, although these did, of course, play their part. Some of the changes were organic and would have happened anyway, such as the removal of the position of commandant, the introduction of the position of bursar, the admission of girls, and the retiral of long-serving staff. Of the last, 'John' said:

There had been a lot of staff who had been there a long time in the school and hadn't ... taught in a ... modern state school ... when I arrived, it coincided with a lot of those teachers retiring, natural wastage, and new young teachers came in and they were from the state system and they brought those ideas and that ethos into the school.²³⁹

In December 1991 the school became aware of allegations that there was widespread systemic bullying. These allegations had been made by Glenn Harrison,²⁴⁰ a former teacher whose tenure had been brief. To the credit of HM Commissioners, their response

was swift and help was sought from HMle inspectors, who were asked to visit the school immediately. A short initial inquiry was undertaken in December 1991, which concluded that a fuller inspection of the provision for the care and supervision of the boys should be carried out, with the aim of evaluating the pastoral care and supervision of pupils in the school and the associated management arrangements.²⁴¹

The report of the fuller inspection carried out in 1992²⁴² noted that there had been 'no structured internal or external review of pastoral care since 1985, and the school should now consider how it can improve arrangements to bring them into line with the best of current practice'.²⁴³

Its recommendations included that 'There should be a thorough review of policy on pastoral care and pupil supervision involving the drawing up of clear aims, well defined working arrangements, job descriptions and proposals for monitoring practice. The whole staff should contribute to the formulation of policy.'²⁴⁴

QVS accepted and embraced the recommendations, implementing 'a major review of policy in relation to stamping out peer-on-peer bullying ... This included the appointment of a deputy head

239 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.25.

240 QVS, Letter from Glenn Harrison to parents, 17 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, pp.9–12.

241 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104.

242 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104.

243 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104.

244 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, p.7.

teacher [Alice Hainey] with that specific responsibility.²⁴⁵

Problems were not resolved overnight. The established reluctance of pupils to report concerns continued, even though there was a greater emphasis on pastoral care. Evelyn Smith said:

Pupils would follow the military code of never dobbing in a fellow pupil when being asked about an incident. Some would fear pupil reprisals. I know that in all schools there is an unwritten code about children not dobbing in fellow pupils, but there seemed to be a genuine fear resulting in excessive hours being spent by staff trying to get the full facts of incidents.²⁴⁶

‘Pupils would follow the military code of never dobbing in a fellow pupil.’

Senior leaders who joined QVS in the 1990s brought fresh eyes and recognised the downsides of the regime. Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006) said:

considerable development was required in a number of areas. Although the introduction of co-education was very much in the forefront of plans for future development, it was apparent that the boarding accommodation had to be completely refurbished ... Not much money had been spent at QVS before I arrived ... and

there were a number of areas that needed development, ie a complete refurbishment of the boarding accommodation, reduction of the bed spaces in the main building, a new boarding house, a radical shift in the supervision and care of pupils, revision of the boarding duties system, appointment of resident deputy/assistant housemasters, housemistresses, upgrading of existing buildings and building of new facilities, for example all-weather pitch and raising academic standards.²⁴⁷

‘John’ thought the military ethos was still too dominant: ‘I don’t think there was as much emphasis put on academic work as there should have been ... things like CCF [Combined Cadet Force] and pipe band were put in the timetable ... I cut a lot of that time out and transferred it over to academic subjects.’²⁴⁸ He went on to say that QVS was still

strict, with ... traditions seen as very important. It was also very sanctions based. There was little pupil voice or consultation in any decisions about the way the school was run. There were no restorative practices to address managing behaviour or behaviour seen as a form of communication. Over the years this has changed ... There are house and school councils with pupil representatives on them. Pupil surveys are now used to gauge the thoughts of the pupil population ... when I first arrived at the school there was little communication with parents and this has dramatically changed over the years.²⁴⁹

245 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.11.

246 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), at TRN-8-000000030, p.142.

247 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.171.

248 [Transcript, day 240](#): ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.24.

249 [Transcript, day 240](#): ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.85.

‘In my early years ... I do not remember a formal policy in relation to discipline and punishment.’

Formal policies

The formulation of policies, just as in other boarding schools in the case study, developed considerably after 1992. As Graeme Beattie said, ‘In my early years ... I do not remember a formal policy in relation to discipline and punishment.’²⁵⁰ That is not to say the school lacked procedures, but those that were in place were informal. Glenn Harrison said:

I asked the management when I arrived ... if there is a problem, who should I complain to? I was told that if there were any teaching issues or curricular problems I should go to David Garden. If I had any house issues I had to go to the headmaster or the Brigadier. The Brigadier was responsible for the military side of things ... the equipment and was the quartermaster. If there was anything like a health and safety issue ... I would go to him. At some point I asked Mr Hankinson for a copy of the complaints procedure but he just told me that if I had any complaints then I should go and see him.²⁵¹

None of that demonstrated the existence of a proper system. Following the 1992 review, the earliest written policies included the QVS Pastoral Policy and Organisation (1994),²⁵² the QVS Child Protection Guidelines (1996),²⁵³ the Staff Handbook (1998),²⁵⁴ ‘Boarding Arrangements’ (May 1998),²⁵⁵ and the Pastoral Staff Handbook (1999).²⁵⁶

QVS now provides all parents with a copy of the school’s Boarding School Arrangements, which describes daily routines, policy, and procedures.²⁵⁷ The school’s policies and procedures are also published on its website and are regularly reviewed.²⁵⁸ All staff, including ‘the school secretaries, the matrons, and all the other auxiliary staff or admin staff’,²⁵⁹ are now trained in the meaning and application of the policies.

Carrying out a regular review of written policies, whilst essential, is not the full answer, as QVS well understands after the discovery that drum major James Clark had been abusing pupils between 2011 and 2019, notwithstanding child protection

250 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.89–90.

251 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989–91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.59.

252 QVS, Pastoral Policy and Organisation, 1994, at MOD-000000052.

253 QVS, Child Protection Guidelines, July 1996, at MOD-000000350.

254 QVS, Staff Handbook, 1998, at MOD-000000050.

255 QVS, Boarding Arrangements, May 1998, at MOD-000000051.

256 QVS, Pastoral Staff Handbook, December 1999, at MOD-000000049.

257 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.6.

258 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at TRN-8-000000031, p.90.

259 [Transcript, day 240](#): ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.28–9.

measures that were continually being developed. The school has invested in additional systems designed to help ensure children are kept safe. An information management system known as 3sys is used to log child protection problems. Graeme Beattie said:

there are protocols for staff to log a child protection issue. This is sent directly to the deputy headteacher (pastoral) and guidance. Staff are also encouraged, once we have done this, to contact the child protection officer to notify him or her personally of the concern. I know that he investigates each issue raised and seeks advice from external agencies where required.²⁶⁰

The school also uses a system called Securly to provide an extra layer of support. Children at QVS use electronic devices for learning, and Securly looks for keywords and terms, for example bullying, profanity, violence, nudity, grief, self-harm or suicide, that might suggest abuse.²⁶¹ I am told the system sends alerts and notifications in real time to the school's safeguarding team.

When asked in the course of hearings whether similar provision should be in place for teachers at QVS, Donald Shaw, along with Colonel Clive Knightley, agreed and thought the idea worth considering.²⁶² In 2024 a new resource called KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) was introduced at QVS.

It is administered by the DCS IT team. If the system perceives that something typed by staff could put them, or a young person, at risk, then the Child Protection Coordinator at QVS is notified.²⁶³

Girls

As Brian Raine recognised, 'The introduction of girls in 1996 was a major development requiring major changes in the structure, accommodation, and procedures, but also ethos, attitudes, sports, and extracurricular activities ... the benefits were obvious and enormous.'²⁶⁴ He thought it easier for armed services families to educate their sons and daughters in one school, and that boys and girls grew up naturally with each other.

Accommodation

The concerns of the 1980s were finally resolved in the 1990s when

the Commissioners and the Ministry of Defence accepted a ten-year programme which involved the building of an extension to Wavell House in order to provide extra space for a girls' house and a new building to house the P7/S1 boys ... Wavell was the first house to be modernised and then extended. Thereafter, the main building was refurbished and bed spaces were reduced from 199 to 124, which made a massive difference in the quality and space of accommodation.²⁶⁵

260 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at TRN-8-000000031, p.91.

261 [Transcript, day 241](#): 'Grant' (teacher, 1996–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.15.

262 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.100.

263 Information sent to the Inquiry by the solicitors representing QVS, dated 17 September 2024.

264 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993–4; headteacher, 1994–2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.173.

265 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993–4; headteacher, 1994–2006), at TRN-8-000000030, pp.171–2.

The environment was softened and made more suitable for children: 'There were further developments on the boarding side: more leisure areas, carpets, curtains, furnishings, and decorations. In general, the homely nature and atmosphere was vastly improved within the restricted confines of the main building.'²⁶⁶

Of the new living conditions and regime, 'Harry' said:

In S1 to S3, I was in Trenchard House ... During my time in Trenchard, the layout of the dorms changed. At first, the layout had bunk beds with lockers in between the bunks for privacy ... When I came back from holiday to start S2, the dorms had been redone. Everyone now shared a two-man room with cabin beds that had a desk underneath. There was much more privacy. The rooms didn't have doors so behaviour couldn't be hidden. I think the new dorm layouts made people happier as there was more privacy.²⁶⁷

Increased staffing

The 1992 inspection report recommended that 'the school should improve staff/pupil supervision ratios at certain times of the evening and weekends'.²⁶⁸ That was achieved. Brian Raine said:

There was also a radical shift in the supervision and care of the pupils within the boarding houses. The boarding duties system was revised twice within a ten-year period, and each house team was allocated more

staff, which meant that during the main pressure periods there were at least two members of staff on duty. Resident deputy/assistant housemasters/housemistresses in all houses were added, to the improved care of the pupils. Quality assurance visits by senior management helped to ensure that maintenance, improvements and health and safety issues were addressed speedily.²⁶⁹

In addition, each house now has a resident matron.²⁷⁰

The positive impact of change was felt by staff. 'Grant' described how bad it could be in the past and what was now better:

In the early days ... the duty master ... would be in charge of everything, essentially. You get a phone at the beginning of the day even when you were teaching class and if there were any issues you would have to be at the end of the phone to try and deal with it and also you'd be in the dining hall by yourself when the meals were on, that's obviously 120 pupils coming through in two stages, so you're having to deal with the lines, et cetera, so it's absolute night and day to what it's like now. The duty actually now is much more relaxed and organised and feels just so much better.²⁷¹

Tutors

The 1992 inspection report recommended that 'the school should consider forming extended teams of staff to play a part in the running of each House'.²⁷² QVS took this recommendation on board. As

266 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.172.

267 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Harry' (former pupil, 1988-94), at TRN-8-000000029, p.183.

268 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, p.7.

269 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, pp.172-3.

270 QVS, [Part A response to section 21 notice, addendum to appendix](#), at MOD-000000540.

271 [Transcript, day 241](#): 'Grant' (teacher, 1996-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.36.

272 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, p.7.

'John' observed, in a modern school it is commonplace for there to be a system of tutor groups and

so every member of the teaching staff was allocated about eight or ten pupils. And they met with them once a week in the morning and they would discuss a topic which was usually designated by the deputy head (pastoral), and they were encouraged to form some sort of better relationship or closer relationship with their pupils ... the tutor would be the first port of call for the pupil ... And the tutor then would pass it on to the deputy head, who would then make a decision of what was going to happen about it.²⁷³

The tutor system has been a process of evolution. The school now has boarding tutors selected from the business support staff. Donald Shaw explained:

Historically ... all tutors were teachers, but because we introduced a new model where every tutor had a smaller group to work with, we went into the business support staff of the school to get more tutors and each of those tutors had to get their level 3 SSSC childcare qualification. That also applied to our drumming instructor, piping instructor. Anyone who couldn't be GTCS registered became SSSC registered.²⁷⁴

The aim now, as described by Alan Plumtree, former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, is 'to ensure that at least one adult member of staff will take a continuous proactive interest in the development of each pupil, meeting with the pupil regularly

and providing structured and responsive discussion'.²⁷⁵

Engagement with external agencies

QVS is a small school and one that sits outside the traditional state and independent sectors. Accepting that, and to its credit, QVS has fostered external links. 'John' described how 'We started having links where we could – the headteacher, Brian Raine at the time, attended headteachers' meetings ... with the Stirling schools, and we ... could tap into in-service as well. So we tried to use as much of their facilities as we could.'²⁷⁶ He also thought QVS was alert to the risks and dangers that being unique can pose: 'you can feel isolated ... and we wanted to see that we were doing what everywhere else was doing, as it were. Especially at that time there were so many initiatives coming in that we were trying to keep on top of them.'²⁷⁷

On the evidence, QVS has an enviable record in fostering such links. Evelyn Smith said the school was

established with a number of agencies, including an educational psychologist at the Notre Dame Family Centre for anger management, bereavement, and counselling, and a clinical psychologist based at the Stirling Royal Infirmary for counselling or suicides, depression or any trauma. The school also had links with the MOD Police at Faslane, who regularly gave a drugs education course; the Central Scotland Youth Project, who provided courses on rape crisis and sexual abuse; Victim

273 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.31.

274 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.34.

275 [Written statement of Alan Plumtree](#) (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012–22), at MOD-000000630, p.1, paragraph 3.

276 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.37.

277 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.37.

Support, who would work with pupils on the consequences of crime; and Careers Scotland, who visited the school weekly to give help and advice.²⁷⁸

The school clearly made real efforts in this regard.

Academic improvement

Brian Raine said:

As headmaster, in my first speech to staff, I set targets and was responsible for driving the school ahead academically. As a result, examination results improved considerably, being well above the national average. New subjects ... were introduced. Support for learning was developed, becoming an integral and very important part of the overall academic operations. Principal teachers in computing, support for learning, and business studies were introduced, and an extra deputy head was added on the pastoral side. I fought hard for the latter in one of our many reviews as it was clear that more resources were needed on the educational senior management side to cope with the increasingly high levels of bureaucracy in pastoral, boarding, careers, and Personal and Social Education areas.²⁷⁹

Discipline

All of these reforms have brought about changes in, and new attitudes to, discipline.

QVS is still an establishment for children of the armed services but it has come to focus first on being a school. 'Grant' said: 'It's much more relaxed, more focused on the individual ... rather than having this expectation of standards, etc.'²⁸⁰ Discipline is different too, and 'over the years ... has moved away from punishment to one of restorative practices'.²⁸¹

**Discipline is different too, and
'over the years has moved
away from punishment to one
of restorative practices'.**

Change has been gradual.²⁸² When Wendy Bellars took over as head in 2007, she 'thought that there was an uncouth atmosphere ... it was uncivilised. So we did a lot of work on that ... Took a long time, but it worked.'²⁸³ She was describing boys clinging to the hierarchal regime that existed unchanged prior to co-education, but added:

I was impressed by how much my two longstanding deputy heads knew about the children and obviously cared about them. I thought there needed to be some greater comforts of home introduced into the boarding houses. So I thought there was work to be done, but I thought we were starting from a fairly positive place.²⁸⁴

278 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), at TRN-8-000000030, pp.152-3.

279 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, pp.169-74.

280 [Transcript, day 241](#): 'Grant' (teacher, 1996-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.30.

281 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984-6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986-90 and 1993-2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999-2022), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.86-7.

282 [Transcript, day 241](#): 'Grant' (teacher, 1996-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.30.

283 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.138.

284 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.138.

“There is a clear hint that there may have been a significant peer-on-peer abuse issue in some periods of the school’s history.”

Prefects continue to have a role at QVS but are now trained in what is expected of them. They ‘are not responsible for discipline [but] have leadership roles in the house and school set by the housemaster or housemistress and the senior leadership team’.²⁸⁵ Leadership training began in 1996,²⁸⁶ and written guides were first produced at the same time.²⁸⁷

Response to evidence about the regime

Donald Shaw, the current head, assessed progress since the mid-1990s in this way:

I think ... that we’ve been on a pathway since potentially the mid-1990s ... and things have massively improved since 2006, and I would hope that if you spoke to somebody in 2031, they would say that things have massively improved again in the last ten years because you’re never going to get it perfectly right. You’re just going to do your absolute best for the children, and certainly my predecessor was very much a part of that journey.²⁸⁸

Reflecting, Donald Shaw was candid about past failings: ‘in looking at old documents and searching the archives ... there is a clear hint that there may have been a significant peer-on-peer abuse issue in some periods of the school’s history’.²⁸⁹ He considered that the failings disclosed in evidence

had a massive impact on those who have suffered abuse. It seems to me like children have been actively discouraged from reporting things in the past, not just by other boys but by the staff as well. My impression of the evidence is that staff were simply not involved enough in the lives of the children, and at times in the past, discipline has been left to senior students and those senior students have dished out brutal punishments that have no place in any school.

It seems like students had no place to go with their problems. ‘Andy’ mentioned ... ‘a terrible culture of silence’. That struck a chord with me as to how it must have been ... a young person having nowhere to turn. ‘James’ described teachers as ‘complicit’ in this culture of silence, and ‘Clifton’ actually summed it up as ‘the collective consciousness of the school’. ‘Alex’ commented that staff were ‘indifferent’ and that does paint a picture of a very difficult place to live and be educated ...

I’m exceptionally proud to be the head of QVS as it is now. I believe that pupils are supported, cared for, at the heart of everything we do. But the version of the school portrayed by those witnesses is something not to be proud of in any way ... I want to take responsibility for helping those people find a little bit of closure and I would urge again anyone ... to come to the school, share their experiences with me,

285 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.86–7.

286 QVS, HM Update for HMC Meeting on Monday 17 June 1996, at MOD-000000601, p.27.

287 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.145.

288 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.84.

289 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.98.

and allow me to show them that things are better nowadays.

But my heart goes out to them ... it's not been the most pleasant of listening but I'm so glad I had the opportunity to hear and be able to respond to their concerns.²⁹⁰

Representing the MOD, Colonel Clive Knightley agreed:

I found it upsetting, verging on harrowing, listening to particularly the earlier evidence, and even though I'm not a direct part of the school, I've been very proud of my association with QVS since it started back in 2012, and I was sufficiently upset that I was sharing with friends. I said: 'We're hearing things here that are making me really feel bad', and the predictable, perhaps, response was: 'Well, were they things that were of that time?' And it caused me to reflect, and actually I think that is the value of this Inquiry and others like it, that if we are not confronted with what happened in the past, there's always that risk that we will unwittingly repeat it in the future. And I was reassured as we progressed through the witnesses and realised that things really had started to change in the sort of early to mid-1990s, and that upwards trajectory is exactly what I've seen in the last nine and a half years ... I do have enough of a distance from the school that I can remain objective, and ... I think ... that there is now a deeply embedded culture of continuous improvement in the school ... But I found those earlier witnesses harrowing.²⁹¹

Conclusions about the regime

The QVS vision statement is: 'We aim to provide a unique, thriving boarding and educational community in which all pupils and staff work to support and respect one another in realising their full potential.'²⁹²

There have been periods, particularly in the 1970s to the early 1990s, during which QVS came nowhere near to fulfilling that aspiration. This resulted in a culture where abuse of all kinds was allowed to take place within the boarding houses unchecked. Not only were there few, if any, systems in place to prevent it, there was an active unwillingness to even look for it on the part of many staff who bolstered and even encouraged the culture of silence. The same problems meant that opportunistic sexual abuse by staff, made easier by the exploitation of already vulnerable children, could take place.

To its credit, QVS, because of the actions of a teacher – Glenn Harrison – who would now probably be called a whistleblower, recognised and began to respond to the discovery of these failures slightly earlier than many other schools in the case study. It has continued to do so ever since, but the discovery of an abuser in 2019, who had been harming children for nearly a decade unnoticed, is a timely reminder of the need for constant vigilance and that it is never safe to assume all is and will be well.

290 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.115.

291 [Transcript, day 241](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012–21), at TRN-8-000000032, p.117.

292 QVS, [Vision, Mission and Values](#).

4

Physical abuse

Introduction

QVS had a military culture – a culture that had ‘always been one of physical activity’.²⁹³ It was a culture in which the expectation of staff and pupils alike was that disputes would be resolved by fights at the ‘magic circle’. It was a culture that paved the way for physical abuse to flourish. Many applicants experienced it. There was brutal physical abuse of younger children; they were subjected to some dreadful ordeals. Some of them appear to have echoed the treatment of junior servicemen and recruits which the armed forces are reported as having been trying to address since the 1990s.



Queen Victoria School, exterior

Physical abuse by teachers when disciplining pupils was never officially sanctioned by the school itself, and there is evidence to show that throughout the school's history efforts were made by those responsible for

governance to try to clarify and limit what form of corporal punishment was acceptable.

An example from 1929 demonstrates the mindset of the school after a parent complained to the Under-Secretary of War about a beating his 11-year-old son had been given for running away. The child had received three strokes of the strap on one day and five more the next. The father wrote:

This was done in the Central Hall before the whole school. He was ordered to lie over a chair and the Drum Major inflicted the punishment. At the fourth stroke of the punishment the boy turned his head slightly round and the Drum Major remarked, ‘Just for turning round you will get a harder one next time’, then preparing himself the Drum Major leapt towards the helpless boy and in a fiendish fashion struck him a severe blow on the small of his back, then remarked I missed you that time, that won’t count, I’ll give you another one. He did give him another one which made six strokes a thing the Drum Major had no right to do. My boy came from his trying ordeal bleeding, sore and his flesh very much discoloured ... All the boys of the school were present and later on commented quite freely in the severity of the punishment given to my boy. Even the maids of the school were allowed to stand at the open door to look upon the unseemly spectacle. Whenever I heard of what had happened I at once had

293 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.84–5.

‘The Doctor told me that my boy had been very severely punished, far too severely for a boy of eleven.’

my boy removed. I took him to a Doctor to be examined and when the Doctor saw the markings on my son’s body he uttered the word scandalous. The Doctor told me that my boy had been very severely punished, far too severely for a boy of eleven. I strongly protest against such cruel treatment for a boy of eleven and the indifference shown by the Commandant and the Headmaster. I also very strongly protest against the fiendish attitude of Drum Major Hetherington.²⁹⁴

The commandant responded:

I ordered that he be given five strokes on the seat with the school tawse ... I do not consider, in view of the boy’s conduct, that the punishment was severe in any way. Punishment ... has always been carried out in this manner for misconduct, otherwise discipline and good order could not be maintained among 280 boys.²⁹⁵

However, the Army Council, while agreeing that punishment was merited, considered that ‘the particular form of punishment meted out to him was excessive and illegal ... in future corporal punishment is only to be inflicted in strict accordance with [the law] and school standing orders should be amended accordingly’.²⁹⁶ Similar directions, including the need to keep records of punishments, were repeated in 1961.²⁹⁷

Despite that, some staff continued to use excessive and inappropriate discipline, and this amounted to abuse. For decades after the Second World War, individual teachers were able to act in that way without paying any heed to whether or not the discipline they inflicted was excessive or inappropriate. The school appears to have had little or no interest in what was actually happening to the children.

Abuse by staff

‘Bob’, the oldest applicant, remembered being assaulted by a maths teacher nicknamed ‘Slathers’ – because he would become excited and slobber – under the guise of corporal punishment. He would cane pupils for

the least thing. If you were talking in class or throwing a bit of paper at your mate or doing a childish thing, he would drag you out of the class and give you a lashing with the cane. That happened quite often to me and other children. He caught me talking to one of my friends who sat beside me. I was dragged out of the class. He got me to lift the sleeves of my navy-blue jumper. I thought I’d get the strap, but he brought the cane out. He started slathering and hit me. One of the strokes caught me on my wrist. I had a complete and utter meltdown.²⁹⁸

294 QVS, Letter to Under-Secretary of War, 1 October 1929, at MOD-000000602, p.17.

295 QVS, Letter from acting commandant, 15 October 1929, at MOD-000000602, p.18.

296 QVS, Letter on behalf of the Army Council, 7 November 1929, at MOD-000000602, p.19.

297 QVS, Minutes of HM Commissioners’ meetings, 1950–72, at MOD-000000032, p.107.

298 [Transcript, day 236](#): ‘Bob’ (former pupil, 1951–5), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.10–11.

As a result, 'Bob' could not use his arm properly; his 'wrist was all swollen and I had a big red welt on my arm'.²⁹⁹

Not only was the teacher using corporal punishment that was inappropriate and excessive, he was also committing a criminal assault. Despite 'Bob's' father threatening the teacher after learning of what he had done, it appears his behaviour did not change.³⁰⁰

Little had altered by the 1960s, notwithstanding the expectations of HM Commissioners. While many thought overall discipline was fair, it inevitably depended on the individual teacher. Some were 'very fair and some were unjust'.³⁰¹

'Andrew' remembered that punishment generally could come in a number of forms – the slipper, the belt, and the cricket bat – and could be administered even for the most minor misconduct:

[I] was in the classroom and one of the boys threw a piece of paper at me. I picked it up and threw it back and was caught by the teacher. It meant that after I had gone to bed, the teacher whose name I can't recall ... came for me. He got me out of bed and took me to his room where he hit me with his slipper on my bare backside. It was very painful. I can't recall how often he hit me with the slipper ... On the occasion I was hit with a cricket bat it was in the gym in front of the rest of the class. It was extremely painful and totally humiliating. It left the impression of the cricket bat on my skin for several days after. I can't recall what I had done to deserve it.³⁰²

'Andy' remembered an occasion when he was in P6, his first year at QVS:

There was a bit of noise, we were all shouting. The teacher came in demanding, you know: who's making all this noise? Nobody admitted to it, so he ordered us all to see him at 8.30 on the ... Abercrombie landing, and he soft shoed the whole class. And soft shoe is a misnomer.³⁰³

'On the occasion I was hit with a cricket bat it was in the gym in front of the rest of the class. It was extremely painful and totally humiliating.'

Two teachers in particular were remembered for their excessive and harsh use of physical punishments. The first was Mr Malkowski, who taught languages. He joined QVS in 1958 and remained there until at least the early 1970s. The other was Mr Urie, who taught technical drawing between 1963 and 1984. Mr Malkowski had a belt he had named 'Johnny Debasher'. 'Ann' said:

I was never in his classes because I wasn't clever enough to do French or Latin but I was in prep some nights in his class and he'd write: 'Johnny Debasher lives to strike again', and he'd put a piece of forked lightning on the board. Yes, he was quite good at giving the belt. I had the belt off him ... I got caught in one of the buildings with my hands on the radiator and it was a Sunday afternoon and it was very cold and I was very cold and he gave

299 Transcript, day 236: 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.10-11.

300 Transcript, day 236: 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, p.13.

301 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.57.

302 Transcript, day 236: 'Andrew' (former pupil, 1965-7), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.27-8.

303 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.25.

‘The injustice rankles to this day, you know, that I’d be beaten because I couldn’t do the French.’

me the belt for it, which warmed my hands up, which I thought was a bit unjust.³⁰⁴

That was not simply unjust. It was abusive.

‘Andy’ would have agreed. He recalled that the French teacher beat him

for not doing well in the language laboratory. The injustice rankles to this day, you know, that I’d be beaten because I couldn’t do the French ... At the time I lived in fear of him ... The infamous Johnny Debasher ... I think he had a little bit of paper sellotaped to the belt with the name on.³⁰⁵

‘Andy’s’ memories of Mr Malkowski also included the following:

I remember on one occasion realising that ... if you got a D in this you were going to get belted and the stress was too much for me. And I’d worked really, really hard and my cortisol levels must have been through the roof. I remember sitting with a book trying to memorise this bloody French ... Anyway, I said into the tape recorder ... ‘Oh God’, and at the next meeting ... the French teacher said: ‘God will not help you’. He was a humorous man. And then proceeded to belt me again.³⁰⁶

‘Hamish’, similarly, had memories of Mr Malkowski being ‘particularly brutal and

would never give less than six of the belt. His favourite technique was to get you to roll your sleeves up so he could hit the soft tissue on your inner arm, very painful to say the least.’³⁰⁷

Reflecting on the man’s behaviour, ‘Andy’ said: ‘One thing ... really upsets me. This must have been known to people. Surely people must have known that the French teacher was kind of abusing this corporal punishment. Whether things were ever done, I don’t know ... It didn’t change.’³⁰⁸

‘Surely people must have known that the French teacher was kind of abusing this corporal punishment.’

It seems inconceivable that other staff were not aware of such openly excessive and abusive uses of corporal punishment. Even if somehow they were not, they should have been. And, in either event, such abuse should have been addressed but it was not. Mr Malkowski regularly abused children in this manner, there appears to have been no system under which that was recognised, and no steps were taken to protect children from being subjected to it.

304 Transcript, day 236: ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.55–6.

305 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.28–9.

306 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.28–9.

307 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.10, paragraph 44.

308 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.30.

The other teacher, Mr Urie,

had a nasty habit of throwing blackboard dusters at children. He didn't mean to hit you, and quite often he didn't ... He got very close, in my case. I think the object of throwing the duster was to frighten you, and because the stools you sat on were rather high, the action of him throwing the duster at you, and it was going to hit you, you fell off the stool before it got to you.³⁰⁹

'Alex' confirmed this use of the duster:

He had absolutely no patience whatsoever and he used to love the blackboard duster, the wooden duster ... rattling that off the back of your head. And he was a good shot as well ... He was an invective SOB, that's the only thing I would put him down as being. I don't know why he was a teacher. But I think he just took great pleasure out of inflicting pain on people.³¹⁰

'I think he just took great pleasure out of inflicting pain on people.'

Mr Urie's physical abuse included the use of the belt too, irrespective of whether a boy had misbehaved. 'Alex' left some bread in a tuck box in his locker. It had been given to him by his mother. Mr Urie found the bread and accused 'Alex' of having stolen it. 'Alex' explained that it was from his mother, but the teacher said:

'Oh, you stole that from the kitchen' ... and I got dragged into the office with it and I said to him: 'Look, phone my mother, she'll tell you', you know, and it wasn't even the same brand they use in the kitchen ... and he just said: 'No, you're lying, you're lying, I'm not interested', and I ended up getting the belt ... And he knew I'd just come back that evening with my mother with a tuck box full of - that was the sort of person - if he wanted to belt you, he would. It would be any excuse.³¹¹

'Martin' provided a similar description of Mr Urie as

a master who would belt people for the simple reason of failing to understand the basics he was teaching and he would humiliate boys in front of others. I used to dread going to his classes and would be delighted in the morning if it was announced his class had been cancelled.³¹²

'James' remembered Mr Urie 'would throw blackboard dusters at your head ... In first year I took technical drawing and metalwork and that teacher asked you to put your hands up and he would hit you over the knuckles with an eighteen inch ruler.'³¹³

Again, these children felt that such behaviour was well known amongst other staff, so nobody reported it. In any event, as 'Alex' observed, 'the housemaster wouldn't have done anything. He would just ... say: "Well, you must have deserved it". That would be the sort of - telling tales, you know.'³¹⁴

309 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.54.

310 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.102.

311 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.103-4.

312 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.114.

313 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, pp.15-16, paragraph 52.

314 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.104.

The children to whom [the teachers] owed a duty of care were left unprotected.

A number of other teachers were remembered by 'James' for their violence. One taught religious education and, like Mr Malkowski, had given his belt a name. He also used a crocodile clip:

He would give you a choice of whether you wanted to be belted or wear a crocodile clip over the top of your ear for the duration of the class. He called his belt 'Gnasher' and the crocodile clip was called 'Nipper'. I got 'Nipper' a couple of times. When you took it off, your ear would be bleeding.³¹⁵

Another, a Latin teacher, 'would hit you over the head with a big heavy book'.³¹⁶

A few teachers engaged in physical abuse without even suggesting it was disciplinary.

A few teachers engaged in physical abuse without even suggesting it was disciplinary. A physics teacher was described as a bully by 'Hamish' because 'he once kicked me down a set of stairs for no apparent reason'.³¹⁷ 'James' was in a locker room next to the staffroom when the same man

came in and slapped me full across the face and knocked me to the floor and started shouting at me that I was making too much

noise and disturbing their lunch. He left and I picked myself up. My face was all red, he was a huge man, about six foot five inches.³¹⁸

The same was true of a PE teacher called Mr Boast who would grab pupils by their sideburns and drag them about or lift them up. 'Douglas' described how

if he needed you to go quickly from one place to another, [he would] grab you by your sideburns and pull you ... That was something he did quite frequently ... Looking back from the perspective of being a father now, I would see that as inappropriate were a teacher to do that with my son.³¹⁹

'James' remembered how Mr Boast

picked a student up by the hair on his temples. The teacher was a physically big guy, and he had the boy off the floor. The student was crying, and he was shouting at him ... I think it was more the teacher demonstrating how strong he was and he was the one in charge, just asserting his power.³²⁰

These actions amounted to an abuse of their power by each of the teachers involved. It seems inconceivable that the school was unaware of what was happening, and their breaches of the trust placed in them by the school should have been addressed. But they were not. The children to whom they

315 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.15, paragraph 51.

316 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.15, paragraph 52.

317 Written statement of 'Hamish' (former pupil, 1968-75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.3, paragraph 14.

318 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.19, paragraph 62.

319 Written statement of 'Douglas' (former pupil, 1984-93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.30, paragraph 115.

320 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.21, paragraph 67.

owed a duty of care were left unprotected, at risk of being abused, and, in cases such as those of the applicants referred to above, were subjected to harmful abuse.

‘Andy’ provided what appears to be some insight in relation to the conduct of Mr Malkowski and others. He said:

chatting with ... old boys and things, I find that maybe one or two of those people in positions at the school had somehow got them for maybe the wrong reasons ... but, you know, they’d maybe been traumatised themselves ... Certainly the French teacher, I found lots of people sort of mitigate what he was doing through his experiences in the war ... I remember ... he was particularly strict about no food left on the plate when he was in charge of the dining room ... apparently that was a reflection of how important food was in prisoner of war camps ... I think at the bottom line there should have been some kind of check on what he was doing. I don’t know whether they knew ... I suspect that they must have ... but perhaps they should have made it their business to know.³²¹

One housemaster in Wavell House completely lost patience with a boy who had just started in P6, so was probably only 10 years old. ‘James’ remembered how

[the boy’s] mother brought him to the school and just left him there. He was a troubled lad. He was in the bunk bed next to me. He was a bed-wetter and he also drew all over his bunk bed with a marker pen. The housemaster just lost patience with him one day and shouted at him, ‘You’re a disgrace to your father and his regiment’. I was in my bed but I could hear

the whipping noise and the cries out in the hall. It sounded like a belt he was being hit with. I covered my ears to try and block out the sound of his screaming, the housemaster shouting and the noise of the striking. The boy returned to his bed and I could hear him sniffing and crying. Shortly after that incident he was removed from the school.³²²

This happened in the mid-1980s but it is similar to abusive treatment engaged in by housemasters at Morrison’s Academy³²³ in the 1960s and calls to mind the ways in which isolated, impatient, and unsupervised boarding house staff resorted to abusive behaviour towards children which went unchecked. It might be thought that, for the sake of children at boarding schools, lessons would have been learnt across the sector in the decades between the two. Apparently not. The risk and, indeed, likelihood of such boarding house staff losing control appears not to have been recognised at QVS, all to the detriment of the children.

Being tough and being seen to be tough were key.

I have no doubt that the QVS culture did not help. Being tough and being seen to be tough were key, as were not complaining and not clipping. ‘Hamish’ gave a shocking example of how the culture encouraged and facilitated physical abuse by both staff and fellow pupils:

A boy ... was allocated as my seconder. I was crying because my parents had left without saying goodbye and [he] decided to teach

321 Transcript, day 237: ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.43–4.

322 Transcript, day 238: ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.112.

323 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no. 9: Volume 2](#): The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children at Morrison’s Academy, Crieff, between 1945 and 2007 (March 2024).

me a lesson for crying and gave me a good kicking which resulted in my nose bleeding, my eyes blackened and numerous bruises. I then made the mistake of going to ... the Housemaster of Wavell House and he punished me for telling him by hitting me once with the slipper.³²⁴

That, it seems, was just the way it was, and children had to accept it. There was nothing they could do about it.

Abuse of children by other children

Prefects and monitors

QVS was a small school, and many pupils left at the end of their fourth year. Accordingly, the pool of fifth- and sixth-year boys available for appointment as prefects and monitors was limited. Some who were appointed are likely to have been unsuited to the role – which included the power to exercise authority over younger children – and none of them appears to have received appropriate guidance.³²⁵ It is, therefore, unsurprising that some prefects and monitors abused their powers in a variety of ways.

‘Alex’ said:

The prefects and monitors were the ones who dished out the discipline and the day-to-day punishment ... One of the things they especially didn’t like was talking back to them. They would intimidate you. I guess that’s what

any older boy might do if they were given a role like they were.³²⁶

He added: ‘It was all just issued ad hoc ... They had carte blanche. The prefects and monitors wouldn’t consult the housemasters when they issued their punishments.’³²⁷

‘They had carte blanche. The prefects and monitors wouldn’t consult the housemasters when they issued their punishments.’

‘Alex’ accepted that some were ‘sensible and decent’. He also, very fairly, said that, at times, they had good reason to discipline:

Don’t get me wrong, I mean, if I deserved it ... if I got found by a decent one and he gave me a punishment, yeah, that was fine ... But sometimes ... prefects and monitors would just turn round and say: ‘Okay, I want you to polish my shoes’ ... and then if you didn’t do it as well as he’d like you to do it, then he’d say: ‘Okay, you’re on cross-country tomorrow, get up earlier than everybody else, go and do a cross-country run and get back and showered’. So that was the kind of way they would be.³²⁸

The abuse of power by prefects and monitors is something ‘Peter’ still thinks about:

My biggest hatred of the school was that [they] were given far too much power from a

324 [Written statement of ‘Hamish’](#) (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.4, paragraph 16.

325 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.95.

326 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.96.

327 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.99–100.

328 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.99.

‘He told me it was just one of the privileges of being a prefect.’

very young age. I reflect on it regularly with people I’m still in touch with. The power they had and the punishments that some prefects issued was absolutely ridiculous and I don’t remember a prefect ever being questioned ... They thought they ran the place and they weren’t even scared to challenge teachers ... punishments were often given for the most stupid things, such as having a little dirt on your shoes when they had been scuffed ... I had a good relationship with Bill Webster, the housemaster, so I spoke to him about it. He told me it was just one of the privileges of being a prefect but I told him I thought it was ridiculous and he did actually stop it ... I didn’t witness and wasn’t aware of there being any physical bullying behaviour from them. They knew if they took things to that level they could end up losing their trows and their status.³²⁹

‘Peter’ believed that children should not be able to punish other children, saying that: ‘It is ridiculous that that was still going on in the 1990s. It should have been banned.’³³⁰ It is not difficult to agree with him. He is right – it should.

In previous decades there were prefects and monitors who

would get a wee bit physical ... if they were doing ... a run night where they would pick on people just for the sake of picking on them ... Usually the last day of term would be the sort of like the target days ... there was

what’s called kit bagging where they would get younger boys, stuck them in a kit bag and then just kick them around like a football and stuff like that ... it was usually a last day of term sport for them, for want of a better word.³³¹

This was far in excess of ‘a wee bit physical’. That was a gross understatement. This was cruel. It was abusive.

This was cruel. It was abusive.

Behaviour of this sort was not officially sanctioned but could easily take place given the inadequacy of supervision by staff:

Senior pupils were not allowed to dish out the belt or cane. There were sort of formal/informal arrangements and depending on what level of misbehaviour it was deemed to be, punishments would be meted out ... In the summer months you would have to go to the gym at seven in the morning and you would be forced to do sit ups and press ups, physical exercises. if you didn’t do it you would get kicked. That was administered by the senior monitors. That was quite brutal, being made to do press ups or sit ups until you were sick.³³²

‘Douglas’ experienced a further variation of abusive punishment in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, where ‘prefects and monitors

329 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.146.

330 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.157.

331 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.97–8.

332 [Written statement of ‘James’](#) (former pupil, 1979–86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.16, paragraph 53.

made boys who had not done their “days” drink shampoo’.³³³

Fellow pupils

Brutality was a regular feature of everyday life in the boarding houses. It was, in particular, imposed on younger boys by older ones. It could have been stopped by the monitors, prefects, and/or staff but it was not. Commonly,

older boys wielded quite a lot of power in the dormitories from senior 1 onwards ... It was all a bit ‘Lord of the Flies’ inasmuch as we were all policing ourselves. It was ridiculous when I think about it now because if an older boy took a dislike to you then they essentially could do what they liked.³³⁴

Brutality was a regular feature of everyday life in the boarding houses.

Abuse began in the junior school and, for many, was just seen as part and parcel of being sent to a tough school. One dreadful practice was what the boys called ‘crucifixion’:

A broom handle would be put through the sleeves of your jacket and you’d get dangled up on the bars in the drying room while everyone went for lunch. There was no way you could get out of it yourself as you were too high up. You had to wait until they came back from lunch and took you down. I think this happened to me just once ... It happened to a few others as well.³³⁵

This happened to ‘Joe’ when he was in P6:

Another punishment ... by the P7 boys was to put you in your kit bag and dangle you inside your locker, which they’d then lock and go off to lunch. Being dangled ... wasn’t exactly the problem, it was missing your meal ... None of the duty masters did a roll call at lunch so nobody would have noticed if you weren’t there. This was an almost daily occurrence ... you saw it going on. It was just part of being at school ... I tried to keep my head down and be invisible.³³⁶

There was a practice of informal punishments being administered by senior students. ‘James’ was in his early teens when he experienced this. For example, there was ‘running the gauntlet’:

You would be told to be at the fifth-year dorm room at a certain time ... there were two things in particular that they did. They had long dormitories, with maybe twenty boys in them ... which were more private as they had walls up between the beds ... like they were partitioned off. So you had to go down to the far end of the dormitory and all the fifth-year boys would stand in their doorways with brushes or shoes ... and you had to run from one end to the other and they would kick you, spit on you, hit you with brushes, and you’d get to the end and you might have to do it again, several times sometimes. That happened to me quite a lot ... if you’d done well and hadn’t cried, the older boys would say: ‘Well done’.

The other thing that happened ... there was a beam across the doorway of a room, you had to climb up there, or they would lift you

333 Written statement of ‘Douglas’ (former pupil, 1984-93), at WIT-1-000000991, pp.29-30, paragraph 112.

334 Written statement of ‘Noah’ (former pupil, 1984-90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.20, paragraph 73.

335 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.64-5.

336 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.64-5.

‘There was more serious bullying like getting stripped naked in the dormitory and hung out of the window.’

up and then they would hang on to your legs and arms with your tummy over the beam. That one was particularly painful ... a boy, or two boys on each arm and leg, tugging. I remember coming away from that with injuries, cuts, and bruises to my ribs and torso. It happened to other students ... I’m not sure if those two punishments were known by the teachers.³³⁷

If staff had known about these practices, they should have stopped them. But that did not happen. Rather, physical bullying of this type appears to have been the norm throughout at least the three decades before the early 1990s.

In the late 1960s physical abuse was rife and some of it was dangerous:

Bullying was a constant threat and could happen anywhere at any time and by anybody. Some was by monitors or prefects while some was simply done by other older boys. There was a straightforward physical bullying like getting slapped on the head or more serious bullying like getting stripped naked in the dormitory and hung out of the window. I recall seeing this done but I don’t remember how often other than it was more than once. Another form of bullying was getting put into a laundry basket and shoved down the stairs.

I saw and can recall such things happening ... [they] were just par for the course. I can’t be exact as to how regularly this occurred and it happened to me at least once. I can’t recall anybody being seriously injured by such things ... I couldn’t say for certain that staff were aware of the bullying but the boys certainly had sufficient leeway to continue bullying without the masters knowing. The bullying occurred in all sorts of places.³³⁸

Almost 60 years on, ‘Andy’ was still thinking about these practices: ‘It gives me shivers what they did to other boys. It seemed this behaviour was allowed to flourish, as if boys will be boys. We would have fights with wet towels called “rats’ tails”. This was just day-to-day behaviour.’³³⁹

‘It gives me shivers what they did to other boys.’

The conduct ‘Andy’ was talking about began when he was a P6 boy, aged 10, in Wavell House. He described a chaotic world where he ‘got hit, because I can remember how sore it was, and I probably hit people as well. But that kind of running battle between dormitories. Those kind of things seemed to go on.’³⁴⁰ He had a particular memory of

337 [Written statement of ‘James’](#) (former pupil, 1979–86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.70, paragraphs 55–6. ‘Hamish’, who was at the school a decade earlier, also had to run the gauntlet: [Written statement of ‘Hamish’](#) (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.12, paragraph 49. See also [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.65–6.

338 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.116–17.

339 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.18. See also [Written statement of ‘Hamish’](#) (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.11, paragraph 46.

340 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.14.

being held down on the bed by a few of the older boys and it's strange because I wasn't particularly concerned about it ... and they kind of used my chest as a kind of drawing board and they had a woollen glove on and they kind of drew a river down your chest with this kind of rough woollen glove on and then had a little story of elephants pounding across the river ... I recall it so obviously it had an impression on me.³⁴¹

Although he does not remember being frightened at the time, on reflection he is clear that it was 'beyond just horsing about. These are bigger boys holding down a smaller boy, you know. So in my opinion, yeah, it's way across the line of horsing about.'³⁴²

The physical bullying that was going on, as illustrated by these examples, should never have become the norm. The fact that it did clearly demonstrates that responsible supervision was absent or inadequate, or that staff condoned it.

'I came across two or three boys who had tied another boy to a chair and put a kit bag over his head.'

As boys rose up the school, the physical abuse escalated in its severity. 'Andy' remembered: 'On one occasion I came across two or three boys who had tied another boy to a chair and put a kit bag over his head ... that struck me as even further beyond the pale.'³⁴³

A boy in Cunningham House was subjected to some horrific behaviour by fellow pupils. 'Andy' saw what happened:

Yeah, they'd tied him to the chair with straps for sporrans, leather straps, and they were threatening to throw him down the lift shaft at the back of the dormitory, which was unused ... The kind of rumour was that somebody had died down the lift shaft ... urban legends and all of that. So ... they actually raised the guy on the chair onto the edge of a bed pretending to be taking him - you know, swinging the doors, it was the second bed from the end of the dormitory, I remember, right by the swing doors, and they put him on the edge of the bed and then kind of dropped him and the guys caught him coming off the edge of the bed. They obviously thought this was great fun, but I'm horrified because, you know, I can just imagine, you know, the trauma that might cause if you bought into the whole scenario that these guys were perpetrating.³⁴⁴

'Felix' experienced similar abuse at the hands of seniors in the early 1990s. It was frightening:

it certainly happened to me and a couple of other lads ... they would specifically come up to the dorm and ... ask us to come down to their rooms ... we had to go on all fours and ... essentially we were kicked and it was whoever ... capitulated first would be the one that ... could leave the room first.³⁴⁵

Such incidents involved not just one but a group of boys being abused quite openly. I find it very hard to accept that staff were not aware of it.

341 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.14-15.

342 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.17.

343 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.18.

344 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.19.

345 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.151-2.

‘His was not the kind of anger of boys having fistfights. His was something darker.’

Casual abuse of individual boys was also commonplace. ‘Hamish’ was standing in a corridor waiting to go into his next class when ‘a lad ... came by and he banged my head off the wall so hard I lost consciousness, there were other occasions where I would be standing in line for class or food in the mess hall and would get punched, kicked or stamped on for no apparent reason’.³⁴⁶

Occasionally, weapons were used. A sixth-year boy threatened to stab ‘James’ in the leg

because I was Catholic. I think I was in Secondary 4 and he was two or three years older than me and ... an Orangeman through and through. He confronted me in my bed-space ... He pulled a skean dhu out of his sock and pinned me up against the wall, held the tip to my thigh and threatened ... me ... Another time the same boy gave me a leathering with snooker balls. I think that was also ... in Secondary 4. He was playing snooker with a friend and he said something to me so I said something back. The next thing I knew I was hit by a snooker ball, then another, and another. He hurled them at me with full force. I was on the floor after the first one. His was not the kind of anger of boys having fistfights. His was something darker. Fistfights were not uncommon amongst pupils.³⁴⁷

Violence at QVS was part of everyday life. Whilst some might shrug it off as inevitable in a community of adolescent boys, that won’t do. It was abusive behaviour and it was badly

in need of being addressed and stopped. It fed into an abusive culture that did a disservice to boys in the longer term. ‘James’ commented:

It was like this in every school year and there was a pecking order in each school year where people would give you space depending on how you had exerted yourself. That’s the way it was for most people, but you did tend to grow up and the older you got, the more you could see it wasn’t worth bothering about. Ever since I have struggled with managing my aggression and dealing with aggressive situations with people outside my family unit.³⁴⁸

That ‘way it was for most people’ should have been obvious to QVS, as should the real risk of it leading to abusive bullying. The behaviour of the oppressors should have been addressed. Instead, staff, who must have been aware of what was happening, turned a blind eye and in doing so afforded it validation.

Staff, who must have been aware of what was happening, turned a blind eye and in doing so afforded it validation.

‘James’ remembered a day when

a fifth-year pupil hit me in front of a teacher and I hit him back. He was sort of embarrassed by this so he challenged me to a fight after

346 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.14, paragraph 62.

347 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.107–8.

348 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.108–9.

school. I had to go over to the senior common room, and there was me and all the fifth and sixth years and this fellow that I'd hit and I was made to fight him. One of the teachers' lounges was adjacent to that room, so that they would know there was something happening as it was very noisy, with chanting and stuff like that ... The teachers would have definitely knew there was something going on there. There was so much the teachers saw but turned a blind eye to. I remember ... in second year, a boy several years older than me ... asked my group to be quiet ... I didn't stop talking so he walked up and punched me in the face, in front of a teacher ... He told me to shut up and I think I smirked, so he punched me in the face again. The teacher in the room didn't say anything ... The culture of the school was violence, every aspect of it.³⁴⁹

Change began to take place in 1992 and does seem to have had some impact. 'John' remembered some bullying in the same form that monitors and prefects carried out but it being less violent:

We were each other's family at the school. We had to rely on each other, so disagreements were over and done with quickly. The only thing I experienced that could be described as bullying, although I didn't really see it as bullying, was once when a group of S5 and S6 boys waited for some of the younger boys to come out from a lesson. They grabbed you and asked if you knew any swearwords. If you said a swearword, they sprayed shampoo into your mouth.³⁵⁰

'Peter' talked of there being increased teacher presence but this did not lead to a change for the better in all aspects; horseplay – which always had the potential

to amount to harmful bullying – clearly continued.

Further, 'Peter' was

not aware of there being an anti-bullying policy ... and it wasn't part of the curriculum ... However everybody was quite protective of the school's reputation. I never witnessed any physical bullying. There was quite a lot of fighting, particularly in the younger years when a pecking order was established, but I wouldn't say there was any bullying. We were all very robust, independent boys who liked a lot of banter and there was typical teasing. I suppose the situation we were in, where we were all living together and going to school together, meant that there was perhaps more teasing than in a non-boarding school, but for me it was just banter.³⁵¹

'Everybody was quite protective of the school's reputation.'

Shrugging off this behaviour as 'teasing' and 'banter' may have been acceptable for some, but there will inevitably have been those who, having experienced much worse, still found school traumatic. The experience of 'Hamish' in the 1970s was likely to have been replicated for later vulnerable pupils, given the length of time it takes to change such an embedded culture:

The problem was that I was small and when you appeared small or weak you were immediately a target and the bullying and name calling was constant and I never felt safe. Because of fear for my safety I became a bit of a ghost. I always avoided places where other

349 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979–86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.19, paragraphs 58–60.

350 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'John' (former pupil, 1989–96), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.187–8.

351 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Peter' (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.137.

It should have been obvious to staff and headmasters that there was a very real risk of boys physically abusing other boys in the absence of adequate guidance, oversight, and control.

pupils loitered, I spent a lot of my [time] hiding in the library or the woods at the back of the school to prevent the bullies finding me.³⁵²

Fights were still being used in the 1990s as the way to set the pecking order. That was never going to ensure that children felt safe.

Conclusions about physical abuse

For several decades, physical abuse was the norm at QVS. It was perpetrated by a small number of violent teachers whose conduct must have been known about but never addressed.

As for pupils, it required only the smallest of steps for boyish or adolescent larking

about to morph into dreadful and terrifying physical abuse. In a robust school where military competition, status, and hierarchy mattered so much, it should have been obvious to staff and headmasters that there was a very real risk of boys physically abusing other boys in the absence of adequate guidance, oversight, and control. However, the lack of a proper system of supervision and guidance and the mistaken assumption that pupils could adequately police themselves enabled abuse to flourish. That was a very real failing on the part of QVS. Just as significantly, it also appears that some staff deliberately ignored the obvious and positively chose to avoid the responsibilities that they were employed to discharge.

352 [Written statement of 'Hamish'](#) (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.14, paragraph 59.

5 Sexual abuse

Introduction

Children at QVS were sexually abused.

Some younger boys were sexually abused by older ones. After QVS became co-educational there was some sexual abuse of girls by boys as well as complaints of same-sex abuse involving both boys and girls.

Two members of staff engaged in serious courses of sexually abusive conduct of children. The first of these occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, and involved the grooming and abuse of junior boys in Wavell House by a male teacher, Ben Philip. The second involved the grooming and sexual abuse of senior girls over a period of eight years from about 2010 by the drumming instructor, James Clark. He was convicted of four charges under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 and of having committed three common law offences of assault in 2021, and jailed for one year nine months. His offending was able to take place despite the risk of children in residential care being abused having been well known for years and the school having taken steps to introduce child protection systems.

Two other teachers had entirely inappropriate relationships with senior girls in the 2000s.

The school had been made aware of the potential for sexual abuse of the children in its care from as early as the 1920s; there is evidence of this in minutes of the meetings of HM Commissioners. In 1929, for example,

an allegation of indecent conduct, made by a boy against Mr X (the parent of another boy in the school) was reported. Lt Colonel C L Addison Smith said that he had information that the Crown would probably not prosecute as a conviction seemed unlikely. The Board authorised the Commandant to exclude Mr. X from the ordinary access to the school granted to parents, and to permit him to see his boy at stated times and places.³⁵³

The school had been made aware of the potential for sexual abuse of the children in its care from as early as the 1920s.

Minutes from a meeting in 1955 record the headmaster reporting that ‘two boys were expelled on 24 October 1952 for indecent behaviour’.³⁵⁴ They also record that there was a man from Dunbartonshire whose ‘method was to ingratiate himself with some of the boys’ parents, then take the boys out during holidays or fetch them at weekends and interfere with them’.³⁵⁵

353 QVS, Minutes of HM Commissioners’ meeting, 4 April 1929, at MOD-000000006, p.19.

354 QVS, Minutes of HM Commissioners’ meeting, 26 January 1953, at MOD-000000029, p.55.

355 QVS, Minutes of HM Commissioners’ meeting, 28 November 1955, at MOD-000000031, p.55.

This was reported to the Royal Corps of the Military Police who took action. The man was arrested and was awaiting trial as at the date when the matter was recorded in the minute of a meeting of the commissioners. QVS must have been, or at least ought to have been, aware of the risk of pupils being sexually abused whilst in their care, throughout the twentieth century.

Sexually abusive conduct by pupils

Some applicants were victims of non-consensual indecent behaviour by older boys in the 1960s and 1970s. In the dormitory where 'Andrew' was placed, abuse by the senior boy, the dormitory captain, was commonplace. 'Andrew' refused to comply but others were too scared to resist:

After lights out he would tell the other boys in the dormitory to come to his bed and to fondle his private parts. I refused to do this and was threatened by him. It only happened to me on the one occasion. Some of the other boys were too scared to refuse. I was 10 years old and quite confused about what was happening but I knew it was wrong ... I think that some of the other boys did fondle his private parts but no one spoke about it. The dormitory captain was a lot bigger than most of the boys and was a bully. He would use his size to intimidate and get what he wanted.³⁵⁶

On reaching third year in the senior school, 'Ann' became the target of one particular boy – who was good at sport – and his friends, suffering repeated abuse for a number of years. This included sexual abuse in a den made by that boy in woodlands in the school grounds:

Once in there, he would touch my genitals and get me to touch his. I wasn't happy about it but he forced me to have sexual contact with him ... The sexual abuse happened quite often over a period of maybe two years. It would normally happen in the afternoon between school and dinner time ... he used the bullying and intimidation to get what he wanted. It got so bad that I started self-harming myself in my genitalia area ... I would try to pull my willy off and cut it with my fingernails to make it very sore and bleed, in the hope that it would stop the abuse.³⁵⁷

“The sexual abuse happened quite often over a period of maybe two years.”

In keeping with the QVS culture, neither 'Ann' nor any of the boys in 'Andrew's' dorm complained, but in the case of 'Ann', there was marked deterioration in schoolwork, a change in demeanour, dreadful distress, and self-harming, all of which must have been obvious but was, it seems, just ignored.

In fairness to QVS, once it became aware of sexual abuse the school was capable of taking action, as it did in the case of 'Alex'. He was abused by a boy in the year above him over, he thought, a number of terms. It began with his abuser making 'Alex' touch him when they were in the boot room together. Thereafter, it 'escalated to the point where he was forcing me to give him oral sex. Looking back, I was an easy target. I was the boy who was perceived to be causing lots of trouble. I was one of the boys who was bullied quite a lot.'³⁵⁸

356 Transcript, day 236: 'Andrew' (former pupil, 1965–7), at TRN-8-000000027, p.29.

357 Written statement of 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965–70), at WIT-1-000000559, p.14, paragraphs 101–3.

358 Written statement of 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979–83), at WIT.001.002.9378, p.21, paragraph 95.

The culture was uncaring and homophobic.

'Alex' did not report matters at the time but did tell his mother later. She contacted the school. 'Alex' was interviewed but felt he was met with indifference. He accepted he may not have given an entirely full account to the headteacher, Mr Hankinson. It is, however, clear that the impact on him was distressing and harmful; he said he was treated as 'a leper, a complete and utter leper in that school. Every member of - bar possibly two members - the teaching staff completely ignored me ... It was a complete Coventry, as they called it.'³⁵⁹

Investigations were made by the head in early 1982, and the older boy admitted that he had, on a single occasion, abused 'Alex'.³⁶⁰ In response, and with the consent of the parents of both boys, both 'Alex' and his abuser were referred to an educational psychologist employed by Central Regional Council.³⁶¹ Contact with the psychologist was maintained into 1983. 'Alex' spoke of his perception being that, at the time, staff treated his abuser better than they did him: 'the teachers looked after him ... they treated him as if he was the victim'.³⁶² That may well have been the case, given that, as 'Alex' acknowledged, he, 'Alex', could be a 'gobby shite'³⁶³ and, according to school records, could be disruptive and badly behaved, whereas his abuser was, also according to the school's records, a nervous boy of solitary nature who was under severe emotional stress. There is a sense in the records of

a sympathetic approach being adopted towards him that does not feature in relation to 'Alex'.³⁶⁴ However, it is apparent that Mr Hankinson had the best interests of both children in mind.

Trying to address sexual abuse between boys responsibly was not, however, the norm at that time, because the abuse was not well reported and nor was it understood by the school. When the BBC TV programme *Panorama* 'ran a documentary about single-sex boarding schools, making a generalisation that sexual misconduct happened in every one ... some of the monitors and prefects wrote to a leading newspaper taking issue with this, saying no such thing had ever happened at Queen Victoria School'.³⁶⁵

The following week, however, the incident referred to above occurred, in which 'Alex' was abused by the older boy who had chased him to an isolated part of the school gym and sexually abused him.³⁶⁶ Such a thing did happen at QVS.

'Martin' remembered that incident and thought it was the only occurrence of sexual abuse at the school throughout the seven years he was a pupil there (1978-85). However, the culture was uncaring and homophobic, with the latter making boys who were, or were perceived to be, gay vulnerable to sexual abuse - which did

359 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.112.

360 QVS, Letter from headteacher to parent, 16 March 1982, at MOD-000000564, pp.4-5.

361 QVS, Correspondence with educational psychologist, at MOD-000000564, pp.3-5, and MOD-000000568, pp.3-5.

362 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.112.

363 [Written statement of 'Alex'](#) (former pupil, 1979-83), at WIT.001.002.9378, p.16, paragraph 72.

364 QVS, [Part D response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD-000000636, pp.9-10.

365 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.116.

366 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.116.

happen – and staff failing to protect them from it.

‘James’ felt that: ‘With the school being all boys and the time it was, the worst thing you could be at that school was gay. Some of my peers are gay and they would have been at the time, but they wouldn’t have come out then.’³⁶⁷ He described what happened to a particular boy who

was quite effeminate ... he was pinned down by some of the older boys, fifth and sixth years, and had a pencil put up his backside. That was common knowledge at the school, and if I knew ... I think it would have been known among the teachers. And if that particular incident wasn’t, that same boy ... walked in the dining hall one day and the older boys started chanting ‘Poof’, to the extent that the whole school started chanting it to this one poor guy. There were teachers in the room and nothing was ever done about that. Not to my knowledge anyway.³⁶⁸

As is so common, being different made the child vulnerable to this abuse and it must have been highly distressing. Moreover, he was humiliated by the entire school in the presence of staff who did nothing to stop it.

He was humiliated by the entire school in the presence of staff who did nothing to stop it.

Sexual abuse was not a common feature of life as a pupil at QVS, but it undoubtedly happened to some children and was mostly not responded to as it should have been.

The school’s responses to such conduct did, however, begin to improve in the 1990s. Alice Hainey, who was appointed assistant head (pastoral) in 1992, by which time QVS had begun to establish its child protection systems, remembered one investigation taking place in 1997. The school’s response was both prompt and appropriate:

Using the ‘trusted adult’ system, I was approached by a group of primary-aged pupils who alleged they were being sexually harassed by a vulnerable fellow pupil who ... was at least a year older. He had been trying to make sexual overtures under the guise of chasing games ... A detective sergeant and a female social worker, both from the unit at Bannockburn, visited the school and questioned the boys with myself acting in loco parentis. The outcome was that the boy left the school ... One pupil had in fact been anally penetrated. All boys were given the support of sessions with psychologists from the Notre Dame Clinic in Glasgow who came into the school. I was never given any feedback about the vulnerable wee boy and his fellow pupils were very concerned about him and wanted to know if he was all right.³⁶⁹

Allegations post-1997

Since QVS became co-educational in 1997, according to available records there have been five other episodes that were a cause for concern and that the school shared with the authorities.

In 1998 allegations of inappropriate behaviour were made involving three teenagers. They were suspended pending investigation, and the matter was reported

367 [Written statement of ‘James’](#) (former pupil, 1979–86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.21, paragraph 68.

368 [Written statement of ‘James’](#) (former pupil, 1979–86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.21, paragraph 68.

369 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992–2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.122.

to the police. The Child Protection Unit was 'not particularly concerned as there was no coercion'.³⁷⁰

In 2004 a gap year student from Australia was reported to the police for lewd and libidinous behaviour towards two junior boys. It is understood he returned to Australia after the authorities returned his passport.³⁷¹

Also in 2004 a complaint was made by a teacher and her nephew two months after an allegation of indecent assault by six boys was made. The matter had been reported and investigated with disciplinary steps being taken by the school at the time. The police were involved and a report was made to the procurator fiscal. The Crown did not proceed with any prosecution of those children; there was, however, a referral to the Reporter to the Children's Hearing.³⁷²

In 2011 allegations of inappropriate touching amongst pupils were reported to the police, the Care Inspectorate, and the Social Work Department, from whom guidance was sought.³⁷³

In 2015 an allegation of rape was made and reported to the police. The school offered support to both pupils involved, and the charge was ultimately dropped.³⁷⁴

Sexually abusive conduct by staff

Ben Philip

Ben Philip, nicknamed 'Bender', was a primary school teacher and housemaster of Haig House. He worked at QVS from 1973 until his premature death in December 1993. Graeme Beattie, a fellow teacher, thought him

very caring and a good teacher. He was a dedicated and kind man. His life was Queen Victoria School ... During my time I did see him with children both in class and in the boarding house. He had a lot of patience and time for his pupils ... I never saw or heard of him abuse any children.³⁷⁵

Some former pupils agreed. 'James' said he 'was very strict. I was on the receiving end of the belt from him but he was really fair. He had a caring nature as well.'³⁷⁶ 'Harry' said he was

very much loved ... a single man who lived in the flat in Haig House. I can imagine the media would make something of that now, but nothing ever happened, to my knowledge. He was very understanding and always willing to give you five minutes of his time ... The whole of Haig House were affected by his death and his pupils in P6. We had lots of support.

370 QVS, Minutes of HM Commissioners' meeting, 8 June 1998, at MOD-000000072, p.77.

371 QVS, Part D response to section 21 notice, appendix, at MOD-000000652 and [Written statement of Evelyn Smith](#) (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), at TRN-8-000000030, p.11, paragraph 36.

372 QVS, [Part D response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD-000000636; and see the section 'Tensions amongst staff 2002-4' where this matter is also discussed.

373 QVS, Part D response to section 21 notice, appendix, at MOD-000000652.

374 QVS, [Part D response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD-000000636.

375 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Graeme Beattie (former primary teacher, 1984-6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986-90 and 1993-2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999-2022), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.92-3.

376 [Written statement of 'James'](#) (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.12, paragraph 37.

Boys were threatened with violence by Ben Philip in an intimidating demonstration of his power.

Every teacher, matron, cleaner came to be a shoulder to cry on. Overwhelming support from the school.³⁷⁷

‘Barry’ felt rather differently about Ben Philip’s death:

He had been up a ladder in the theatre ... when he slipped and sustained a severe head injury ... A memorial was held and a tree planted, and I remember thinking that there was no way I was going to it. About six or seven other pupils also refused to go and our housemaster at the time asked why we weren’t going. I said I didn’t really feel comfortable and was just told it was up to me and it was left at that.³⁷⁸

‘Barry’s’ discomfort was because of his having been subjected to abusive treatment by Ben Philip when he was in P6 and new to the school. Corporal punishment had ceased by then, but he and other boys were threatened with violence by Ben Philip in an intimidating demonstration of his power:

On my first or second day at the school, Ben Philip gave a demonstration of how proficient he was with the belt ... He put a piece of chalk on the desk and whipped the belt so that the chalk rolled one way, then whipped it again so that the chalk cracked in half ... I looked around the room and saw other boys were wide eyed and clearly terrified ... He said ... we were not to cause him any problems and that even though he was the first teacher we

would have, he was also the housemaster for Haig House and he was the one that would write our references. He told us that if we wanted a good start and if we wanted to do well at the school, we should not upset him.³⁷⁹

Such intimidation was also experienced by others. Ben Philip unnerved ‘Peter’ by telling him how important he was in the wider school context and

that as housemaster for the senior boys he decided who could stay in the school and who would leave. On top of that, he used to say that he was the one who would write out the report that we would take to university and the first reference we would need to get a job ... ‘I’m the one that receives you when you start at QVS and I’m the one that sees you out’ ... As he spoke to us, he would whack his belt on his desk and try to intimidate us. He spent a good six weeks behaving like that, intimidating us and essentially brainwashing us into thinking that we would do whatever he wanted and be quiet in his class. I know now that he was grooming us.³⁸⁰

‘I know now that he was grooming us.’

I agree with his assessment of Ben Philip’s motivation. Within weeks, the man progressed to sexual touching. ‘Barry’ described how

377 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Harry’ (former pupil, 1988–94), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.184–5.

378 [Written statement of ‘Barry’](#) (former pupil, 1989–98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.25, paragraphs 134–5.

379 [Written statement of ‘Barry’](#) (former pupil, 1989–98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.22, paragraphs 115–18.

380 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.147.

Philip would call boys up individually to his desk to get things marked. His desk was to the side of the classroom ... Boys would have to stand to Philip's right-hand side, so that their view of the classroom was obscured. Similarly, the rest ... could only see the top half of any boy that was standing there. The boy would then put their jotter down and ... he would start going through their work. I remember waiting for my turn and looking over and seeing a friend of mine ... and he looked terrified ... [He] turned to Ben Philip and shouted: 'Stop fucking touching me, you poof'. Ben Philip stood up instantly and told him to get out of the classroom.³⁸¹

'Barry' was next:

I opened my jotter and stood there. Ben Philip told me to relax, that it was the best way to learn, and suddenly I felt his hand on the back of my neck. He started rubbing my neck and I instantly felt cold and stiff. Even to this day I still feel that. He kept telling me to relax and then he pulled the shirt out of my shorts and started stroking my back. At that point I was really uncomfortable, so I turned round and went and sat down. Later that day I met ... some other people in my class and I asked them whether they thought it was normal. They replied that they didn't know, but that they didn't like it.³⁸²

Ben Philip was touching many boys in the classroom setting. 'James' was another example:

I was abused by Ben Philip from the age of 10 or 11. I would get called to his desk and he

would put his hand up my shorts at the back and sides and down my waistbands ... He used to lift up my shirt and put his hand down my trousers ... He didn't touch my genitals but he almost did. It was like he was trying to see how far he could go ... before I would start pulling away. I was too young to understand what was going on. In hindsight it was totally abhorrent.³⁸³

'I was too young to understand what was going on. In hindsight it was totally abhorrent.'

His impression was that Ben Philip 'would concentrate on newcomers, pupils who were missing home, those who needed attention'.³⁸⁴

In the 1970s 'Joe' was also groomed by Ben Philip who he felt was

a nice guy and was like a father figure to me ... you went up to Ben's desk and stood beside him ... He used to put his hands down my shorts and caress my bum when I stood at his desk. I thought it was odd but I thought that he must have known that I was a slightly nervous person and he was just trying to calm me. This happened during class time when all the other kids were there, so I thought that everyone else must have been getting the same treatment. I didn't say anything. I just kind of accepted it. It was in P6, either after the October break or the Christmas holidays, and it went on throughout my time in primary school.³⁸⁵

381 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, pp.22-3, paragraphs 119-21.

382 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.23, paragraphs 123-4.

383 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.102-3.

384 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.104.

385 [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.63.

‘I remember after showering he told us not to use our towels and to rub ourselves dry with our hands.’

Ben Philip’s progression to sexual touching appears to have begun after a half-term break:

When we came back from the October break, he had moved the classroom around so that his desk was facing the door so that if anybody came in, he would see them straight away. He would tell boys ... to come up to his desk because he wanted to show us something. He would stand boys to his right-hand side, blocking the view from the door, and then ... would unbutton boys’ shirts, put his hands inside and rub their chests and their nipples. He tried to make what he was doing into a joke and he tried tickling your armpit. He would also lift your shirt up at the back and put his hand down the back of your shorts, under your underpants, and grope your backside. I saw him do this a lot to a number of boys in the class, pretty much on a daily basis ... At the time it was just kind of perceived as banter. If you had your backside felt by him, everybody would giggle.³⁸⁶

The abuse was not confined to P6 boys. Ben Philip sexually abused boys who were in P7 and beyond. ‘Joe’ met Ben Philip again when he was duty master and would visit the dormitories to check boys were in bed:

Because I was the dormitory leader in P7, he would come to my bed and sit for a while and he’d put his hands down my pyjamas and play with my penis. That went on through P7 whenever Ben was on duty. I don’t know how

I felt about it at the time. He was my teacher and my friend and he looked out for me at school.³⁸⁷

So it was that Ben Philip engineered matters and maintained the notion that he was simply his friend when ‘Joe’ moved to the senior school; he sent ‘Joe’ a postcard in which he described himself as ‘your friend’.³⁸⁸

‘He would unbutton boys’ shirts, put his hands inside and rub their chests and their nipples.’

‘James’ and other classmates encountered Ben Philip when he supervised swimming in P7:

He would make us change and get dried off in front of him and he would make us shower in front of him. I remember after showering he told us not to use our towels and to rub ourselves dry with our hands. He would also stand really close to boys of any age. It would be to the point that the tip of his nose was almost touching you. He would walk towards the boy of his attention and force him back literally into the corner simply by being in close proximity to the boy’s face. That was his standard practice. You could feel his breath on your face and he visibly enjoyed it.³⁸⁹

Boys discussed this behaviour. ‘James’ explained that one boy observed

386 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.148.

387 [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.64.

388 [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.64.

389 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.104.

‘Teachers by and large didn’t come into the showers, with the notable exception of Ben Philip. I remember boys putting a bench up against the door to try and stop him coming in.’

that Ben Philip would use innuendo to try and determine which pupils in the class were sexually aware. My friend made reference to Ben Philip’s use of the word ‘shaft’ in conversation. By chance, Ben Philip overheard us. He came round the corner and had a visibly crestfallen demeanour. He knew what we had been discussing. He knew what we knew. He was not a happy man at all.³⁹⁰

‘Hector’ was taught by Ben Philip in P7. He recalled that when his work was marked at the teacher’s desk Philip

would always have his hand up my shirt, stroking me. He would do that for as long as he was going over my work and he did it every time I was beside his desk ... I wasn’t horrified at the time, I liked the feeling ... I thought he was a nice teacher and he was stroking me. He never did anything else and there were no private parts involved. The only other thing is that my brother told me that he took boys into his flat.³⁹¹

‘Douglas’ did remember senior boys in Haig House having coffee in Ben Philip’s flat, which was part of his ‘attempt to try and give us a broader education about what normal people did’.³⁹²

That said, the postcard Ben Philip sent to ‘Joe’ – who he had abused – when ‘Joe’ left P7 included the words ‘you will always be

welcome at Flat 1, Wavell House’.³⁹³ It seems likely that, as with paedophiles in other residential establishments in this case study including Loretto School and Gordonstoun, Ben Philip encouraged children to visit him in his private quarters and did so with ulterior motives.

Ben Philip’s behaviour was consistent and certainly known about by pupils from the 1970s on. Red flags were there to be seen but were missed or ignored. As ‘Noah’ observed:

[Philip] was always a very tactile person. I remember him rubbing boys’ shoulders, legs, and bottoms over the top of their clothes. That behaviour was so ubiquitous that you came to not even think it was wrong when it was happening to you. I remember Ben Philip being particularly tactile with [one boy] ... when we were both in senior four. That was mainly during the day but sometimes at night. [His] parents were going through a break up ... That could be why Ben Philip was giving him extra hugs ... Looking back, irrespective of the time, Ben Philip’s behaviour was inappropriate.³⁹⁴

He was also well known to be a voyeur when boys were showering. ‘James’ said: ‘Teachers by and large didn’t come into the showers, with the notable exception of Ben Philip. I remember boys putting a bench

390 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.113–14.

391 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Hector’ (former pupil, 1984–91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.170.

392 [Written statement of ‘Douglas’](#) (former pupil, 1984–93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.23, paragraph 89.

393 [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.64.

394 [Written statement of ‘Noah’](#) (former pupil, 1984–90), at WIT-1-000001133, pp.23 and 27, paragraphs 84–5 and 93.

up against the door to try and stop him coming in.³⁹⁵

Moreover, when 'Peter' arrived for the start of Primary 6, 'they split up all the boys and 20 went into Mr Beattie's class and 20 went into Mr Philip's. They wouldn't say why, but the Primary 7 boys giggled and teased us about going into Ben Philip's class.'³⁹⁶ However, boys were reluctant to report their concerns, even to other boys:

One pupil ... did say something in front of everyone else in the dorm about getting his bum felt. The reaction was [he] got a whole lot of verbal abuse from the other boys and it was because of that sort of reaction that no one was ever going to come forward.³⁹⁷

Staff should also have been concerned. Many of the staff and pupils said in evidence that QVS was so small people knew what was going on. That was no doubt true to some degree, including, I am sure, the nicknames of staff.³⁹⁸ 'Bender' was understood by the boys to relate to Ben Philip's habit of bending a slipper before he used it for beatings but also because of his sexual behaviour.³⁹⁹ The school should have been concerned.

More to the point, at least one boy did raise concerns with a teacher. 'Barry', who had

rebuffed Ben Philip's second attempt to touch him and had been left alone thereafter, remembered that in a discussion with another teacher, a pupil asked if Ben Philip was known as 'Bender'

because he was gay or because he touched people. The teacher asked what he meant and I said that Ben Philip had touched my neck. He told me that if I thought it was serious and I wanted to make a formal complaint I needed to go to the headmaster, but I didn't want to take it any further. I didn't want to be the one guy that came forward, even though there had been open discussion about it amongst my peers.⁴⁰⁰

Such a disclosure should have led to investigations. Instead, either the teacher did nothing or QVS failed to act. Both are possible, and it confirms the impression that QVS was a school where much went unnoticed, obvious risks were ignored, and abuse could take place in plain sight.

That was largely before the changes brought in during the 1990s and beyond. It is therefore all the more troubling that the same shortcomings were repeated for a lengthy period beginning in 2010, when a member of the support staff, the drumming instructor, was able to engage in a course of sexually abusive conduct.

395 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.92. See also [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.108. 'Martin' also said that Mr Bruce, the Wavell housemaster, had the reputation of having 'an unhealthy habit of looking at boys' but was the only applicant to do so, and was not speaking from direct experience. 'James' recalled that Mr Bruce made sure the boys washed themselves properly, including their genitals, and watched the process. At the time he did not think anything of it but is now not so sure: [Written statement of 'James'](#) (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.10, paragraph 31.

396 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Peter' (former pupil, 1990-6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.146.

397 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.24, paragraph 131.

398 'James' was clear staff did know. [Transcript, day 238](#): 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.104.

399 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.104; [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.173.

400 [Written statement of 'Barry'](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.24, paragraph 129.

James Clark

On 18 February 2019 a female pupil reported to Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present) that she 'had been sexually assaulted by a member of staff'.⁴⁰¹ The member of staff was James Clark, the drumming instructor and an assistant housemaster who, after a career in the army, had previously taught at Loretto School in Musselburgh and George Watson's College in Edinburgh. In stark contrast to what would have happened in the past, QVS's response was both thorough and swift.

The school's child protection processes were followed, and the matter was immediately reported to the police.

The school's child protection processes were followed, and the matter was immediately reported to the police. The Registrar of Independent Schools, the Care Inspectorate, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), and Disclosure Scotland were also notified. James Clark was immediately suspended. As Donald Shaw said, there was 'zero faff'.⁴⁰² On 22 February 2019 James Clark was charged with having committed 14 sexual offences involving a number of female QVS pupils.⁴⁰³ Thereafter, on 9 April 2019, the SSSC made a temporary suspension order for a period of nine months, and on 17 April 2020 James Clark was dismissed by QVS for gross misconduct.

The criminal case against him was delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but on 27 September 2021 he was convicted at Falkirk Sheriff Court of four offences under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, and three offences of common law assault: see [Appendix F](#). Seven children in their early teens had been abused by him over the course of his employment at QVS, between August 2011 and February 2019 in a gross breach of trust; his conduct included indecent assaults and behaviour, including masturbation. On 15 November 2021 James Clark was sentenced to one year and nine months' imprisonment, and placed on the sex offenders' register for 10 years. He was struck from the Register of those working in social care in Scotland held by the SSSC on 28 February 2022.

Donald Shaw and others at QVS were stunned by the unveiling of what had been happening. The man who committed these offences had, during his eight years at QVS (2011–19), worked with Donald Shaw. Further, they had thought that the development of child protection policies meant that adequate systems were in place to minimise the risk of children being abused and that if abuse did occur, it would be rapidly discovered:

Despite having a culture of 'Please report things' ... kids clearly suffered from some form of abuse for a number of years before somebody eventually flagged it up, and of course that's a matter of concern for me. But you'll also be aware that this man was a very clever and open abuser, and hid in plain sight, as many abusers have done in the past;

401 QVS, Time line of events following CP disclosure, February 2019, at MOD-000000635, p.1.

402 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.82.

403 See QVS, Time line of events following CP disclosure, February 2019, at MOD-000000635.

‘This man was a very clever and open abuser, and hid in plain sight.’

normalise their behaviour so that the young people did not recognise it as abuse until they had time to reflect on it at a later date.⁴⁰⁴

It seems remarkable that the same flaws and shortcomings that allowed Ben Philip, and abusers in other schools, to abuse so openly up to the late 1990s could be repeated with such ease decades later. The point made by Donald Shaw about the ability of abusers to hide ‘in plain sight’ is well made. It provides an important lesson for all who have responsibility for the protection of children in residential care. James Clark’s course of abusive conduct emphasises how critically important it is to avoid complacency and to refrain from assuming that systems and processes will somehow, of themselves, prevent abuse or ensure prompt and appropriate reporting.

James Clark’s course of abusive conduct emphasises how critically important it is to avoid complacency.

Sensibly, QVS embarked on a thorough ‘lessons learned’ exercise which resulted in the introduction of further safeguarding measures for staff. Donald Shaw was candid:

We thought how could this possibly have been missed? How can somebody’s behaviour have been abusive but it’s been missed by the whole school community? So we had a

safeguarding ... review ... of the whole case. I prepared a training exercise for ... all staff, and ... we looked at the various scenarios and we talked about the need to report concerns as soon as a member of staff has a concern. What we wanted to avoid was the scenario where somebody might say, ‘Oh, the behaviour of that teacher’s a bit dodgy but I’ll just keep it to myself’, whereas three or four or five teachers might be witnessing behaviour and think, ‘Och, I’ll just keep it to myself, it’s probably nothing’, so we put a system in place on our intranet page where immediately a staff member has a concern, they click a button, they jot down their concern, they take their concern out and that goes straight to the child protection co-ordinator, and the child protection co-ordinator then has the overview of a number of concerns that may come in against a member of staff. So every member of staff bought into this new idea that they can report openly and without prejudice any concerns they witness and those concerns will be investigated by the child protection co-ordinator.⁴⁰⁵

It could be said to be surprising that such a system was not in place before but, as with other schools, QVS’s existing reporting system appears to have focused only on the child’s behaviour, not on the behaviour of staff. There needs to be a system of reporting any concerns in relation to both.

Other staff

Two teachers behaved inappropriately in their relationships with female sixth-form

404 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, pp.86–7.

405 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, pp.92–3.

pupils. One was undoubtedly abusive and in some respects was similar to the case of ‘Martin’, a teacher at Loretto School.⁴⁰⁶ The evidence of these relationships was not provided by any applicants but was in material from other sources, including information provided by the school, the General Teaching Council for Scotland, and the police.

Conclusions about sexual abuse

Children were sexually abused at QVS. There may not have been as much sexual abuse as there was in some other boarding schools in the case study, but the same themes recur. The absence or inadequacy of supervision and a culture in which reporting did not happen enabled older pupils to abuse younger boys without fear of discovery. The same was true of those teachers who abused both young and older children.

In closing submissions, counsel for QVS acknowledged that the accounts from former pupils of Ben Philip’s abuse were

vivid and harrowing. QVS accepts the compelling nature and the sad consistency among them over a period of many years. The picture emerging is of a man determined to

exploit his position and with the opportunity and the craft to do so and in plain sight where others remained oblivious ... The significance of it lies in the warning that threats to children’s well-being can arise from any source at any point. Indeed, it may well have been a conscious approach to portray a positive side to many people in order to maintain credibility as a trustworthy individual.⁴⁰⁷

Vigilance must be the watchword and child protection systems must be regularly re-evaluated.

That warning was well made and it applies to all the accounts of sexual abuse given in evidence. It is reassuring that further steps have recently been taken to encourage the reporting of concerns of and about both staff and pupils, but that only happened after the discovery that abuse was occurring, which was while the school was already responding to SCAl’s investigations. I make no apologies for repeating that there is never scope for complacency or assumption that all is or will be well. Vigilance must be the watchword and child protection systems must be regularly re-evaluated.

406 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no. 9: Volume 1](#): The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children at Loretto School, Musselburgh, between 1945 and 2021 (April 2023).

407 [Transcript, day 248](#): Closing submission by counsel for QVS, at TRN-8-000000041, p.48.

6 Emotional abuse

Introduction

As I have explained in other case study findings, not only can emotional abuse be associated with the physical or sexual abuse of a child in residential care, it can, for the child, be harder to bear than any other form of abuse. And it can certainly have as much, if not more, lasting impact. It was no different for those who were abused at QVS, and the impact of being emotionally abused has, for a number of applicants, had life-long consequences. The abuse included behaviour similar to the shunning that occurred at Loretto School⁴⁰⁸ and to the targeting of children who were different in some way that featured in the evidence in relation to other schools in this case study.

Witnessing the abuse of others

It can be distressing for a pupil to witness fellow pupils being abused and can cause them, in turn, to suffer long-term impact. That is not unique to boarding schools of the type covered in this case study.⁴⁰⁹ 'James' was horrified when a teacher lost patience and beat a new P6 boy outside the dorm: 'I covered my ears to try and

block out the sound of his screaming, the housemaster shouting and the noise of the striking. The boy returned to his bed and I could hear him sniffing and crying.'⁴¹⁰ 'Andrew' suffered badly from witnessing what happened to boys who had run away from school:

I never ran away from school as I knew what the consequences would be ... I think that those boys were just homesick and wanted to be at home. I didn't see what was happening to them ... I can also remember a room at the end of the dormitory which was a sort of office ... You could not access the office from the dormitory. I recall hearing the screams of some boys who were receiving some sort of punishment for running away. When I could hear the screaming from the other pupils, it affected me terribly. I could only guess why they were screaming. It was mentally disturbing to me.⁴¹¹

**'I recall hearing the screams
of some boys who were
receiving some sort of
punishment for running away.'**

408 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no. 9: Volume 1](#): The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children at Loretto School, Musselburgh, between 1945 and 2021 (April 2023).

409 See, for example, [Transcript, day 441](#): Deirdre MacDonald, at TRN-12-000000074, pp.20-6, who, having heard the sound of blows being inflicted on young girls by male staff at Langlands Park List D school over 50 years ago, has found that that sound 'has never gone away. It's been at the back of my mind and popped into my consciousness every so often throughout my life'; she became emotional when giving evidence about it.

410 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.112, and see [Physical abuse](#) chapter.

411 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Andrew' (former pupil, 1965-7), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.27-8.

‘He was teased about it and laughed at every time he wet the bed ... the torment was permanently there.’

The above are examples of what was happening in the 1960s and 1980s. Staff had no regard for the impact on other pupils, who would inevitably be aware of what was going on. In particular, they had no regard for how it was likely to affect younger children; in the case of ‘Andrew’ and ‘James’ their memories were of what would happen in junior school.

Bedwetting

Bedwetting was a problem at QVS. It prompted children to mock the bedwetters abusively, and staff made no effort to address this. Memories of the abuse suffered by bedwetters still upset many applicants, including ‘Hector’:

There was a kid in my year and he was bullied terribly for wetting the bed. I feel guilty because we made his life a misery. I think the school gave him a special mattress. I’m not on Facebook but I was years ago and there were a couple of kids who I really hoped had done well and he has. I am pleased he did well.⁴¹²

‘Clifton’ witnessed one boy being ‘relentlessly bullied about it. From the day he arrived until the day he left he was teased about it and laughed at every time he wet the bed ... the torment was permanently there.’⁴¹³

‘Clifton’ was clear that staff knew not only of the bedwetting but also of the associated emotional abuse, but nothing was done to help the boy.

And ‘James’ had a similar experience of how bedwetters were treated:

It was not dealt with very sympathetically at all. In some cases it continued up until ... 15 or 16 years old. I remember one lad who was always getting ripped into for it by the other boys. It wasn’t particularly malicious and you do learn to toughen up but I remember thinking how difficult it must have been for him. He wasn’t a friend of mine but I felt compelled to speak to him about it, but he was just resigned to his lot. I remember how miserable he was ... The school had known about it all the way up from primary school. Just being there without doing anything made me feel guilty about what was going on. My one redemption was the time I tried to speak to him. I just tried to ask him about how he was feeling.⁴¹⁴

The QVS ethos: a breeding ground for emotional abuse

The expectation that children would suffer adversity with adult stoicism appears to have been an intrinsic aspect of the QVS culture. The school’s failure to address the emotional abuse of bedwetters by other children is an example of that. Rather than address it, staff ignored the obvious and encouraged a culture of silence, making the risk of emotional abuse greater. These failures continued up to the 1990s.

‘Ann’ experienced significant abuse of all types in the 1970s, but the emotional impact was perhaps the most distressing. Wavell House had, for her, been fun, but

412 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘Hector’ (former pupil, 1984–91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.164.

413 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.33.

414 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.95–6.

life changed once she moved up to senior school and into Trenchard House:

It was okay initially but then I got picked on by certain, shall we say, larger boys, or I would call them bullies. I was the smallest and lightest person in the school. I hadn't got any weight to start pushing somebody else around. It's not my demeanour anyway ... and to be picked on by certain people was not very nice.⁴¹⁵

Sexual and physical abuse followed, but as 'Ann' explained:

a few other things ... happened along the way. For example, one boy ... said there was a plot - whether it's true or not, but I have to believe the person who came up to me and said that they wanted to tie me to a cross or bury me in a grave. What kind of person does that to a child, even if you're only one or two years older?⁴¹⁶

However, at QVS, with its culture and ethos, there was nothing to be done. Silence was expected, and teachers were not interested. 'Ann' knew that well, having suffered a violent assault which caused obvious injury and significant distress, when 'None of the teachers said anything or asked me about it, and nobody got me medically checked in case there was severe damage ... I couldn't stop crying and asked to speak to my parents'.⁴¹⁷ Staff eventually, if reluctantly, allowed this. 'Ann' reflected:

The bit I find shocking is that nobody really sat me down, even a couple of good teachers could have sat me down and discussed it and

said, 'Look, what's really going on here?' because a child doesn't cry infinitely for hours and hours of the day or night without there being a real reason. I know if I saw a child in so much distress then I would sit them down and sit and talk to them and try to get them to calm down and then get to the bottom of the whole thing.⁴¹⁸

'A child doesn't cry infinitely for hours and hours of the day or night without there being a real reason.'

Supporting a distressed child and trying to find out what was happening was, however, not the QVS approach. Rather, obvious emotional harm was ignored. As 'Clifton' said, for the children it 'didn't feel like a zero tolerance approach to bullying' and he certainly never witnessed staff being intolerant of it.⁴¹⁹

'Hamish' suffered similar humiliation in the same period and provided some insight into how wide-ranging such abuse could become:

Some of the psychological abuse received from fellow pupils was awful. This ranged from what service your parent was in to constant verbal abuse. The teaching staff never intervened in this despite the distress caused. The reality for those at the receiving end was having someone in your face shouting and hurling verbal abuse at you with others joining in; it was really upsetting especially as the

415 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.61.

416 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.67.

417 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.73.

418 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.73.

419 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.35-6.

‘As a victim you were sometimes forced to join in this abuse on pain of receiving abuse or violence yourself.’

intention was to start a fight ... As a victim you were sometimes forced to join in this abuse on pain of receiving abuse or violence yourself. This I found as distressing as being on the receiving end and made me feel weak and a coward for not standing up to them but the fear of not complying and the resulting abuse was too much to resist. I still have issues today about this.⁴²⁰

Telling staff about such abuse did not help; it was only liable to add to emotional hurt and confusion, as was experienced by ‘Hamish’:

the worst psychological abuse I suffered when I was small was being grabbed by some pupils, forced into a locker, locked in and left for hours. I missed the mealtimes and the pain of being cramped up in the locker was hard to deal with ... Unfortunately, it was noticed by the duty teacher on two of the occasions I was locked up and when asked I stupidly told them what had happened and got punished.⁴²¹

‘Joe’ had similar experiences himself and also witnessed them being endured by others, into the 1980s:

I could handle the physical stuff but there was a lot of name-calling and that was pretty hard going. The mental bullying really wore you down. You knew it if the older boys didn’t like you. They would find something to pick on you about. There were a few lads in my year who were picked on terribly. One lad used to wet

the bed. He wasn’t in my dormitory ... When the lad who wet the bed was in secondary, he got pushed a bit too far with the name-calling and he threatened to jump off the top floor of the school building. I think the fire brigade had to be called out because he was threatening to jump.⁴²²

While ‘Joe’ was uncertain how much teachers and parents knew about the details of that episode, it seems inconceivable that the cruel emotional abuse of the boy that had preceded the incident was not known about, yet nothing seems to have been done as a result. I consider that ‘Joe’ was over-generous when he said: ‘As far as the peer bullying is concerned, only some of the kids were a problem and it was just their mindset at the time. That’s how it was back then.’⁴²³

The fact that it happened does not mean that it was acceptable, nor does it mean that it did not amount to abuse. Furthermore, it should never have been allowed to become so bad. There were obvious lessons to be learnt but, although QVS was a place for learning, there was no evidence to indicate that the school did so.

The experiences of ‘Felix’ in the 1990s emphasise just how significant QVS’s failures to respond were. The culture remained rotten and allowed emotional abuse to continue. Humiliation provoked by differences was the norm:

420 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.11, paragraph 47.

421 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.12, paragraph 48.

422 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.66–7.

423 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.73.

I have to own up to my part ... There were two boys with differences who, because of their physical appearance, got quite the brunt of it. And did I partake in that? Unfortunately, yes, I did. And again, you know, it was like it was well known and it didn't stop ... it happened for the whole two years that I was in the house with those two individuals.⁴²⁴

Humiliation provoked by differences was the norm.

It was also well known to the staff because the differences were in plain sight and one of the boys played up to the stereotype he had been labelled with in front of them. 'Felix' remembered:

I think [the boy] had muscular dystrophy. So there was something wrong with the cast on his leg so he really struggled to walk. It was also him that had the dietary requirements ... So there was certainly enough different about him that unfortunately gave others excuse to single him out.⁴²⁵

There was, however, no intervention by staff to put a stop to what was obvious abuse. That, it seems, was the QVS approach at the time.

QVS is not the only boarding school where a child's differences made him or her particularly vulnerable to being subjected to damaging emotional abuse. Take, for example, 'Thomas', a scholarship pupil at

Gordonstoun.⁴²⁶ Whilst he was not physically different, he suffered dreadful emotional abuse on account of his social background not being the same as that of other pupils. He was targeted because he wore football shirts; they were not only unfashionable but marked him out 'as poor'.⁴²⁷ He was ridiculed and made to feel inferior on account of his haircut, his accent, his interests, and aspects of his family life that identified him as socially different from others. The outcome was that, as with those who suffered emotional abuse at QVS, he never felt safe.⁴²⁸

Homophobia

At QVS, there was open prejudice towards anyone believed to be homosexual:

The worst thing you could be at that school was gay ... [a boy] walked in the dining hall one day and the older boys started chanting 'Poof', to the extent that the whole school started chanting it to this one poor guy. There were teachers in the room and nothing was done about that.⁴²⁹

At QVS, there was open prejudice towards anyone believed to be homosexual.

'Hector' said he 'never heard anything about sexual abuse between boys in the school. There was such an anti-gay thing in the school that I don't think anyone would have thought about that.'⁴³⁰

424 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.139.

425 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.141.

426 Written statement of 'Thomas' (former pupil, Gordonstoun, 1982-7), at WIT-1-000001244, p.1, paragraph 5.

427 Written statement of 'Thomas' (former pupil, Gordonstoun, 1982-7), at WIT-1-000001244, p.10, paragraph 49.

428 Written statement of 'Thomas' (former pupil, Gordonstoun, 1982-7), at WIT-1-000001244, p.22, paragraphs 106-37.

429 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, pp.21-2, paragraph 68.

430 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.173.

He continued:

I have only accepted in the last two or three years that I am gay or bisexual. The word 'gay' has been a negative thing all my life. There were kids picked on for it and that has been the way it has always been. Anything bad was called 'gay'. You are seen as subhuman.⁴³¹

'Hector' was 46 years old when he provided his evidence.

It is abundantly clear that the school can only have known about the anti-homosexual prejudice that prevailed. Whatever may have been the attitudes at the time, whether in society at large or in the military, this was a matter of children in the residential care of the school who required to be protected from a pernicious form of emotional abuse.

Sectarianism

Although some felt that sectarian divides were not a problem at QVS, that was not the experience of all applicants. 'James' was threatened with being stabbed because he was Catholic.⁴³² He explained: 'There was a sectarian divide at the school. That was the general attitude in Scotland at the time and it permeated through every element of society and so it permeated through the school as well. I was not used to that, having grown up and attended school in Germany.'⁴³³

'Felix' also experienced this. He was taunted for being a Catholic and a Celtic supporter, and his Celtic football shirt was stolen. He saw his experience as another example of

the school's failure to deal with an obvious problem:

In the emotional abuse and the mickey-taking, without a doubt being Catholic was always brought up ... on an Old Firm day, there was no ... getting everyone together to say: 'We appreciate it's an Old Firm match and tensions might be high, but you're all boys together in a school, let the best man win', as it were. So it wasn't addressed ... in any preventive way when there would be flashpoints when that could occur.⁴³⁴

Theft

Theft was a source of emotional abuse at a number of levels for pupils at QVS. Being able to have and cherish a tangible reminder of home is of fundamental importance to many children at boarding school. At QVS, it made children vulnerable and 'theft was common as a form of abuse, if you possessed something you cherished you became a target to have it taken and if you reported that theft, it was likely that you, the victim, would be punished because "there was no theft" at the school'.⁴³⁵

**'If you possessed something
you cherished you became
a target to have it taken.'**

That indicates that, in the late 1960s and 1970s, when 'Hamish' was a pupil at QVS, reputation was prioritised over the interests of the individual child. It also seems

431 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.176.

432 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.107.

433 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.94-5.

434 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.146.

435 [Written statement of 'Hamish'](#) (former pupil, 1968-75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.13, paragraph 54.

Such was the level of his unhappiness that it led to his attempting suicide.

indicative of an arrogant refusal to think the unthinkable. To make matters worse, if an item issued by the school was stolen from a child, then that child, despite being the victim of theft, had to pay for its replacement and was likely to be beaten for the loss. That happened to 'Hamish' on several occasions.⁴³⁶ Gallingly, in both scenarios,

thieves would brazenly display stolen items to their friends and the victim. Naturally, this caused much distress to the victim and if they challenged the thief to return they either received a blow or [were] told that they had to prove it was theirs and in the meantime their friends would support the claim of the thief.⁴³⁷

Another means of abuse 'Hamish' witnessed concerned false allegations of theft when one pupil 'had a rugby ball planted in his locker and the planter got his friends to restrain the victim while he fetched a teacher to show him the victim's locker where he had planted it. That poor lad got six of the belt for that particularly nasty trick.'⁴³⁸

Common to all is a disturbing lack of interest on the part of staff in establishing what was actually happening. Instead, they took the line of least resistance.

By the early 1990s theft was still a problem but at least the headmaster was aware of it and was trying to address it.⁴³⁹

It is, however, important to appreciate that the consequences of the emotional abuse that was part and parcel not only of having one's property stolen but of many forms of bullying at QVS could be and were, in at least one case, quite profound. 'Felix' was the youngest boy in his year and the focus of a course of emotional abuse which essentially led him to believe he was worthless. It had begun in junior school, though while he was there a move from one dorm to another had improved matters. The respite did not last; when he moved up to the senior school, in September 1991, the abuse started again:

It was more like purposely isolating me from activities, doing things – either saying, 'Come along, do this', then saying, 'Actually, no, we don't want you here', or you'd wake up in the morning, they'd go – you wouldn't know where they were, and then if you found them, they'd be like, 'What are you doing here? We don't want you here'. [I was] made to feel that I wasn't an equal person and therefore not ... allowed to be in their presence.⁴⁴⁰

That treatment was ongoing throughout a term, and the theft of 'Felix's' Celtic football shirt, after previous thefts of school equipment, was what he described as 'a bit like the last straw'.⁴⁴¹ Such was the level of his unhappiness that it led to his attempting suicide by jumping off a windowsill with a curtain round his neck.

436 [Written statement of 'Hamish'](#) (former pupil, 1968–75) at WIT-1-000001110, p.13, paragraph 55.

437 [Written statement of 'Hamish'](#) (former pupil, 1968–75) at WIT-1-000001110, p.13, paragraph 56.

438 [Written statement of 'Hamish'](#) (former pupil, 1968–75) at WIT-1-000001110, p.13, paragraph 57.

439 QVS, Letter from headteacher to parent, 20 November 1991, at MOD-000000609, p.6.

440 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989–92), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.141–2.

441 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989–92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.159.

Some members of staff themselves engaged in the emotional abuse of children.

The response by the school both before and after was inadequate. 'Felix' thought Mr Harrison, the housemaster of Cunningham, would not have been aware of what had been happening to him; there was a culture of silence and his door was shut.⁴⁴² That said, 'Felix' also remembered that after his suicide attempt, his father told him Mr Harrison had said that 'bullying was rife and he was trying to sort it but the school wasn't listening'.⁴⁴³ However, in his end-of-term report of December 1991, Mr Harrison made no such reference and simply wrote that 'Felix' was 'made unhappy by having a lot of equipment stolen. Although some equipment may have just been left around. He is trying however to look after his things now. Boys will steal his things. He is one of the good boys in the house but behaves strangely at times.'⁴⁴⁴

Mr Harrison was genuinely concerned by the behaviour of the boys in Cunningham House, and at the lack of response from the school. His concerns led to him writing to parents when he left the school's employment in early December 1991, as discussed further in the [Glenn Harrison](#) chapter.

However, in practice, neither Mr Harrison nor the headmaster, who was of course alerted after 'Felix's' suicide attempt, seem to have done much for the pupil. The return of the stolen football shirt – which simply appeared back on his bed – was somehow

seen as resolving the problem. When asked if anything had been changed by the housemaster prior to his departure, 'Felix' simply said: 'No.'⁴⁴⁵ When asked whether anything had been actively done by anyone to try to address the bullying and the thieving, he said: 'Not that I recall, no.'⁴⁴⁶

It was only in mid-December 1991, and then more fully in 1992, in response to the letter sent by Mr Harrison to parents, that the Board of HM Commissioners acted swiftly by calling the police and HMle.⁴⁴⁷

Emotional abuse by staff

Staff condoned the emotional abuse perpetrated by pupils either by their silence or by punishing those who complained. Some members of staff themselves engaged in the emotional abuse of children. Their conduct included denigrating children and failing to provide pastoral support. For 'James', it was a matter of teachers saying:

'Sit at the back, you'll never amount to anything', and this was said to other people, not just to me. I think I realised how bad things were in Trenchard House when I saw that people were self-harming and doing other things that seemed way over the line, such as breaking into the house tuck shop and stealing food. The way the school dealt with

442 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.151.

443 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.161.

444 QVS, School report for 'Felix', December 1991, at MOD-000000609, p.3.

445 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.166.

446 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.163.

447 See, for example, QVS, Letter to parents from chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, at MOD-000000569, p.5.

pupils displaying this type of behaviour was just to get rid of them, to expel them. There was no underlying attempt to deal with any of the issues.⁴⁴⁸

‘Hamish’ suffered dreadful treatment which, I consider, amounted to emotional abuse when, on a return trip from seeing his parents in Africa, he

fell very ill with a kidney infection and was really in no state to return to the school ... I had to change aircraft in Paris but I collapsed and passed out. The French medics gave me a shot of penicillin and sent me on my way. I slept until landing in Glasgow Airport. The ground staff at the airport arranged a taxi to take me back to school and I arrived after lights out. This really infuriated the Duty Janitor and Duty Teacher on two counts – the first was paying for the taxi out of the cash box for that very purpose then getting me settled back in the dormitory. The following day I reported to the housemaster to tell him what had happened during the trip back and the illness I had suffered. He was only concerned about the cost of the taxi and removed the money from my pocket money account. I had no pocket money for that term. No medical follow up was offered nor any concern shown for my health at all.⁴⁴⁹

The impact of emotional abuse

The impact on those who suffered the emotional abuse that happened at QVS has been wide-ranging in the harm it has caused to applicants, and I am satisfied that it is likely also to have damaged others to similar effects.

‘Hamish’ said:

I certainly wasn’t affectionate enough nor loving enough, which stemmed from fear of rejection and being hurt due to my formative years with my parents and worsened by time at QVS. I feel as if my emotions are locked away and compartmentalised, I tend not to make close friends nor retain relationships ... I also suffered for a very long time from paranoia and anxiety, I was constantly anxious whether I was good enough ... I could never shake off the feeling that someone was out to undermine me or make my life difficult.⁴⁵⁰

‘I’m still conscious of my skin colour and my accent when I go out because of the mental abuse I suffered at school.’

‘Joe’ said:

I’m still conscious of my skin colour and my accent when I go out because of the mental abuse I suffered at school. I’ve always been a bit edgy among strangers and feel more confident and relaxed when I drink. I’ve hit the bottle quite a few times and got very, very drunk and I’ve partied really hard over the years and haven’t done myself any favours ... I’ve sought help for it.⁴⁵¹

‘James’ thought of himself

as stupid for a long, long time because I’d been told that on a regular basis in class. I’d be asked a question, not just myself, but

448 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.111-12.

449 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968-75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.12, paragraphs 50-2.

450 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968-75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.16, paragraphs 71-2.

451 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.69.

‘The worst aspects of emotional bullying may have been slower to be addressed than the physical forms.’

others too, and you’d get it wrong and be berated and made a bit of a fool of. So again, I adapted the same kind of protective issue there, didn’t answer any questions and just kept my head down.⁴⁵²

Establishing pastoral care

Following the inspections of 1991 and 1992 pastoral care slowly became established at QVS. The culture did not change overnight, but the tone appears to have shifted for the better, as did staff response and engagement. ‘Harry’ put it this way:

Was there bullying in S1 to S3? There was the taking of the piss and banter. It was light-hearted fun. If someone called you ‘fatty’, you’d just reply ‘ugly’. There was the odd scrap over something like a chocolate bar, usually because someone had light fingers. Fairly unusual. It might start off out of the view of staff but the housemaster would always end up turning up and would take both of you away for a talking-to. It would usually end up in an apology and whatever had been lifted was returned. The housemaster dealt with it well. I don’t remember any of my year being bullies. We encouraged the younger lads, especially in sport. At most, a few lads had a spiteful tongue. Never any fisticuffs. Bill Webster was my housemaster at the time. He looked after us well. He was ‘dad’.⁴⁵³

However, documents provided by QVS showed that harmful bullying had not been

eradicated as at 2010. In July that year a grandparent wrote to Wendy Bellars, the then head, complaining about a number of matters, one of which was her shock and utter disgust that her grandson had been presented with a certificate which evidently came from other pupils. It read: ‘Congratulations on being the house RETARD’.⁴⁵⁴ Nonetheless, contrary to the past norms, this abusive behaviour was reported and responded to.

The culture did not change overnight, but the tone appears to have shifted for the better.

Conclusions about emotional abuse

QVS acknowledged in closing submissions that

the worst aspects of emotional bullying may have been slower to be addressed than the physical forms ... [‘Felix’s’] comment ... that nobody would have thought to tell the teacher is on its own a very sad one. He spoke to having suffered from extreme physical and emotional bullying, to a culture of discouraging sneaking, as it was known at the school, culminating in ... a suicide attempt and in his leaving the school. Many of the themes in this part culminate in his evidence, and QVS acknowledges the experience and effect of all

452 Written statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1979–86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.11, paragraph 35.

453 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘Harry’ (former pupil, 1988–94), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.183–4.

454 QVS, Letter from grandparent to headteacher, July 2010, at MOD-000000563, p.18.

those incidents upon the pupils and reiterates how sorry it is to everyone whose time was tarnished in that way.⁴⁵⁵

That was emphasised by the current head Donald Shaw when he issued a genuine offer to

[anyone] who has reported abuse during their time at QVS to come and meet with me and get a personal apology and to see what school life is like at QVS nowadays, simply to reassure them that no young person will ever have to go through what they went through during their time with us.⁴⁵⁶

455 [Transcript, day 248](#): Closing submission by counsel for QVS, at TRN-8-000000041, p.47.

456 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.101.

Background

Glenn Harrison was employed at Queen Victoria School from 1 September 1989 as a teacher of physics and science with electronics.⁴⁵⁷ He was soon invited to become a housemaster. He accepted, and on 1 January 1990 was appointed housemaster of Cunningham House, an intermediate boarding house of 60 boys aged between 12 and 15. He lived in the boarding house with his wife and family, and a third of his timetable was thereafter allocated to his duties as a housemaster.

Glenn Harrison delivered a letter of resignation to the school on 20 June 1991, giving six months' notice. He was due to leave QVS on 17 December 1991 but 'the way it unfolded my last day was in fact 13 December 1991'.⁴⁵⁸

In his resignation letter, Glenn Harrison made no mention of any concerns about abuse, nor did he make any allegations of bullying. He simply wrote that he was 'leaving of my own free will' and took the opportunity to 'thank management in the school for their dedication, skill and professionalism;

it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work along with them'.⁴⁵⁹ In a letter to the headmaster, written on 19 June 1991, he wrote: 'I am convinced ... that I am totally UNSUITABLE for this position; I just do not belong here.'⁴⁶⁰

Letters of reference written by headteacher Julian Hankinson, dated 24 September 1991⁴⁶¹ and 10 December 1991,⁴⁶² similarly made no mention of any unhappiness on the part of Mr Harrison and are complimentary. They stated:

at the end of the Summer Term 1991, Mr Harrison indicated that truthfully he had taken on too much - perhaps too soon - and resigned his post as Housemaster with a Term's notice. Mr Harrison is a man of considerable principle and honesty, and he felt that it was not tenable for him to continue as a teacher having resigned as a Housemaster. That was his decision not mine: he has always been most conscientious in that role. He feels, however, that after all he does not fit in to an ethos which he saw as somewhat of a Service establishment, though I hasten to add that all Staff are civilian teachers and such a view is rather personal to him.⁴⁶³

457 QVS, Reference for Mr Harrison, 24 September 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.15.

458 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.57.

459 QVS, Resignation letter of Mr Harrison, 20 June 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.21.

460 QVS, Mr Harrison's letter to headteacher, 19 June 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.23.

461 QVS, Reference for Mr Harrison, 24 September 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.15.

462 QVS, Reference for Mr Harrison, 10 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.29.

463 QVS, Reference for Mr Harrison, 24 September 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.15.

Judging by the evidence provided by the 11 applicants who were at QVS at the same time as Glenn Harrison, his self-assessment that he did not belong at QVS, particularly because he could not fit in with what was, at that time, the QVS ethos, seems to have been accurate.

The lead-up to Glenn Harrison's resignation

Glenn Harrison provided evidence to SCAI in a signed statement accompanied by supplementary documents. Whilst he asked, on arrival at the school, about complaints procedures and was told who to contact for what,⁴⁶⁴ it appears that he never presented a complaint to or raised concerns with the headmaster or the Board of HM Commissioners in relation to the allegations he made later, including those made to parents and the press.⁴⁶⁵ He did raise with Ben Philip, housemaster of Haig House, problems his first-year boys were having with Haig senior boys in correspondence dated 8 December 1991⁴⁶⁶ and 10 December 1991,⁴⁶⁷ but he did not raise the matter with the headmaster or with HM Commissioners. He had also been sending letters to the headteacher explaining that he wanted to talk to him about disturbing statements being made by boys, but he did not, he said,

receive a response beyond being 'told to stop writing him letters and to get on with my job'.⁴⁶⁸

On 4 December 1991 Glenn Harrison wrote a letter to David Miller at Elgin Social Security Office in support of 'Why I resigned my position'.⁴⁶⁹ It appears that he hoped to secure alternative employment in Aberdeenshire. Julian Hankinson learned indirectly that Glenn Harrison had written to David Miller but 'did not know what his letter ... contained'.⁴⁷⁰ On 10 December 1991 Julian Hankinson was informed by a housemaster that Glenn Harrison's 'letter [had] been circulated to all Teaching Staff seeking their support by signature, for its contents'.⁴⁷¹ On 11 December 1991 Julian Hankinson wrote to Glenn Harrison and asked that he stop writing to Mr Miller and inviting support from other colleagues⁴⁷² and to use the proper channels if he had a complaint.⁴⁷³ Glenn Harrison responded to this, saying: 'I am prepared to discuss with you, in the presence of Mr Miller and a member of staff I choose, when I am well and able. This is my final word on the matter'.⁴⁷⁴ This was against a background of his feeling that although he had expressed his fears to the headmaster 'he just treated me as some sort of nut'.⁴⁷⁵ By 13 December 1991 Glenn Harrison had written a letter to

464 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.59.

465 QVS, Letter from Glenn Harrison to parents, 17 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, pp.9-12.

466 QVS, Note from Glenn Harrison to Ben Philip, 8 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.4.

467 QVS, Note from Glenn Harrison to Ben Philip, 10 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.3.

468 [Written statement of Glenn Harrison](#) (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at WIT.001.001.2989, p.13, paragraph 40.

469 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Mr J. Wallace MP, 4 March 1993, at MOD-000000569, p.90.

470 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Mr Miller, 11 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.7.

471 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Mr Miller, 11 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.7.

472 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Glenn Harrison, 11 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.8.

473 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Mr J. Wallace MP, 4 March 1993, at MOD-000000569, p.90.

474 QVS, Letter from Glenn Harrison to headteacher, 12 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.25.

475 [Written statement of Glenn Harrison](#) (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at WIT.001.001.2989, p.24, paragraph 76.

the parents of all Cunningham House boys (see [Appendix H](#)). In it, he made allegations about bullying. A copy of the letter was sent to Julian Hankinson by a parent.⁴⁷⁶ It includes the complaint that Visiting Commissioners 'sadly ... do not see the school as it really is. They are victims of shopfronty.'⁴⁷⁷

The headmaster was appalled when he found out about the letter and wrote to Glenn Harrison, informing him that

Having sought advice ... I have no option but to relieve you of your duties as a Housemaster as from today, handing the House office and appropriate information to myself or Mr Borking. This must take place this afternoon. When you inform me that you are well enough to return to your duties as a teacher, the question of any further steps will be considered.⁴⁷⁸

Glenn Harrison immediately contacted the media and, on the afternoon of 13 December 1991, attended Dunblane police station where he repeated the allegations set out in the letter he had sent to parents.

On 13 December 1991, having sent the letters, Mr Harrison's recollection is that he was telephoned by someone 'who screamed "I will kill you" and hung up', that research material he had compiled had been stolen from his flat, that Ben Philip '[had] told me that I was in deep trouble, that I would be going to prison and the police were coming

for me', and that police officers did arrive and took him to Dunblane police station where nothing was recorded and he 'got the impression they were just there to try and frighten [him]'.⁴⁷⁹

Bullying

It is clear to me that Glenn Harrison had genuinely become very concerned about 'the bullying and abuse of boys by other boys'.⁴⁸⁰ As he saw matters, there was a 'dark side of the school and it began to creep up on me and nobody wanted to know about what was going on'.⁴⁸¹

He alleged that bullying at QVS was widespread and systemic, and his allegations were extensively reported in the media.

The 11 applicants who were at QVS at that time had and still have a very different perception of events. 'Clifton' said: 'It didn't feel at all accurate to me. I couldn't reconcile what I was seeing, reading, with reality at the school'.⁴⁸² He did accept that there was bullying at the school, though not, he thought, to the extent alleged by Glenn Harrison: 'The scale that was being reported in the press ... there was the sense of it supposedly being systemic, it was rife across the whole school at every level, just didn't feel true'.⁴⁸³ He went on:

It was a school filled with boys from nine to 18 years old living in a sort of pressure cooker

476 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Glenn Harrison, at MOD-000000569, p.6.

477 QVS, Letter from Glenn Harrison to parents, 17 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.11.

478 QVS, Letter from headteacher to Glenn Harrison, at MOD-000000569, p.6.

479 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.76-80.

480 QVS, Letter from Glenn Harrison to parents, 17 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.9.

481 [Written statement of Glenn Harrison](#) (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at WIT.001.001.2989, pp.11-12, paragraph 35.

482 [Transcript, day 238](#): 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.47-8.

483 [Transcript, day 238](#): 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.47-8.

‘If necessary changes were made as a result of my letter, then the end justified the means.’

environment. There was no other place to go, so if there were problems they would carry on throughout your time at the school. Everyone had reasons to be upset about any number of things and they would take it out on each other. There was bullying, there was fighting, there was bickering, but not to the extent it was a scandal.⁴⁸⁴

‘Douglas’ said that it ‘certainly wasn’t my experience of the school and I knew nothing about it between the years 1984 and 1993’.⁴⁸⁵

Harry said: ‘In my last year at school I was in Haig House, Ben Philip was the housemaster ... This was when Mr Harrison made his allegations. I don’t think there was any bullying like he described. I didn’t see anything like that.’⁴⁸⁶

‘Peter’ said:

I’m aware there had been allegations in the media that were made by a teacher at QVS of a culture of bullying, but I certainly didn’t witness any and I wasn’t aware of any. I was in Wavell when those allegations came out and perhaps those accusations were the reason they split up Primary 6 and Primary 7. However, when the articles came out, the general feeling of the pupils was confusion about where the allegations had come from.⁴⁸⁷

The perception of staff was, according to ‘John’, also rather different:

There was quite a few staff that had been there when he’d been there and every now and again, I gather, he made – he either wrote to the papers, I think it was, and his allegations would resurface. And that would set up a little bit of chat in the school amongst teachers that knew him. And any time I asked them about what he was saying, the general consensus among the staff – and I mean even the staff who were not totally gung ho with the school – their view was that it was nonsense.⁴⁸⁸

It was *not* all ‘nonsense’. Bullying was still a problem and much of it was abusive, but the findings I can make on the evidence provided to the Inquiry do not go as far as showing that Glenn Harrison’s assessment of its scale was correct. However, his actions did help; changes to the QVS regime were undoubtedly required, as was evident from, for example, the terms of the report following the HMIe inspection of 1992,⁴⁸⁹ and that began to be recognised. Whatever the rights, wrongs, or wisdom of sending the letter to all parents, I accept that it was sent in good faith and it could be said, as Mr Harrison himself observed, that ‘if necessary changes were made as a result of my letter, then the end justified the means’.⁴⁹⁰

484 [Transcript, day 238](#): ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.49.

485 [Written statement of ‘Douglas’](#) (former pupil, 1984–93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.34, paragraph 131.

486 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Harry’ (former pupil, 1988–94), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.184–5.

487 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.137–8.

488 [Transcript, day 240](#): ‘John’ (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.11.

489 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104.

490 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989–91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.87.

Some specific concerns

Glenn Harrison stated:

Part of my duties was to patrol the corridors and dorms at night to catch the boys smoking and drinking. I was also suspicious of the fact that bigger boys from Haig House were coming up and pestering my boys in Cunningham House. I would creep about at all times of the day and night to try and catch them. About 1 a.m. one morning when I was doing one of my checks, I found a boy in the corridor outside Cunningham dorm. This boy was 12 or 13 years old. I can't remember his name. He had no slippers on, which wasn't allowed. He said he was going to the toilet. He was unusually solemn and quiet. It was almost like he was shell-shocked. He went to the toilet and I went into my office. About 20 minutes later he walked past the door. I spoke to him and he said that he couldn't sleep. I reassured him and told him to try and sleep. The next morning I again went out on one of my patrols and I heard in the distance a commotion in the corridor outside Cunningham House dorm. By the time I got there the same boy I had seen the night before was standing facing the wall. I never saw anyone else. I asked him what he was doing and he said he was being punished. He was upset so I took him back to my office. He said he couldn't tell me who it was that was punishing him or why. He said that if he told anyone 'they' would come and get him. He said he wouldn't even tell his mother. I again assured him ... I checked up on the boy a few days later and he just said the same thing to me. He wouldn't tell me what had happened.⁴⁹¹

'Hector' confirmed that Glenn Harrison did 'creep about':

The only adult that we thought was creeping about was the Cunningham housemaster, Glenn Harrison. He seemed to walk around a lot more than any teacher there. Maybe he had genuine concerns, but I never saw anything strange in the dorms whatsoever ... I think Glenn Harrison's heart was in the right place. Teachers would do a patrol while you were in bed and they did their rounds, that was normal, but he seemed to do that often ... Whether he was right or wrong, I think he really was concerned. Because he went round all the time, we used to set traps for him. We'd put empty tin cans in a row so he would trip over them. We just had a laugh about it ... At the time we thought that the way Glenn Harrison went round more than the other duty teachers was funny. He never approached you in bed and there was no talk of that. I have read stuff online about Glenn Harrison having written letters to parents talking about abuse. At the time, I knew nothing about it.⁴⁹²

'Clifton' had

a vague sense that he was a bit paranoid. I don't know why. I think it was because he - he knew that he was being taken advantage of by the boys and that he was that laughing stock, and it must have rankled and felt very uncomfortable for him. And, yeah, just increasingly he just seemed to be very unhappy about being there ... nobody respected him at all ... everybody just wanted to take advantage of him. He wasn't seen as strong.⁴⁹³

491 [Written statement of Glenn Harrison](#) (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at WIT.001.001.2989, p.10, paragraph 29.

492 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-00000002, pp.172-3.

493 [Transcript, day 238](#): 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.47-8.

'Douglas' said:

Some teachers had the absolute respect of the boys but others didn't. Glenn Harrison just didn't fit in. It's hard to not sound impolite but he just wasn't right for the school and should never have been placed in the school ... He just didn't have command over the boys.⁴⁹⁴

'Felix' said:

You know, he wasn't a warm pastoral person that you would probably want presiding over a house full of young children, but he also wasn't mean. He wasn't volatile. He was just a bit socially awkward. And so some of the conversations would be a bit abrupt and a bit strange, but he would kind of sort of say his point and walk off.⁴⁹⁵

The demeanour described by 'Felix' seems likely to have been what Julian Hankinson had also observed and referred to when he wrote in references for Glenn Harrison: 'He is a pleasant, likeable colleague, though sometimes displaying some nervousness which could be construed in QVS as the strain of trying to do both jobs (teacher and headmaster) well and conscientiously.'⁴⁹⁶

This also fits with Glenn Harrison's self-assessment that he was unsuited to the position.

The QVS response

The school took Glenn Harrison's allegations seriously. On 13 December 1991 the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners wrote to all parents of pupils at QVS advising that 'without prejudging anything, it would seem to me wise to initiate an independent inquiry'.⁴⁹⁷

Concerns regarding discipline and behaviour had been reported during the previous year by either the headmaster or a Visiting Commissioner⁴⁹⁸ and had been the subject of repeated discussions at meetings of the Board of HM Commissioners as a whole. In March 1991 Mr Hankinson had recorded:

Discipline: As this matter had been raised with two successive Visiting Commissioners the Headmaster felt it should be covered in some detail. Problems were caused by a minority. Noted by Visiting Commissioner that removal of corporal punishment meant that there was no longer a clear line which boys knew they should not cross. There was no turning back and this must be accepted by all.⁴⁹⁹

In October 1991 the Visiting Commissioner had recorded 'problems with morale and discipline of boys' and that 'staff expressed that with the passing of corporal punishment, there was a limit to the number of sanctions at their disposal to deal with the persistent

494 Written statement of 'Douglas' (former pupil, 1984-93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.31, paragraph 116.

495 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.165.

496 QVS, Reference for Mr Harrison, 24 September 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.16.

497 QVS, Letter to parents from chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, at MOD-000000569, p.5. See also [Appendix H](#).

498 Oversight by HM Commissioners for QVS included and includes Visiting Commissioner visits at least once each year and possibly twice; two Commissioners visit – often with a particular purpose in mind – and prepare a report for the Board of HM Commissioners following their visit; see [Transcript, day 218](#): Alan Plumtree (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at TRN-8-000000009, p.59.

499 QVS, Minutes of Meeting of HM Commissioners, 11 March 1991, at MOD-000000072, p.663.

offenders. The view was expressed that there would be value in having smaller pastoral units.⁵⁰⁰

These matters were to be discussed at the next meeting of the Board; the school was aware of problems and was listening to staff – who were already thinking of the need for improvement in pastoral care – and the head was open to change despite there being ‘a number of diehards, who saw no need whatever for change’.⁵⁰¹

The head was open to change despite there being ‘a number of diehards, who saw no need whatever for change’.

The school was true to its word about an independent inquiry. On 16 December 1991 a team of five police officers arrived to take statements from the boys of Cunningham House, while on 17 December 1991 two HM Inspectors of Education (HMI) attended the school ‘to investigate the circumstances and make a recommendation as to future action’.⁵⁰²

‘Felix’ described what happened:

There was a big response ... one day there was, you know, a big furore, as it were, and all of a sudden we’re getting pulled out of class, we’re needing to kind of form up into queues because we need to speak to some people

who at the time I thought were from the police about anything that’s been going on in the school.⁵⁰³

‘Barry’ recalled having to speak with inspectors from HMIE:

Five or ten pupils from each year group were selected to speak to the Inspectorate and I was taken aside and asked various questions. I was asked what the routine was like and whether there were any problems. I was never spoken to by the police and I’m not sure of the outcome, however I don’t think there was any evidence of bullying ... The school did change and probably for the better. It was a tough school and, although in my experience there was no bullying, it became a more open and welcoming place. We mixed more amongst the year groups and girls were then allowed to attend the school.⁵⁰⁴

On 20 December 1991 the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners wrote again to the parents of pupils at QVS advising that

the Police, having interviewed every boy in Cunningham House, have concluded their enquiries and do not intend returning to the School. They have reported that in their view nothing of serious consequence had transpired and that any incidents which had been reported had been dealt with internally and recorded. Equally they said that a number of the allegations were just rumour and lacked substance. Her Majesty’s Inspector of Schools in Scotland have also visited the School and are now considering whether they wish to

500 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 29 October 1991, at MOD-000000072, pp.650-1.

501 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992-2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.118.

502 QVS, Letter to HM Commissioners, 20 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.69.

503 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Felix’ (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.169.

504 [Written statement of ‘Barry’](#) (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.16, paragraphs 83-6.

return to advise on purely the pastoral care and supervision. I will be encouraging them to do this as I believe it will give reassurance to parents and good advice to myself and the Commissioners.⁵⁰⁵

There followed an inspection of QVS by HMIs on which they reported in 1992. They recommended that the school 'would benefit from a new appointment on the pastoral front',⁵⁰⁶ and Alice Hailey was appointed as assistant head (pastoral) on 31 August 1992.

Glenn Harrison's other concerns

Trips and masonic influence

The letter to parents, set out in [Appendix H](#), did not make any mention of an allegation that subsequently attracted much press attention, namely that boys were being taken out on 'mysterious trips'⁵⁰⁷ during which, Glenn Harrison inferred, sexual abuse was taking place. Nor did it refer to masonic influence, to Thomas Hamilton⁵⁰⁸ (who, although he had not actually seen him there, he believed to have been a regular visitor to the school), or to there having been a paedophile ring whose activities were connected in some way to people he referred to as the 'Friends of QVS'. All are matters about which Glenn Harrison was and is deeply concerned and, convinced that something abusive was happening to boys when on trips, has written about and reported at some length.

He stated:

There were other trips, however, that were organised by Brigadier Tweedy. There was no schedule written down giving details about these organised excursions. Brigadier Tweedy would just phone me and tell me. He would say that selected boys were going out that night or the next night and command myself and the matron to make sure the boys were ready by 7 o'clock or whatever time he said. He would also tell me what equipment they needed to take with them. I was never made aware of their destination or the purpose of their trip. I can't remember if he handed me a list of the boys' names or if he told me on the phone. I have no idea if the Brigadier filled out forms for his trips. I never checked in the office to find out if the completed forms were held there for the Brigadier's trips. I remember asking where they were going and what time they would be back. The Brigadier told me that I didn't need to know. It was my job to make sure all the boys got back safely so that meant I would have to wait up until they got home. I challenged the Brigadier before they went because the boys had school the next day but that made no difference. As far as I was aware, the boys were going to be dancing and it was always the good dancers who were picked to go. This happened several times but I am not sure if these were on school nights or at the weekend. They would either leave in a minibus which would hold 10 to 12 boys or four or five in a car. There were usually about six boys from my house that went. I can only

505 QVS, Letter to parents from the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 20 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, p.70. See also [Appendix H](#).

506 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hailey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992-2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.118.

507 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.8.

508 Thomas Hamilton massacred 16 children at Dunblane Primary School on 13 March 1996 and injured 15 others before killing himself.

say that the boys who were in my house didn't stay out overnight when they went on these trips. I would check when they came back and count them in. I had a list of the boys' names that went out. I did this even if I was not on duty. I remember speaking to the other housemasters about these trips so assume that they must have sent boys too. They just told me that these trips happened and I shouldn't worry. I wasn't reassured by this. I didn't see boys from other houses going.⁵⁰⁹

Glenn Harrison thinks that boys were being abused. His belief seems to flow from some jokey comments made by boys in the showers:

I was on shower duty the day after one of these excursions. When the boys showered, myself or the matron had to be near the showers in case of any accidents. The boys knew we were there. When I was there, I heard the boys say things like, 'Did he feel your bum?' or 'Had he had his hands on your bum?' And the other boy said something about playing with someone's willy. They were laughing and joking about it and not being serious. They were not upset. I assumed the boys were talking about what had happened the night before. I never heard any mention of the big house. When they came out of the shower I asked them if they had a good time the previous night and one of them grunted something like 'Up your bum' and I said 'Pardon?' and he made a jeering noise. I didn't share that with anyone at this point but as usual recorded this in my notes. I can't remember any other similar conversations like this.⁵¹⁰

No other evidence has been provided to the Inquiry to the effect that there was anything mysterious about these trips or from which I could infer that something sinister was happening. 'Keith' said:

I never experienced or saw anything of that nature. If there were trips out from school, they were enjoyable. Some boys did go away as individuals, normally associated with pipe band activity or Remembrance Day. Any trips I went on as part of a smaller group were associated with pipe band activity with either one of the teachers or the school pipe major.⁵¹¹

'Clifton' said: 'I don't know of anybody ever being taken out in the evenings by anyone they weren't expecting to take them out. No, never.'⁵¹²

'Hector' said: 'I have read online that he's saying people came to the school to collect boys in cars, but I never heard or saw anything like that. You only went away with relatives.'⁵¹³

'Douglas' said:

I have read some of the accusations Glenn Harrison has made in the media and online. He says things like pupils were taken away, told to wear clean underwear and were coming back flush with cash. When I read those things they were a million miles away from my experiences. It was a small school. If something happened in one dorm then everybody would know about it. That went for both the junior and the senior sides of the

509 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.64.

510 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989-91), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.65-6.

511 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Keith' (former pupil, 1983-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.181.

512 [Transcript, day 238](#): 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.47-8.

513 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.173.

'He felt there was a high level conspiracy that everyone was involved in.'

school. People would know about whatever happened. If the sort of things Glenn Harrison claims were happening then we would have known about it. You absolutely would have heard something but myself and my friends know nothing about those sort of things happening.⁵¹⁴

He went on: 'If things were happening then it wasn't something I was aware of and that was not my experience at the school.'⁵¹⁵

'James' said:

I was aware of my housemaster at Cunningham House, Mr Glenn Harrison, being removed from his post following his making a statement about allegations of bullying and sexual abuse at the school. His allegations included the alleged involvement of VIPs and Masons. He claimed children were being ferried away. He felt there was a high level conspiracy that everyone was involved in. My response to that at the time was that I was mystified by the allegations he was making. These certainly weren't my experience but those were the allegations he went public with. I am not debunking what he said but as someone who was there at the time that is not something I would identify with. I only know for certainty what happened to me.⁵¹⁶

'John' said:

I was at the school at that time and it wasn't pleasant when all of that ended up in the

papers. I have no idea where his allegations came from. I never experienced anything like that or witnessed anything like that. I cannot see how boys could have been whisked away in secret. I have no recollection of anyone going away for a night with a member of staff. I was interviewed by the police – we all were – with my parents present. I do not think any charges were brought.⁵¹⁷

'Felix' said: 'I was never approached, I was never asked, and none of my friends that I knew of were asked or approached to go off site.'⁵¹⁸

Very fairly, 'Felix' added, when asked if he would have been aware if pupils were going out on a regular basis:

I think we would, but – no, I'm going to retract that. We might be close-knit, but equally, knowing the power dynamics of abusive relationships, if you were a child that was being taken away in the middle of the night, and given that you were told not to grass even if you were just hit by another school lad, I doubt you would be telling anybody when you came back to the school ... so I am not able to categorically say whether that happened or not. What I don't want to be on the record as saying because it was close-knit I would have known, because actually knowing what I know now about the dynamics of abusive relationships, I imagine if anybody was, they probably wouldn't be coming back to the school to say what had happened.⁵¹⁹

514 [Written statement of 'Douglas'](#) (former pupil, 1984-93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.31, paragraph 117.

515 [Written statement of 'Douglas'](#) (former pupil, 1984-93), at WIT-1-000000991, p.32, paragraph 119.

516 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.106-7.

517 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'John' (former pupil, 1989-96), at TRN-8-000000029, p.189.

518 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.175.

519 [Transcript, day 237](#): 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.175.

'Felix' made a valid point. However, it remains the position that there is no basis in the evidence provided to the Inquiry which would enable me to conclude that something untoward was happening to boys when they were taken on these trips.

One applicant who came forward after the oral hearings did confirm the existence of a group referred to as the 'Friends of QVS' but his description did not support the drawing of any inference that there was something sinister about its activities. And there was no evidence that the group had any formal or recognised status. All that 'Noah' was able to say was:

The Friends of QVS was a very real thing. I don't know who they were, or what they were about, but I remember it being a thing during my time in Wavell and around the time of you having your confirmation. If your family was not there for your confirmation someone from the Friends of QVS would come along and take the boy out for the day afterwards. On my confirmation day, another boy ... and I didn't have parents present so we were taken out by the headmaster, Julian Hankinson, and his wife. Other boys were taken out by other adults from the Friends of QVS to different places. I couldn't say what checks, if any, were undertaken as part of that. I don't know what happened with those boys when they were out but the Friends of QVS was definitely something I was aware of.⁵²⁰

Nor has any evidence been provided to the inquiry that Thomas Hamilton was involved with QVS pupils although I was made aware of suspicions to that effect being harboured and placed before HM Commissioners.⁵²¹

Documentary evidence suggests he was invited to attend QVS as a possible .22 coach at the rifle range in 1980 but was told he was not required. Julian Hankinson wrote that 'Mr Hamilton never visited the school again, nor was he in contact with QVS pupils'.⁵²²

Conclusions

Glenn Harrison had the best interests of the pupils in mind when he wrote to parents about abusive behaviour by older boys in December 1991. He did so in good faith. It was not a malicious act on his part. He did not use any formal complaints or whistleblowing procedures, but he could be regarded as an example of a whistleblower. His letter led to an immediate response from the school, demonstrating the genuine concern about the welfare of the children in their care. That, in turn, drove significant change at QVS in terms of improved pastoral care and supervision.

He could be regarded as an example of a whistleblower.

The manner in which Mr Harrison approached matters, however, was ill-judged. It was very unlikely to result in the school engaging with him collaboratively and, although QVS did in fact listen and respond, his letter ran the risk of being dismissed as an extreme outburst by a departing member of staff. It supports his own assessment that he did not fit in at QVS and also shows that he was distressed and under considerable

520 Written statement of 'Noah' (former pupil, 1984-90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.27, paragraph 95.

521 See MOD-000000266, at pp.133 and 186, and, for an example of a reply from HM Commissioners, p.229.

522 See MOD-000000266, at p.133.

stress. It would have been better had he used other channels to raise his concerns within the school, and it is striking that similar concerns had already been raised by the headmaster and HM Commissioners earlier in 1991.

Since 1991 there has been some continuing media interest in the matters raised by Glenn Harrison. Against that background, Wendy Bellars, headteacher at QVS in 2007 – some 16 years after Glenn Harrison had left the school – explained that she had on occasion addressed the pupils about the importance of reporting concerns:

It's always sad to see the school that you lead have aspersions cast upon it publicly, but it did give me the opportunity to remind the children again that nothing was more important than their safety and that there were people – there were lots of people – to whom they could talk and it was important that they chose a person with whom they felt comfortable and didn't stay quiet. So, no, I wouldn't say it caused difficulties. It caused unhappiness, but I turned it into an opportunity, I hope.⁵²³

I have no reason to think that her hope was other than well-founded.

523 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.122.



'Mark', 'Grant', and 'John': investigations into allegations of inappropriate conduct involving female pupils

'Mark'

In 2002 rumours were circulating in the school suggesting that a teacher, 'Mark', was engaging in inappropriate conduct with a sixth-year pupil, 'Lisa'.

In March 2002 Mr Carroll, the housemaster of Trenchard House, spoke to 'Mark' to advise him to stop going into ["Lisa's"] room and to express concerns about the contents of a birthday card message, which were inappropriate'.⁵²⁴

In May 2002 the headteacher, Brian Raine, received an anonymous letter in which it was alleged that 'Mark', and two other teachers, were conducting inappropriate relationships with senior female pupils.

In relation to the allegations about 'Mark', Brian Raine and Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), interviewed witnesses. These included 'Lisa', who 'stated that nothing had happened' and 'Mark' himself, 'who was adamant that he had done nothing wrong',⁵²⁵ and no further action was taken by QVS. However, in November 2004 Central Scotland

Police began investigating them; they had 'received several allegations in relation to various incidents which had occurred at the school'.⁵²⁶

'Lisa' was not the source of the complaint. Central Scotland Police interviewed her and she 'reluctantly admitted that she had had a relationship with "Mark" while she was a sixth-form pupil at the school'.⁵²⁷

Central Scotland Police appear to have accepted that 'Lisa' was over 18 at the time of the relationship she admitted having had with 'Mark'. He, on the other hand, has never admitted having had an inappropriate relationship with 'Lisa', saying that there 'was no inappropriate relationship'.⁵²⁸

On 6 January 2005 Central Scotland Police wrote to Mr D. MacLehose, the then chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, reporting their concerns. Within a week, by letter dated 14 January 2005,⁵²⁹ 'Mark' was 'suspended from duty as a precaution pending the outcome of Departmental enquiries'.⁵³⁰ An internal review was carried out by the MOD which concluded that there

524 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.14.

525 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.179.

526 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.8.

527 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.8.

528 [Written statement of 'Mark'](#) (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998-2006), at WIT-1-000000534, p.29, paragraph 115.

529 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.8.

530 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.8.

The school committed itself to any reference being in terms that would refrain from disclosing that there had been any child protection concerns.

would appear to be sufficient evidence to indicate that [‘Mark’], either deliberately or intentionally, failed to maintain the appropriate professional boundary of teacher/pupil relationship in his dealings with [‘Lisa’]. There are independent witnesses who saw ‘Mark’ in [her] room and considered that they spent too much unnecessary time in each other’s company until she left school in June 2002.⁵³¹

The review recommended that a ‘formal MOD disciplinary charge be raised against [“Mark”], which encompasses the full range of allegations that he had an inappropriate relationship with [“Lisa”], while she was a sixth-year pupil at the school’.⁵³²

The recommendation was accepted by the MOD, and ‘Mark’ was invited to attend a disciplinary hearing which took place at QVS on 22 and 23 June 2005. The allegations against him were:

Having behaved in an inappropriate manner in your dealings with [‘Lisa’] and;

Having conducted an inappropriate relationship with [‘Lisa’].⁵³³

‘Mark’ participated in the hearing. The outcome was a recommendation, dated 14 October 2005, that he should be

dismissed.⁵³⁴ Brian Raine did not agree with the recommendation and, by letter dated 16 December 2005,⁵³⁵ the MOD agreed with ‘Mark’ that there should be further investigations. As explained in a letter dated 12 January 2006, this included obtaining further statements from ‘Lisa’ and Evelyn Smith.⁵³⁶

‘Mark’ resigned on 13 January 2006 prior to the conclusion of the internal MOD disciplinary process and subsequently raised employment tribunal proceedings against QVS. On 19 January 2007 QVS entered into a compromise agreement with ‘Mark’, which brought the tribunal proceedings to an end.⁵³⁷ One of its conditions was that QVS would respond to any requests for a reference in agreed terms. These included that QVS would make no mention of the allegations that had been made against ‘Mark’; they would simply advise of the roles he carried out when employed at QVS and the dates of his employment.⁵³⁸ In other words, the school committed itself to any reference being in terms that would refrain from disclosing that there had been any child protection concerns, or concerns about his failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with senior female pupils, whether alleged or otherwise. Further, as matters unfolded, ‘Mark’ felt under no

531 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.14.

532 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.16.

533 QVS, Hearing officer recommendations, 14 October 2005, at MOD-000000154, p.7.

534 QVS, Hearing officer recommendations, 14 October 2005, at MOD-000000154, p.8.

535 QVS, Letter from Command Secretary, MOD, 12 January 2006, at MOD-000000170, p.1.

536 QVS, Letter from Command Secretary, MOD, 12 January 2006, at MOD-000000170, p.1.

537 QVS, Compromise agreement between QVS and ‘Mark’, 19 January 2007, at MOD-000000217, p.3.

538 QVS, Compromise agreement between QVS and ‘Mark’, 19 January 2007, at MOD-000000217, p.10.

obligation to do so himself, even when applying for another teaching job.

On 27 November 2006 the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) began a process to determine whether or not 'Mark' was fit to practise as a teacher.⁵³⁹ Five charges were brought against him. They were:

That you did, between 1 March 2002 and 30 June 2002, while a teacher at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, have an inappropriate relationship with 'Lisa', then a pupil of said school, and in particular in respect of said relationship you did:

1. On her 19th birthday, send her a card with a message which was inappropriate for a teacher to send to a pupil;
2. On return from Easter Holidays in 2002, hug [her] and make comments to her which were inappropriate for a teacher-pupil relationship;
3. Repeatedly visit her room on your own, during which visits you sat on her bed, kissed her, and had inappropriate sexual contact with her;
4. Visit Edinburgh with her alone;
5. On Grand Day Night 2002 go with [her] to a hotel where you had consensual sexual intercourse with her.

It is alleged that the foregoing facts represent relevant misconduct.⁵⁴⁰

'Mark' was invited, on 6 May 2008, to attend a disciplinary hearing⁵⁴¹ at which the charges

were to be considered. He chose not to attend, and so the charges were considered in his absence. By letter dated 18 June 2008⁵⁴² 'Mark' was informed that the GTCS had decided that all five charges were found to have been proved and that they amounted to relevant misconduct: 'Members considered that this had been a continuing, escalating and improper relationship over a significant period of time. When taken in context the behaviour outlined in each one of the charges plainly constituted misconduct.'⁵⁴³

The GTCS determined 'to direct the Registrar to remove the Respondent's ["Mark's"] name from the Register'.⁵⁴⁴ 'Mark' did not appeal their decision or their determination. His name was removed from the register of teachers in Scotland and has not since been restored.

Leaving aside the matter of 'Mark's' conduct, three aspects of the above events are worthy of comment. The first relates to policy and procedures; the second to 'Mark's' employment after he had resigned; and the third to the length of time it took to conclude all processes.

In May 2002, when the anonymous letter landed on Brian Raine's desk, had QVS followed its own written policies and procedures⁵⁴⁵

- the matter would have been reported to the child protection co-ordinator (CPC)

539 Letter from GTC, 27 November 2006, at GTC-000000083, p.39.

540 Findings of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the GTC, 18 June 2008, at GTC-000000102, p.1.

541 Notice of proceedings, 6 May 2008, at GTC-000000083, p.46.

542 Findings of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the GTC, 18 June 2008, at GTC-000000102, p.1.

543 Findings of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the GTC, 18 June 2008, at GTC-000000102, p.2.

544 Findings of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the GTC, 18 June 2008, at GTC-000000102, p.2.

545 QVS, Pastoral Staff Handbook, December 1999, at MOD-000000049, p.15.

- the CPC would then have collated ‘all relevant information held by the school on the child’⁵⁴⁶
- the CPC would have held a co-ordination meeting involving relevant members of staff and the headmaster
- at the conclusion of the co-ordination meeting a decision would have been made about whether there were concerns that required a referral to the social work department
- minutes of the co-ordination meeting would have been kept together with a record of the reasons for the decision to refer or not to refer
- the headmaster would have sent a brief report of the incident to the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners
- the allegations against the member of staff would have been intimated as soon as possible to the parents and guardians of the child concerned, even if they were felt to be unfounded.

These were the steps set out in a handbook published by the school in 1999; whatever the terms of the steps set out in that handbook or similar guidance as at 2002, it is reasonable to infer that they would have been at least as rigorous. But there is no evidence that this or any similar process was in fact followed. The internal review by the MOD in 2005 had stated that ‘there remains a general lack of awareness in some of the staff interviewed about the procedures and their application in QVS’, and some staff members interviewed at the preliminary investigation stage seemed to be unaware even of the existence of the CPC.

Ultimately, ‘Mark’ left the school and it could be said that any risk he posed to the then current pupils was removed. But that is beside the point. The failure to follow a clear prescribed process created a risk that he might not have departed.

I am driven to repeat an important observation that I have already made in these and other case study findings: written policies and procedures are all very well – and important – but they are never, of themselves, enough. They need to be known about and properly understood by all those to whom they relate, and they must be applied consistently in a way that creates and maintains a child-safe culture.

**Written policies and procedures
are all very well – and
important – but they are never,
of themselves, enough.**

From the point of view of the children entitled to protection, the need for clear policies and procedures which are understood and embedded in staff practices is obvious. ‘Mark’ was not well treated by the school either. When he learned of the allegations, he was ‘just in this absolute turmoil of emotions ... but it just felt there wasn’t support for me ... you were just on this tsunami of a process and I didn’t know who to contact’.⁵⁴⁷ In the event, the truth of the background to his resignation was not disclosed, which was hardly in the interests of children beyond QVS.

546 QVS, Pastoral Staff Handbook, December 1999, at MOD-000000049, p.16.

547 [Transcript, day 239](#): ‘Mark’ (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.72.

It shows how a person who may properly be regarded as unsuitable to work with children may be able to do so.

After resigning from his role at QVS, 'Mark' secured employment as a teacher with Falkirk Council. He did not disclose the allegations to Falkirk Council or that the background to his resignation was that he had left under a cloud. Further, Falkirk Council did not seek references from previous employers prior to appointing 'Mark' as a teacher at one of its schools. Whilst QVS, if it had kept to the terms of the compromise agreement that brought an end to 'Mark's' employment tribunal claim, would not have issued anything other than the bland and brief reference I have referred to above, it seems unlikely that Falkirk Council would have refrained from making further enquiries, including of 'Mark'. That combination of failures in their respective duties had the potential to expose children to risk, as was later recognised by Falkirk Council. They learnt of the allegations and then suspended 'Mark' on 3 October 2007. In a letter to GTCS, Falkirk Council wrote:

Falkirk Council Education Services has no option at this time other than to suspend ['Mark'] from his teaching duties until such time as an investigation has been carried out. The concerns which are the reason for the suspension are in relation to child protection matters and to the safety and wellbeing of pupils within Falkirk Council schools, in particular ... [those] who are in the care of ['Mark'].⁵⁴⁸

The circumstances surrounding 'Mark's' resignation enabled him to seek further employment as a teacher without restriction

or disclosure of its troubling background, despite the GTCS being aware of the allegation in November 2006.

'Mark' said, by way of explanation:

I was unemployed in a profession I absolutely adored and so I was trying to secure a future for us as a family, and if a question was asked I would have answered it ... hoping or just probably desperate for a job to try and keep things alive for us as a family ... I think at that stage I thought, well, I haven't done anything wrong, I'm quite within my rights to apply and continue - continue teaching.⁵⁴⁹

That mindset - unsurprising but devoid of any regard for child protection - is illustrative of exactly what can happen in such circumstances. It shows how a potential employer may be deprived of relevant information to enable them to judge for themselves whether or not they should employ the person to work with children. It shows how a person who may properly be regarded as unsuitable to work with children may be able to do so. 'Mark' should have disclosed the background to his resignation to Falkirk Council at the time of his application. And it is alarming that he was able to secure employment as a teacher from a local authority without it seeking references, whether orally or in writing.

'Grant'

In the anonymous letter of May 2002 there was also an allegation made against 'Grant'. It

548 Letter from Falkirk Council, 4 October 2007, at GTC-000000083, p.48.

549 [Transcript, day 239](#): 'Mark' (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, pp.89-90.

stated: 'I also have knowledge of a very tight sexual relationship with ["Grant"] ... I have heard of occasions in which sexual acts have occurred inside [a classroom], again with the door firmly locked.'⁵⁵⁰

As in the case of 'Mark', Brian Raine and Evelyn Smith interviewed witnesses about the allegation. Those interviews included 'Grant' and a sixth-year pupil, who both 'categorically denied the allegations'.⁵⁵¹ No further action was taken by QVS. Again, as in the case of 'Mark', the allegations were revived in November 2004, this time by Central Scotland Police who 'received several allegations in relation to various incidents which had occurred at the school'.⁵⁵²

Again, the sixth-form pupil was not the source. Central Scotland Police interviewed the pupil, 'who admitted that she had had a relationship with ["Grant"] while she was a pupil at the school'.⁵⁵³ They established that she was under the age of 18 at that time. 'Grant' denied having had a relationship with her when she was a pupil, but accepted that a relationship began with her after she had left school.⁵⁵⁴ In evidence he provided to the Inquiry, 'Grant' stated that when interviewed by the police, he 'denied the allegation but agreed that a relationship initiated by the ex-pupil had taken place for around a year to late 2003'.⁵⁵⁵ It seems that, whatever happened between them, 'Grant' must at least have been overstepping the professional boundaries that he should

have regarded as non-negotiable limits to his relationship with the girl whilst she was still a pupil. Also, it seems highly unlikely that the relationship to which he admitted suddenly formed after the girl left the school without him having prepared the ground for it before then.

On 6 January 2005 Central Scotland Police wrote to Mr D. MacLehose, then chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, reporting that

over the last two months officers from my Family Unit have been conducting investigations at Queen Victoria School. This has, amongst other things, involved allegations that in the years 2000/2001 two male members of the school staff had been engaged in inappropriate relationships with two female sixth year pupils ... Whilst enquiries are at this stage still ongoing it is our intention at the conclusion of the investigation to report these circumstances to the Procurator Fiscal at Stirling.⁵⁵⁶

By letter dated 14 January 2005, 'Grant' was suspended while police investigations were ongoing.⁵⁵⁷ As with 'Mark', the MOD carried out an internal review which recommended 'that the allegations are addressed and the evidence tested through the disciplinary procedures'.⁵⁵⁸ The recommendation was accepted by the MOD and 'Grant' was invited to attend a disciplinary hearing.⁵⁵⁹ The allegations were:

550 QVS, Letter to school, May 2002, at MOD-000000166, p.2.

551 QVS, Report of preliminary investigation, 22 June 2005, at MOD-000000205, p.1.

552 Report of preliminary investigation, 19 April 2005, at GTC-000000083, p.8.

553 QVS, Report of preliminary investigation, 22 June 2005, at MOD-000000205, p.2.

554 QVS, Report of preliminary investigation, 22 June 2005, at MOD-000000205, p.2.

555 [Written statement of 'Grant'](#) (teacher, 1996-present), at WIT-1-000000472, p.15, paragraph 88.

556 QVS, Letter from Police Scotland, 6 January 2005, at MOD-000000473.

557 QVS, Report of preliminary investigation, 22 June 2005, at MOD-000000205.

558 QVS, Report of preliminary investigation, 22 June 2005, at MOD-000000205.

559 QVS, Letter from headteacher, 28 July 2005, at MOD-000000278, p.1.

Between summer term 2001 and 29 June 2002, as a teacher and person in a position of trust, it is alleged that you had an inappropriate relationship with [the pupil] whilst she was a fifth and sixth year pupil at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane. In accordance with the MOD Personnel Manual Volume 5, Discipline, I am therefore required to charge you with the disciplinary offences of:

- a. Having behaved in an inappropriate manner in your dealings with [her]; and
- b. Having conducted an inappropriate relationship with [her].

These are contrary to the standard of behaviour and professional conduct expected of a teacher and fall into the category of gross misconduct.⁵⁶⁰

The disciplinary hearing took place on 4 and 5 October 2005. 'Grant' participated in the hearing. The subsequent report stated:

After considerable deliberation and discussion the Hearing has concluded that it cannot be sure that inappropriate sexual activity did not take place between 'Grant' and [the pupil] whilst she was a pupil at QVS. The Hearing is quite clear however that for Charge A, 'Grant' did behave in an inappropriate manner in his dealings with [the pupil], in that despite the warning from a colleague and in the face of rumour and speculation about 'Grant' and [the pupil], he failed to recognise or blatantly ignored the position in which he was placing himself and the school. This was a definite error of judgment. The Hearing considers that the penalty of this charge [is] included in Charge B.

Charge B, i.e. conducted an inappropriate relationship with [the pupil], was far more difficult to determine. However given [her] statement to the police coupled with the inconsistencies of events, 'Grant' did have an inappropriate relationship with [the pupil]. Given the seriousness of this offence coupled with Charge A, the Hearing recommends that 'Grant' should be dismissed.⁵⁶¹

That recommendation was not, however, accepted by MOD Land Forces Secretariat, which determined:

on the first disciplinary offence, namely that you have behaved in an inappropriate manner in your dealings with [the pupil] that the charge is proven and that you should be awarded a penalty of reprimand. On the second offence, that you conducted an inappropriate relationship with [the pupil] I have decided on the balance of probabilities that the charge is not proven.⁵⁶²

'Grant' returned to work as a teacher at QVS on 29 November 2006.

The same observations as were made in relation to 'Mark' about adherence to policies and procedures were repeated, and the comments I have made above in relation to that matter apply equally.

Turning to the length of time it took to conclude all processes, 'Grant' was suspended for almost two years, from January 2005 until November 2006. As with 'Mark', 'Grant' was referred to the GTCS who commenced its own process to determine whether he was fit to continue practising as a teacher. He was invited to attend a

⁵⁶⁰ QVS, Letter from headteacher, 20 July 2005, at MOD-000000278, p.1.

⁵⁶¹ QVS, Disciplinary hearing recommendations, at MOD-000000295, p.7.

⁵⁶² QVS, Letter from MOD, 21 November 2006, at MOD-000000304, p.1.

disciplinary hearing, after which he was advised, by letter dated 30 October 2008, that 'The three charges against [him] were, by a majority, all found by the Sub Committee to be held unproven on the balance of probabilities. For the avoidance of doubt I can confirm that ["Grant's"] registration status remains unchanged.'⁵⁶³

'Grant' has continued to teach and made clear in his evidence that he takes no issue with the GTCS investigation and process.

On 15 February 2013 the events that dated back to an anonymous complaint made in 2002 resurfaced once again. Disclosure Scotland, which operates the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme, intimated to QVS that 'Grant' was being considered for listing in the children's list, that is a list of persons who are considered unsuitable to work with children. On 29 July 2013 Disclosure Scotland advised QVS that 'Scottish Ministers, having considered all the information, have decided that he is no longer under consideration for listing on the children's list and will not be listed'.⁵⁶⁴ It is unclear what prompted Disclosure Scotland to consider listing 'Grant' in 2013 but its doing so in, it appears, the absence of new information raises a concern that the bodies entrusted with the safeguarding of children may not be appropriately sharing information. Eleven years had passed since the original allegations. The human cost to the individual having to revisit events so many years after the allegations were made, and over three years since he had been told that the GTCS had found them unproven,

seems unjustified and hardly likely to maintain trust in the system.

The Disclosure Scotland PVG Scheme record, dated 15 February 2013,⁵⁶⁵ detailed 'Grant' as 'under consideration of listing'. Under 'Other Relevant Information', the record stated:

Central Scotland Police can confirm that in 2004 the applicant was the subject of a police investigation after it was alleged that, between March 2001 and June 2002, whilst he was employed as a Teacher, he engaged in sexual activity, other than sexual intercourse, with or directed towards a 17 year old female pupil. When the applicant was interviewed, he admitted to having had such relations with the female but claimed that this was when the female was 18 years of age and after she had left the school. Further to investigation, no further police proceedings were taken.⁵⁶⁶

'Grant' takes no issue with such information being disclosed on the PVG Scheme record: 'I suppose it is reasonable because it's just reporting what actually happened. It's factually based.'⁵⁶⁷ 'Grant' accepted that if he applied for a new position, not only would such a record provide relevant information to a prospective employer, it would allow him the opportunity to explain and comment on the entry, all to the benefit of transparency.

What was stated in the record about 'Grant' after 29 July 2013 (the date of the letter from Disclosure Scotland informing QVS that Scottish Ministers had decided that 'Grant' was not to be listed) is not known.

563 QVS, Letter from GTC, 2008, at MOD-000000342.

564 QVS, Letter from Disclosure Scotland, 29 July 2013, at MOD-000000481, p.1.

565 QVS, Disclosure Scotland PVG Scheme record, 15 February 2013, at MOD-000000481, pp.4-5.

566 QVS, Disclosure Scotland PVG Scheme record, 15 February 2013, at MOD-000000481, pp.4-5.

567 [Transcript, day 241](#): 'Grant' (teacher, 1996-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.68.

'John'

The same anonymous letter that contained allegations against 'Mark' and 'Grant' also made a claim against 'John'. The allegation was that a female pupil had been seen having intercourse with 'John' whilst in a nightclub in Edinburgh.⁵⁶⁸ This was investigated in 2002 by Brian Raine and Evelyn Smith who established that although 'John' had been in Edinburgh he was not in a nightclub; he was there to watch a rugby match at Murrayfield in the company of another teacher, the other teacher's brothers, and the other teacher's son. The allegation was found to be without merit and dismissed. 'John' said he believed the anonymous letter had been written by pupils who were angry at having being gated: 'Two boys who – I think something was going on, there

was going to be a party or something at somebody's house and they had been gated for the weekend and this was revenge.'⁵⁶⁹

The allegation against 'John' was not revisited by Central Scotland Police in 2004, and other police records suggest that the letter was written by a pupil. False allegations may be made, and while full investigation must follow such reports to ensure consistency and confidence in child protection, it is in the interests of all concerned for that to be done properly and promptly. If allegations are ill-founded, it is in the interests of pupils that staff are freed of disciplinary processes as soon as possible and restored to their roles at the school as much as it is in the interests of pupils that, if the allegations are well-founded, the staff member is appropriately disciplined.

568 QVS, Letter to school, at MOD-000000404.

569 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.58.

9

Tensions amongst staff

Child protection is likely to be at its most effective where staff are able to work well together, in collaboration, and with respect for one another. Tensions in their relationships, such as those that inevitably arise from the spreading of rumours, is likely to detract from their ability to focus on the protection, nurturing, and education of the children for whom they are responsible. When the school is small, as was QVS, and inward-looking, as QVS appears to have been for much of its history, that risk is heightened.

Most of the former and current members of staff who provided evidence spoke of there having been tensions amongst staff.

Staff recollections

'John', who had been employed at four other schools before taking up a post at QVS in 1997, recalled that there were 'always certain staff who had a beef about something',⁵⁷⁰ that there could be a great deal of rumour, counter-rumour, tittle-tattle, which was 'at certain times, worse than others';⁵⁷¹ and that 'in short, there were tensions at times in the school'.⁵⁷²

'Mark' found the staffroom to be a place of inward-looking gossip from which he would, at times, remove himself to go to his house in the grounds for 15 minutes' peace 'rather than being in that environment 24 hours a day'⁵⁷³ and he described living at QVS as 'like living in a bubble ... an absolute bubble'.⁵⁷⁴

'Everyone's aware that QVS was a little bit of a rumour mill.'

When 'Grant' took up his post at the school in 1996

all the staff lived on site, there was quite a lot of camaraderie amongst the staff, so you got certainly a bond, but I would also say there was an awful lot of gossip and things like that which would go on between the staff which I probably didn't see so much in my first school ... I think it's always been a kind of issue in QVS. Just gossip and people bring up stories that are totally not true ... It would be toxic for that member of staff ... everyone's aware that QVS was a little bit of a rumour mill ... In fact I think the headmaster mentioned it in one of his meetings quite recently.⁵⁷⁵

570 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.16.

571 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.17.

572 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.17.

573 Transcript, day 239: 'Mark' (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.52.

574 Transcript, day 239: 'Mark' (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, pp.52-4.

575 Transcript, day 241: 'Grant' (teacher, 1996-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.43.

Wendy Bellars, who was appointed head of QVS in 2007, was very frank about staff relationships; she found that the culture was such that staff would complain about others whenever they could, and experienced 'some really quite difficult staff members who would rejoice in making life difficult for other members of staff'.⁵⁷⁶ She stated:

Honestly but sadly, I should say that there was a readiness on the part of some members of staff to complain about others whenever possible. This meant concerns were more likely to be raised without substance than to be kept under wraps. There seemed to be a huge sense of complacency and bitterness amongst a hardcore section of the staff.⁵⁷⁷

When such rumours were reported to her she would challenge them by saying: 'Oh, the QVS rumour mill; now why do you think that that's the case?'⁵⁷⁸

Donald Shaw agreed rumour could be a problem, saying:

Yes, it can be ... because you're living in this goldfish bowl of life, it can come to prominence at various times. You used the phrase ebb and flow, and it does ebb and flow through various years ... I'm always saying to staff: 'Stop believing things, stop spreading things that you think are true. Stick to the facts and if you want to know the facts, come and get them from me and I'll tell you the facts.'⁵⁷⁹

Inspection reports

A number of inspection reports over the decades highlighted the corrosive

effect that staff grumbling and gossip can have, particularly if those staff are not, as individuals, truly suited to the roles to which they have been appointed and leadership is not good. Their ability to focus on the protection and nurturing of the pupils is bound to have suffered.

In November 1978, a report prepared by D. Crichton Miller, Visiting Commissioner, concluded:

The situation, therefore, is that you have a staff of decent but rather undistinguished men, disunited except in their complaints, frustrated by events beyond their control and dimly aware, as their chances of promotion recede, that they are missing out somewhere. It is hardly surprising that the younger and more vocal should adopt the less enlightened methods of Trade Unionism ... Internal leadership, or tone, previously supplied by RAEC, disappeared suddenly when they left; so the flock is left, without shepherd and totally astray.⁵⁸⁰

He recommended that:

With firm but sympathetic leadership there seems no reason why the masters should not settle down ... They could then give useful service. But it is fruitless to pretend that this is a distinguished staff, or even one particularly suited to our needs. In the long term the only solution lies in more judicious recruitment. In this connection it might be useful to advise the Commandant that in the future, when appointing staff, he should pay special attention to age, previous experience in boarding school work, and outside

576 Written statement of Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at WIT-1-000000592, pp.24-5, paragraph 86.

577 Written statement of Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at WIT-1-000000592, p.24, paragraph 83.

578 Transcript, day 240: Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.143.

579 Transcript, day 241: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000032, pp.94-5.

580 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 20 March 1979, at MOD-000000574, p.102.

qualifications. It would be no bad thing if the staff knew we were thinking on these lines.⁵⁸¹

The point about the importance of appointing the right people to look after children in the boarding environment is well made, and one that is as relevant today as it was nearly 50 years ago. Further, there seems to be a clear connection between a less than distinguished staff, applicants' descriptions of disinterest, and the lack of intervention to prevent obvious abuses in the late 1970s.

Similar problems were identified by HMle inspectors in their report of an inspection in January 1992. That inspection had followed Glenn Harrison's letters and media coverage, and the report stated:

Partly due to the pressures which staff felt were imposed on them, there were divisions and tensions amongst staff and between some staff and school management ... The school had major challenges to face in view of the developments required in pastoral care and pupil supervision and the present general lack of teamwork. However, the commitment of staff to the welfare of the boys and the extent of constructive ideas in the school suggest that, given goodwill and some changes in attitude, real progress could be achieved.⁵⁸²

It concluded: 'For real progress to be made there will have to be changes in leadership style and in the attitudes of some members of staff.'⁵⁸³

By April 1993 real progress does seem to have been made and many positive changes

achieved, including in relation to pastoral care, as summarised in HMle's follow-up inspection report.⁵⁸⁴

2002-4

Even with the progress in pastoral care achieved throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, QVS was then further blighted by fresh personality tensions, which were picked up by the Inspectorate and acted upon, as set out below. It is clear from evidence provided by staff and the terms of inspection reports that these problems caused considerable tension and addressing them consumed and diverted time and energy away from what should have been a child-centred focus.

'Elsie' was appointed housemistress of Wavell in January 1999. It had, by then, become a girls' boarding house. Her nephew was accepted as a pupil and became a boarder in Cunningham House. Three years later, in April 2002, Evelyn Smith commenced employment at QVS as assistant headteacher (pastoral), replacing Alice Hainey.

In or around October 2003 'Elsie' requested that her nephew move out of Cunningham House and live with her in her flat in Wavell. She was supported in that by Evelyn Smith. Following consultation with the Board of HM Commissioners, the request was refused.⁵⁸⁵ 'Elsie', again with the support of Evelyn Smith, then requested that her nephew be admitted to the school as a day pupil. That was also refused because, under its constitution, QVS was a boarding school,

581 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 20 March 1979, at MOD-000000574, p.98.

582 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, pp.6-7.

583 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, p.8.

584 Scottish Education Department, Follow-up Inspection of Queen Victoria School, April 1993, at MOD-000000056, pp.2-6.

585 QVS, Letter from headteacher, 10 December 2003, at MOD-000000626, p.2.

not a school for day pupils. 'Elsie' and Evelyn Smith were unwilling and/or unprepared to accept these decisions, which caused considerable tension within the school's senior management team (SMT), of which Evelyn Smith was a member.

The nephew was regularly leaving the boarding house and visiting his aunt's flat throughout the week. In a letter dated 25 May 2004, the housemaster of Cunningham House was instructed that such visits were to stop and that 'Elsie's' nephew was to be treated the same as all other boys in terms of visits outwith the boarding house during the working week.⁵⁸⁶ The housemaster had, separately, become very concerned about the boy's wellbeing, about him missing out on opportunities to interact within the house because of spending so much time at his aunt's flat, and about his ability to cope with life at QVS at all; he wrote a letter dated 31 May 2004 to the headmaster, stressing what he referred to as 'a genuine ongoing concern for [the boy's] pastoral well-being and future.'⁵⁸⁷

Tensions arising from Evelyn Smith's adherence to her view that 'Elsie's' request ought to have been acceded to, and her obvious support of 'Elsie', her friend, persisted. On 10 June 2004, Brian Raine wrote to Evelyn Smith, saying:

There is also no doubt that your backing of the day pupil option or your suggested variation on the normal boarding situation had run counter to what Commissioners and SMT have decided. This has now, for

some time, contributed towards the unstable situation that has developed, as far as [Elsie's nephew] is concerned. Furthermore, it must place considerable concern about your willingness to work under the governance of the responsible authorities.⁵⁸⁸

By June 2004 the SMT was struggling to function effectively and this was picked up on by HMle inspectors who carried out an inspection in October 2004.⁵⁸⁹ In relation to Evelyn Smith they stated: 'However in carrying out her responsibilities, the assistant headteacher had not succeeded in gaining the confidence and respect of colleagues. Unsatisfactory working relationships between her and the other members of the [SMT] had led to major weaknesses in the [SMT's] effectiveness.'⁵⁹⁰

Problems were also discovered in Wavell House. HMle inspectors found that

[the] breakdown of effective communication within Wavell House was having a negative impact on pupil and staff morale and the day to day running of this house ... The school had not taken sufficient account of pupils' perceptions and concerns about the fairness with which boarding house rules and sanctions were applied and implemented in Wavell House; The housemistress of Wavell did not have the confidence of the house staff and some pupils; Overall poor communication between the housemistress and the Wavell Staff and inconsistencies in the implementation of the school's boarding policies had led to the management of this house being unsatisfactory.⁵⁹¹

586 QVS, Letter from headteacher, 25 May 2004, at MOD-000000626, p.5.

587 QVS, letter from housemaster, 31 May 2004, at MOD-000000626, p.12.

588 QVS, Letter from headteacher, 10 June 2004, at MOD-000000626, p.16.

589 HMle, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 October 2004, at MOD-000000566.

590 HMle, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 October 2004, at MOD-000000566, p.2.

591 HMle, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 October 2004, at MOD-000000566, p.4.

'Mark' recalled this time, saying:

I don't know if it was because they were women and also people saw them as perhaps allies, you know, two women, new house, boarding school with girls or boarding house with girls and suddenly it's a them and us thing, so I don't know if that was the tensions there.⁵⁹²

These tensions were heightened after an incident at school involving 'Elsie's' nephew. On 7 June 2004, at about 7.15 p.m., the boy reported to his housemaster that he was feeling unwell. He was sent to the medical room, after which he went to 'Elsie's' flat. There had, in fact, been an incident involving allegations of sexual assault of 'Elsie's' nephew by a number of other boys in the house.⁵⁹³ It was investigated by three members of staff, including Evelyn Smith, as a result of which the school 'gained a verbal assessment from the Police and Social Services of the incident and the fact that it did not need to be referred but very clearly investigated'.⁵⁹⁴ The school thereafter wrote to the parents of each of the boys involved in the incident. On 16 June 2004 two pupils were suspended for a short period of time and the school regarded the matter as concluded.⁵⁹⁵

However, the parents of the boys concerned were then telephoned by Evelyn Smith in August 2004 and informed that 'the police were coming for a chat with the boys and that parents could come along if they wanted or could choose someone

to represent the boys'.⁵⁹⁶ She explained that the family of 'Elsie's' nephew had decided to make a complaint to the school. There was a suspicion among parents that this development had been directed by Evelyn Smith, notwithstanding her earlier involvement in the school's investigation. Parents subsequently complained to the school. One wrote:

I have been led to believe there is a close relationship between Miss Smith and ['Elsie's'] family and feel that it was inappropriate for Miss Smith to be contacting the parents of any boy involved when she may have been prejudged, giving limited information to the parents she also may have been aware that an allegation of assault had been made.⁵⁹⁷

Another parent made the point that the boys had already been punished:

I had thought that the matter had been adequately dealt with and that the perpetrators were extremely unlikely to re-offend knowing what the consequences would be. What amazed me was the triumph so evident in her [Evelyn Smith's] voice - it seemed to me that it had become a personal crusade to pursue the matter.⁵⁹⁸

A third parent summed up the matter this way:

I feel that Ms Smith has her own agenda in this matter and without wishing to be a conspiracy theorist would suggest that she is hoping to destabilise the management of the school,

592 Transcript, day 239: 'Mark' (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.55.

593 QVS, Email from housemaster, 8 June 2004, at MOD-000000626, p.15 and see [Sexual abuse](#) chapter.

594 QVS, Letter to parent, 18 June 2004, at MOD-000000626, p.18.

595 QVS, [Part D response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD-000000636, p.10.

596 QVS, Letter from parent to school, at MOD-000000563, p.25.

597 QVS, Letter from parent to school, at MOD-000000563, p.25.

598 QVS, Letter from parent to school, 21 September 2004, at MOD-000000563, p.33.

the School itself, or both. She has not at any time acted in the best interests of the School, the boys concerned or the parents. I believe she used her influence with ['Elsie'] to force the present turn of events to fulfil her own ambitions. She has shown no loyalty to the school.⁵⁹⁹

From the parents' perspective their children were dealt with harshly and inappropriately by the police. The Crown did not proceed with any prosecution of those children; there was, however, a referral to the Reporter to the Children's Hearing.

'Elsie' said: 'Unfortunately Evelyn was a friend of mine and the perception was that she was taking steps because of the friendship and not because of the seriousness of the incident.'⁶⁰⁰

Evelyn Smith said: 'There is no doubt that there was a breakdown in relationships.'⁶⁰¹

'John' offered this observation:

I think how that manifested itself in the house as well was that the boy would come back to the house and he would have sweeties and you know, comics and things like that, and this used to upset the other boys who didn't have any opportunity to go and see their mum or auntie every night and get special treats, as it were. So the whole thing became a bit of a real hot issue ... And never went away. It was constant. I mean, 'Elsie' would just not give up.⁶⁰²

Following the inspections, the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners wrote to the Scottish Executive about the matter, saying: 'The unsatisfactory nature of some of [the assistant headteacher's] work was clearly brought out, as was the worrying state of morale in Wavell House under the current Housemistress. The inspectors urged early resolution of these most unsatisfactory aspects of the school.'⁶⁰³

Both women were suspended. They did not return.

When asked if the tensions with 'Elsie' and Evelyn Smith impacted on the operation of the school and the responsibility the school had to its pupils, 'John' said:

I think it probably did, but I think in the situation we were in, I mean you do tend to get on with it, you just get on with your job and just do it, but it certainly caused tension in so much that I'm not sure staff would have used Ms Smith as a sounding board in the same way that they would have used her predecessor and her successor ... It was very difficult to hold meetings and to discuss things when that was happening.⁶⁰⁴

Further, when it was suggested to 'John' that these events may have impacted on the operation of the school overall including in relation to the responsibilities owed to its pupils, 'John' said: 'It could have done but I'm not sure that it did. But it could have done. It was a danger.'⁶⁰⁵

599 QVS, Letter from parent to school, 21 September 2004, at MOD-000000563, p.35.

600 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of 'Elsie' (former housemistress, 1999-2004), at TRN-8-000000030, p.134.

601 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), at TRN-8-000000030, p.149.

602 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.46-7.

603 QVS, Letter from the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 7 October 2004, at SGV-000067145, pp.1-2.

604 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.48-9.

605 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.48.

Such tensions inevitably give rise to a serious risk that attention will be diverted away from what should be the central focus, namely the protection and wellbeing of the children.

That is the nub of the issue. While it may be difficult to identify particular children who were adversely impacted by these tensions – though ‘Elsie’s’ nephew, the other boys in his house, and the pupils in Wavell might seem likely candidates – the wider point is that such tensions inevitably give rise to a serious risk that attention will be diverted away from what should be the central focus, namely the protection and wellbeing of the children.

Misplaced loyalties

Gerard Buchanan was head of languages at QVS. On 27 August 2015 he was arrested and subsequently charged with multiple charges of distributing indecent photographs and videos, including of children. None of the charges involved any past or present pupil of QVS, or QVS premises, though his school computer equipment was seized as part of the investigation. In August 2016 Gerard Buchanan was convicted and sentenced to a three-year supervised community order that included no unsupervised contact with anyone under the age of 16 and the completion of 200 hours’ unpaid work in six months.

Following his arrest in August 2015, Gerard Buchanan made contact with Wendy Bellars, the then head. In conversation with her on

30 August 2015 he admitted that he had been engaged in such behaviour for many years. Wendy Bellars, who insisted she did ‘not have any friends amongst the staff’,⁶⁰⁶ chose to keep that information to herself for about six months, until the following February.

As at 1 September 2015 it had not been confirmed to Wendy Bellars whether Buchanan should be suspended or put on special paid leave; she knew that there was doubt as to which was the appropriate way to proceed. Despite that, Wendy Bellars wrote to Gerard Buchanan the same day, advising him that he had been placed on special paid leave.⁶⁰⁷ On 4 September 2015, having been advised that the MOD’s view was that Gerard Buchanan should be suspended, she suspended him and appointed herself investigating officer because ‘this was such a serious and unpleasant case, I thought it unfair to ask one of the deputies to do it’.⁶⁰⁸ By November 2015 she had made little progress, despite the QVS HR Business Partner having urged her to do so.⁶⁰⁹ MOD personnel had also become increasingly concerned that Wendy Bellars was ‘struggling with the consequences of what had happened as she liked and trusted GB [Gerard Buchanan]’⁶¹⁰ and that she ‘seemed to be focussing on her view of GB as a good teacher and a nice person and

606 Transcript, day 240: Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.155.

607 QVS, Letter from Wendy Bellars, 1 September 2015, at MOD-000000647, p.15.

608 Transcript, day 240: Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.170.

609 QVS, Letter from Wendy Bellars, 1 September 2015, at MOD-000000647, p.64.

610 QVS, Summary of telephone interview, 10 March 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.7.

The MOD were so concerned about her conduct that they commenced a disciplinary investigation.

not necessarily her primary safeguarding to the children and young people'.⁶¹¹ Wendy Bellars was then removed from the role of investigating officer.

The concerns of those MOD personnel were not without substance, given the observations of teachers who worked with Wendy Bellars and Gerard Buchanan. 'John', for example, said: 'I got the impression she [Wendy Bellars] liked him ... But certainly she seemed to favour Gerry.'⁶¹² Wendy Bellars herself said: 'Inasmuch as I got on with any members of staff, yes. He and I had a shared interest in music, classical music and a keen interest in words saying exactly what they were meant to say. So in that sense, we were on the same ... page, if you like.'⁶¹³

Indeed, during the telephone call when she was informed of the decision to remove her as investigating officer, Wendy Bellars disclosed 'that she had received information from GB about the alleged offences but that this had been in confidence and therefore she could not and would not share it. However she did [say] that "he did not deny it"'.⁶¹⁴

Wendy Bellars was thereafter interviewed as part of the MOD investigation into Gerard Buchanan on 1 February 2016 and only then, for the first time, did she share the details

'received during her meeting with GB on 30 August 2015'.⁶¹⁵ She had not shared the information with the police either.

The MOD were so concerned about her conduct that they commenced a disciplinary investigation⁶¹⁶ and she was suspended on 26 February 2016.⁶¹⁷ A hearing on 17 May 2016 concluded she was guilty of gross misconduct, and she was dismissed from QVS, effective from 23 May 2016. She appealed the decision but was not successful. The decision included these terms:

In fact it is clear that in deciding not to pass to the police a potentially material piece of evidence (i.e. a statement that the alleged offence had been committed over a period of very many years) your judgement was seriously amiss. This error was compounded very significantly when you refused to disclose to your line manager the information given to you at your meeting with the teacher on 30 August.

Given the considerable publicity in recent years about child sex abuse and the ability of perpetrators to hide this and your responsibilities as headteacher, your insistence on withholding information and on coming to your own conclusions about any potential risks or damage to children in your school (leaving aside possible risks or damage

611 QVS, Summary of telephone interview, 11 April 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.9.

612 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.74.

613 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.155.

614 QVS, Summary of telephone interview, 10 March 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.7.

615 QVS, Summary of telephone interview, 10 March 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.7.

616 QVS, Summary of telephone interview, 11 April 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.9.

617 QVS, Investigation report re Wendy Bellars, 20 April 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.17.

to others) over very many years was a very serious error. Seeking to remain in charge of the investigation despite being in possession of potentially key information was another significant error of judgement. Collectively these errors amounted to very serious breaches of the Civil Service Code.⁶¹⁸

All these points were well made.

It is sad to see a long career ending in such circumstances, but in evidence Wendy Bellars ultimately did accept that she had made serious errors of judgment.⁶¹⁹ She was right to do so.

618 QVS, MOD Misconduct Appeal Decision, 20 July 2016, at MOD-000000647, p.69.

619 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.165.

10

Reporting

Most children at QVS did not report the abuse at the time it happened. Some did not realise that what was being done to them was abuse. Some did not wish to upset their parents. Some had no one in whom to confide. Further, boys, including 'James', knew that keeping silent and not reporting abuse was the rule: 'Because of the times and the school's attitude of not sneaking, abuse wasn't something that was openly discussed with the teachers ... no formal reports were raised that I was aware of.'⁶²⁰

And they knew that reporting could just make their lives worse. All these reasons made perfect sense at the time.

Naivety

Ben Philip sexually abused children.⁶²¹ Few children complained about his conduct but children often do not understand the implications of an adult's conduct towards them or of a nickname. Ben Philip's nickname was 'Bender'. 'Hector's' 'brother used to tell my mum that it was because, before he whacked you, he used to bend the tennis shoe. That was naivety and it was what I thought it meant. I didn't know about that name when I was young.'⁶²²

'James' did not, at the time, understand the implications of the teacher's nickname either:

Back then I thought he was called Bender because he used to bend the slipper before he hit you, but he was called that because of the sexual inference. Everyone knew his nickname was Bender, including all the other teachers. I believe they were all complicit in allowing him to do what he did. It was only innocent naive children like me who didn't know what Bender meant.⁶²³

Reporting to parents by letter

Children in the junior house, then Wavell House, were encouraged to write home. 'Martin' said: 'On a Monday at 3.50, as Wavell boys, we had letter writing when we were encouraged to write home. What you wrote wasn't censored.'⁶²⁴

Unlike what happened at some boarding schools, such as Morrison's Academy,⁶²⁵ there was no suggestion in the evidence that junior school letters were read or censored by the housemaster or matron. 'Barry' said:

For the first six weeks at QV we weren't allowed to phone home, although we could write as much as we wanted ... Often boys

620 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.113.

621 See [Sexual abuse](#) chapter.

622 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.170.

623 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.103-4.

624 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.106.

625 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no. 9: Volume 2](#): The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children at Morrison's Academy, Crieff, between 1945 and 2007 (March 2024).

would not bother to write home, so to make sure we all did there was a letter writing period once a week. Letters were never vetted, we would write them, address them and seal them before posting them ourselves in the Royal Mail post box.⁶²⁶

‘Noah’s’ recollection was that ‘contact with your parents was encouraged in the junior school but not so much after that’.⁶²⁷

However, that did not mean that abuse was reported in letters home; allied to the fact that children often did not realise that what they were suffering was wrong, the culture was such that they were unlikely to write to their parents about it. As ‘Martin’ said: ‘Reporting of bullying was not encouraged amongst the boys and was regarded as sneaking. Such actions would simply bring more attention on you and probably more bullying. I don’t recall me or any boy reporting such incidents.’⁶²⁸

Children often did not realise that what they were suffering was wrong.

Reporting to family members in person

When children did report to family members, responses varied. Some parents reported the abuse to the school. ‘Hamish’ spoke to his father who, in turn, reported it to the school, but that did not help:

There was nobody who I could think of that you could report any of the bullying to. You didn’t feel safe enough to report anything but I’m sure staff knew what was going on. I did tell my dad about the bullying and he contacted the school who said I was a dreamer and that there was no bullying at the school. My dad took that at face value and told me I would just have to learn to stick up for myself.⁶²⁹

That simple denial from the school in the 1960s and 70s was in keeping with its standard approach.

By the 1980s a different approach was being taken, and the school did investigate to some extent. ‘Alex’ was sexually abused, as discussed in the [Sexual abuse](#) chapter, and QVS made some efforts to address the problem once his mother alerted the school. However, ‘Alex’ felt he was met with indifference: ‘It didn’t really work in anybody’s favour, did it? ... Because as soon as I left [the headmaster’s] office, that was it. My life changed in there forever.’⁶³⁰

‘Alex’ described the way he was treated after his meeting with the headmaster as ‘being a leper, a complete and utter leper in that school ... if I put my hand up to answer a question, if I was the only one to put my hand up, I was ignored’.⁶³¹

He was bullied in a way that ‘escalated quite significantly. I mean, I was basically walking around with a target on my back from then on.’⁶³² ‘Alex’ felt that the content of his discussion with the headmaster should have

626 Written statement of ‘Barry’ (former pupil, 1989–98), at WIT-1-000000850, pp.16–17, paragraphs 87 and 89.

627 Written statement of ‘Noah’ (former pupil, 1984–90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.17, paragraph 63.

628 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Martin’ (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.118.

629 Written statement of ‘Hamish’ (former pupil, 1968–75), at WIT-1-000001110, p.14, paragraph 63.

630 Transcript, day 237: ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.111.

631 Transcript, day 237: ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.112–13.

632 Transcript, day 237: ‘Alex’ (former pupil, 1979–83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.112.

remained confidential, 'yet the whole school knew about it'.⁶³³ Whilst it is possible that the situation was known about in the school anyway,⁶³⁴ that does not excuse QVS for taking no steps to protect and support 'Alex' so far as was possible in the circumstances.

Boys such as 'James' would discuss a teacher's abusive conduct with other boys but would not report abuse to their parents or other family members:

There was one time I was discussing abuse with my friends, some of what they were saying was similar to what I experienced in Ben Philip's classroom ... I don't think there was any parental awareness of the abuse at that time. I didn't discuss it with my parents or with my siblings when I was home.⁶³⁵

'I don't think there was any parental awareness of the abuse at that time.'

That reticence may have been because of 'James's' fear that to report would be letting his parents down and amount to a personal failing. He did not feel able to tell his mother

because I'd asked to go to a boarding school, so I probably thought I'd be letting them down. In hindsight I probably had multiple opportunities to leave that school and go to regular school but I never did, because I thought it would be a failing of me, letting them down.⁶³⁶

His reasons for not telling his parents were far from unique amongst children abused at boarding schools.

Reporting not 'the done thing': no reporting systems

Within QVS and the boarding houses, there were few people, if any, the children felt they could speak with, for reasons including the fear of reprisal or repercussion if a complaint were made. It was also not clear who they could report to, as 'Andrew' described:

I was stabbed by my best mate at Queen Victoria School when we had an argument. I can't recall what it was about ... It happened in the dormitory at night-time and was near the end of my second year. My best mate had been sent a penknife by his father and during the argument he took out the knife and stabbed me in the leg ... There was no one to report the abuse to. I never contacted the police to report what happened to me and I don't know if the police were asked to investigate the stabbing incident.⁶³⁷

At least in his case the incident was discovered, and both the school and 'Andrew's' father learnt of it. 'Andrew' left the school shortly afterwards but could not remember the detail of how that came about.

'Ann' said that at no stage did she think she could talk to a teacher, for 'I just think it wasn't the done thing'.⁶³⁸ She also felt that 'I don't think anybody would have believed you'.⁶³⁹ Her own experience was a good

633 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.125-6.

634 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.116.

635 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.113-14.

636 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1979-86), at WIT-1-000001136, p.23, paragraph 71.

637 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Andrew' (former pupil, 1965-7), at TRN-8-000000027, p.30.

638 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.69.

639 Transcript, day 236: 'Ann' (former pupil, 1965-70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.93-4.

‘I’m one hundred percent certain that there was no one I would have felt comfortable enough to speak to about Ben Philip’s behaviour.’

example of why it was entirely reasonable for any child to think that; when she was bearing very obvious injuries as a result of being assaulted – ‘a very black eye and bruising round the socket’,⁶⁴⁰ after which she ‘couldn’t stop crying’⁶⁴¹ – staff failed to intervene in any respect. Not only was it normal for children not to speak to adults about abuse, it was normal at that time for teachers not to speak to an obvious victim of abuse about what had happened to them.

It was normal at that time for teachers not to speak to an obvious victim of abuse about what had happened to them.

‘Andy’ explained that ‘there was a clear culture of them and us, which you didn’t cross’⁶⁴² and children were not encouraged to report: ‘That was something that perhaps they should have done ... I can’t remember anyone ever telling on other boys to a teacher. It just didn’t happen.’⁶⁴³

‘Andy’ reflected:

I guess a lot of it comes down to this idea that we wouldn’t go forward to authority with any confidence. I mean, there were occasions

where now I regret that I didn’t say anything. I remember the Brigadier who was outwith the school, he was a kind of figurehead, somebody way up there, and he found me in a classroom once, I was actually up to no good, but he was such a nice gentleman, he chatted to me and I think he was trying to find things out, when I reflect on it now, but it never occurred to me that I could have said something to the Brigadier and he might have stepped in. Now it does, but at the time it didn’t. That’s a kind of regret because ... Maybe I missed an opportunity there.⁶⁴⁴

Pupils such as ‘Joe’ just ‘didn’t think about telling anyone’⁶⁴⁵ but that was not a failing on their part; the problem was that the culture at the time was not to tell and there was no system in place that encouraged children to do so.

‘Noah’ said:

I was never aware of any formal system where a pupil could report things to staff members or anyone else at the school. The closest you would get to that would be having an informal word with your matron or the hospital nurse. Even then the response would likely be ‘there there, crack on’. There might be a little bit more sympathy but that would be it ... I’m one hundred percent certain that there was no one I would have felt comfortable enough to speak

640 [Written statement of ‘Ann’](#) (former pupil, 1965–70), at WIT-1-000000559, p.15, paragraph 106.

641 [Transcript, day 236](#): ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.71–2.

642 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.24.

643 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.24.

644 [Transcript, day 237](#): ‘Andy’ (former pupil, 1966–72), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.31–2.

645 [Transcript, day 237](#): read-in statement of ‘Joe’ (former pupil, 1977–85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.64.

to about Ben Philip's behaviour when I was at the school. Even were I to have approached the more approachable teachers, like Graeme Beattie, I don't think they would have been able to do much. I would have been very surprised if anyone would have taken any interest.⁶⁴⁶

'Alex' went to Ben Philip to report bullying but instead of receiving support he was punished:

He used to have this favourite thing with his Dunlop training shoe and he would go and whack you on the backside with it and I actually got it and he goes, 'Now, I'm doing you a favour so that you don't get bullied when you leave here' ... I don't know if it was a case of trying to protect me or if it was just 'I'll make you think twice before coming to bother me with this again' ... basically it says there they weren't very sympathetic.⁶⁴⁷

In similar vein, 'Noah' explained:

The only time I attempted to report something surrounded the bullying I was suffering from [a boy] in senior one. It was significant enough that I went to speak to ... the head of Trenchard House ... I think [the boy] had arranged a fight with me later that day in the toilets in Cunningham and I was petrified. I approached [the teacher] at the end of his class and told him that I was being bullied and I was really scared. I don't remember his exact words but his response was pretty much 'pull your socks up, get

on with it, I don't want to hear about it'. I felt disappointed but my overriding feeling was fear because I knew what was going to happen later that day. I also realised that what was happening with [the boy] was just going to continue to happen. [The boy] did later end up getting expelled but I don't know what that was for.⁶⁴⁸

'Felix' reported that he had been assaulted by a fellow pupil who had pinned him to the ground and spat 'chewed up chocolate digestive biscuits'⁶⁴⁹ at him through a straw. He told a teacher what had happened, and the other boy was punished with detention, but 'Felix' was clearly told: 'Nobody likes a grass.'⁶⁵⁰ He went on:

I can remember being, I guess, a bit shocked or upset, I was like thinking: really? Okay, that seems a bit odd ... it's like you don't snitch on your friends because you don't want ... your parents to find out, but not from a teacher who's meant to be there to look after me.⁶⁵¹

'Felix' was clearly told: 'Nobody likes a grass'.

The culture was so ingrained that in relation to the possibility of reporting Ben Philip's abuse, 'Barry' said: 'I don't think much could have been changed. Even if someone external had come in and every pupil was given time with them, I still don't think many people would have come forward.'⁶⁵²

646 Written statement of 'Noah' (former pupil, 1984-90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.28, paragraphs 96-8.

647 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, p.95.

648 Written statement of 'Noah' (former pupil, 1984-90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.28, paragraph 97.

649 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.136.

650 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.137.

651 Transcript, day 237: 'Felix' (former pupil, 1989-92), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.138-9.

652 Written statement of 'Barry' (former pupil, 1989-98), at WIT-1-000000850, p.30, paragraph 164.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Steve Laing⁶⁵³ stated: 'I have never had to deal with any allegations of abuse at my time at Queen Victoria School and I am always saddened to hear of any allegations, but I was never privy to any allegations being made'⁶⁵⁴ and that another, longstanding member of staff, 'John', could not think of any occasion when a child came to him unprompted to talk about a concern: 'I'm sure they did, but offhand I just can't think of one.'⁶⁵⁵

In short, the QVS culture in the period from the 1960s to at least the early 1990s was not one in which reporting abuse was facilitated or encouraged, whether by an established system or otherwise.

Some reporting

As noted already, the abuse of 'Alex' and 'Felix' did become known to staff. Some other reporting of problems including abuse did occur but had mixed results.

'Keith' reported his experience of being bullied to a teacher:

When I was at QVS in the 1980s, it was still seen as a military school. There was a chain of command ... I was bullied for a while by a boy in my year group. It was not overly bad and I wasn't scared of him. He hit me once in class and I told a teacher about it. The staff pulled him out of the class and spoke to him. I am not sure what happened thereafter. It calmed

down and we started to get along with each other in S5.⁶⁵⁶

'James' spoke to the school chaplain when he was 15 about worries he had. He explained:

I started having some troubling thoughts and I went to speak to Mr Silcox [the school chaplain]. I subsequently found out that these thoughts were related to obsessive compulsive disorder ... I went into his office and spoke to him and alluded to the fact that Ben Philip got too close to the boys. He nodded and adopted a contemplative expression as if to say 'that makes sense to me'. There was no further comment about this, and Mr Silcox did not make any notes. Mr Silcox advised me to pray to get support.⁶⁵⁷

On the evidence, I could not identify whether the chaplain understood the allusions or took any action. As 'James' said, 'abuse wasn't something that was openly discussed with the teachers. Later on amongst the lads it was discussed but no formal reports were raised that I was aware of.'⁶⁵⁸

A change in approach

Following the inspections of 1991 and 1992 Alice Hainey was appointed assistant headteacher (pastoral). When she arrived at the school 'there was no person within the school or outside of it that a child could speak to established as such'.⁶⁵⁹

653 Steve Laing was employed as a teacher of technical studies for 35 years between 1984 and 2019.

654 [Transcript, day 240](#): read-in statement of Steve Laing (former technical studies teacher, assistant housemaster, and housemaster, 1984-2019), at TRN-8-000000031, p.103.

655 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.20.

656 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'Keith' (former pupil, 1983-91), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.180-1.

657 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.113.

658 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.113.

659 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992-2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.122.

The culture in which reporting was not the done thing changed somewhat during Alice Hainey's time at the school:

The assistant headteacher (pastoral) introduced and delivered a personal and social education class to all pupils from Primary 7 to Senior 6 and the dedicated PSE (personal and social education) period became the place to raise any concerns about anything. A deluge of complaints followed (many about the food). It showed the pupils needed to talk and to be listened to. Out of this came the role of the assistant headteacher being the 'trusted adult' within the school who would listen and change things if it could be done. It was emphasised that the 'trusted adult' could be approached at any time in confidence about personal concerns. Children did raise concerns.⁶⁶⁰

That included the 'trusted adult' being approached by junior school pupils to report sexual harassment which was dealt with appropriately and successfully.

In July 1996 QVS's first child protection guidelines were published by Alice Hainey.⁶⁶¹ It is a thorough and sensible document, challenging the behaviours of the past, setting out clear processes to be followed, and emphasising the need for confidentiality.

It is also apparent that, from early in the twenty-first century, pupils began reporting their concerns to the school as well as to their parents, who in turn reported to the school and to the police. These included

complaints about food, about violent birthday bumps which caused 'substantial damage', and about the secret filming of one girl in the showers by another.⁶⁶²

The QVS response to evidence about reporting

Donald Shaw said, in his evidence:

It seems to me that, reading the witness statements, children were discouraged from reporting abuse, and that is appalling, absolutely appalling, if that happened in the past, and it clearly did, from reading those witness statements. So there perhaps was a systemic failure which failed to allow children adequate opportunities to report any abuse they were experiencing and, therefore, they had to suffer in silence. It's a disgrace if that is the case.⁶⁶³

Sadly, that was the case. QVS failed to afford children adequate opportunities and encourage them to report their concerns. So it was that abuse was not uncovered when it could have been. This was a systemic failing.

Donald Shaw offered this apology:

I would like to, first of all, offer my appreciation to anyone who has now come forward and reported an incident of abuse that occurred during their time at QVS. It is an incredibly hard thing to do but it is also an incredibly brave thing to do. I would also like to say sorry to those people; sorry to any young person who has experienced life at QVS and their life

660 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992-2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.119.

661 QVS, Child Protection Guidelines, July 1996, at MOD-000000350.

662 Examples in QVS, Complaints 2001-14, at MOD-000000563, pp.2, 7, 12-13, 16, 19-20, and 21.

663 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.99.

has been tarnished in any way by any form of abuse.⁶⁶⁴

Systems now in place

QVS said this of its current reporting systems:

QVS uses WCBS (referred to as 3sys) as the Management Information System. All behavioural, wellbeing and Child Protection matters are reported using the Pastoral/Behavioural module within WCBS.

The Pastoral reporting system has been designed and set up specifically to meet the needs of the school's Staged Intervention Strategy – S.A.F.E. Staff report matters under the categories of: Child Protection concerns; Wellbeing concerns; and Pastoral events.

The system is designed to channel information to the appropriate staff to manage the concerns in a timely and effective manner.

All Child Protection concerns are reported directly to the CPC [child protection co-ordinator], and deputy child protection co-ordinator, via WCBS and in person on the same day as the matter is raised.

The school has another layer of safeguarding (Raising a Concern) to enhance the whistleblowing policy at Queen Victoria School.

All staff have access to the Raising a Concern digital reporting system. It is located on the homepage of the school intranet. It provides

a mechanism for safely raising concerns regarding staff behaviour. The concern is raised directly to the child protection co-ordinator who then investigates the matter raised.

Every pupil has access to their virtual boarding house pupil portal. Pupils are able to anonymously report matters that concern them or other pupils through this portal. This matter is raised directly to the respective Housemaster/mistress.⁶⁶⁵

Donald Shaw knew that some describe the system as 'clunky': 'That is the word I've used several times to describe our management information system, yes – clunky.'⁶⁶⁶

He refuted, however, that that impacted on the efficacy of the system, saying:

It doesn't negatively impact, it just means that staff have to spend a little bit more time in making sure they write the report ... You want something at the click of a button and it maybe takes three or four different menus to get into the point of the place where you're actually making your report on this management information system. You asked 'Grant' the question as to whether it was actually holding staff back from making those reports. I do not believe that to be the case.⁶⁶⁷

Defence Children Services, an MOD department, carried out a safeguarding inspection at QVS on 20 and 21 September 2021.⁶⁶⁸ They appear to have found the system to be satisfactory – albeit with there

664 Transcript, day 218: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.101.

665 QVS, Information provided to SCAI re software used by QVS, at MOD-000000649, p.2.

666 Transcript, day 241: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.96.

667 Transcript, day 241: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, pp.96–7.

668 DCS, Safeguarding visit to Queen Victoria School, September 2021, at MOD-000000653.

being scope for further development of the school's policies on these matters – and they were also complimentary about the support afforded by staff:

Staff present an 'it can happen here' attitude and adopt a focussed and responsive approach to identifying and reporting concerns.

The school has introduced and embedded effective systems to report and record concerns about the behaviour of adults.

Key policies are in the process of being updated and aligned to national Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in 2021.

Safeguarding files are currently held on the school's electronic management system. Staff report positively on its use and feel that it creates an efficient platform to log and share concerns.

The Head of Pupil Support/DCPC [deputy child protection co-ordinator] has led on significant improvements to the school's emotional and welfare and support system where children are central in the decisions made regarding their care. The GIRFEC staff hub provides an effective platform for the SAFE process where staff can flag and/or refer, depending on the child's level of required intervention. Pupil records evidenced examples of how completed assessment frameworks and referrals to external agencies were based on the wishes of the child.

The school have introduced an effective cloud based system to keep pupils safe on school devices. The system filters content, analyses usage and swiftly alerts the school to any concerning online footprint.

Boarding staff reported that personal devices used by children in the boarding houses presents a challenge for the school. Whilst some steps have been taken to reduce the risks associated with the use of unfiltered devices, the school is aware that further exploration into home/school arrangements around mobile device management is required to ensure devices are safe for unsupervised use by young people.

All staff who took part in the visit articulated a high level of care and respect for pupils.

All staff are provided with annual safeguarding training by the CP [child protection] co-ordinator and receive regular internal updates.

Targeted responses to lessons learned from previous incidents are evident and both staff and pupils speak with confidence about how technology has created confidential routes to raising concerns about any behaviour that does not align with the values of the school. During the meetings with pupils and interviews with staff, it was clear that these support systems are valued, but not as a replacement for the accessible, open door policy adopted by senior leaders. To build on this the Headteacher is keen to engage with a reporting upwards system with DCS that will provide him with support when making decisions around thresholds and next steps.⁶⁶⁹

Finally, Alan Plumtree told me of another positive development:

About 20 years ago the Commissioners set up a parent liaison group which is the link between the parents and the Board of HM Commissioners. As part of the school's complaints policy, the parents can write directly to the Chairman of the

669 DCS, Safeguarding visit to Queen Victoria School, September 2021, at MOD-000000653.

QVS consistently failed, in the period before 1992, to afford or encourage reporting.

Commissioners, and this does happen from time to time.⁶⁷⁰

Conclusions about reporting

Many of the children abused at QVS would not, or could not, report what was happening to them at the time. As HMIE stated in its 1992 inspection report:

There were many informal channels of communication but not enough provision for systematic one-to-one contact between boys and their teachers and House staff. The current informal approaches relied on staff reacting to boys' problems or on boys taking the initiative, giving rise to fears in younger boys that they might be 'sneaking'.⁶⁷¹

Some children did report being abused at the time but very few such complaints, if any, were investigated, or investigated properly. QVS consistently failed, in the

period before 1992, to afford or encourage reporting, with the result that children were exposed to further abuse. The school knew that some children were displaying signs of vulnerability and of having been harmed yet carried out little or no investigation into the causes. Supervision of the boarding houses was lacking. Staff knew, or ought to have known, that children were being abused, including by teachers, by prefects and monitors, and by fellow peers. Such failures to respond adequately represented serious failures in care, as did the maintenance of a culture where children felt unable to report abuse.

It is clear that lessons have been learned progressively since 1992, but the impact of James Clark's abusive conduct has been profound and a useful reminder of the need for constant vigilance. The 'it can happen here' attitude is one that all schools should maintain.

670 [Written statement of Alan Plumtree](#) (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at MOD-000000630, p.6, paragraph 25.

671 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, January 1992, at MOD-000000104, pp.5-6.

11

Reflections

A number of applicants provided thoughtful reflections, some of which are referred to below.

Painful journeys

Former pupils who have come forward to provide evidence have, as adults, revisited abuse suffered in childhood – a painful journey for them. ‘Bob’ shared this:

If I see a film with someone with a cane or something I get taken aback ... My wife and I have to sleep in separate beds because of my nightmares. I still have them once or twice a month ... I don’t think children should ever be given punishment of the nature that was given at Queen Victoria.⁶⁷²

It is not unusual for the mental health of those who were abused as children in care to be adversely affected and also for that impact to worsen as time passes. For example, ‘James’ explained:

The impact on my mental health has been harder to deal with as time has gone on. When you are young it is easy to deal with, but as you get older, it is harder ... and you need help ... The people who are vicious to you are the ones to blame. These are the people who leave a lasting impression on you because they have been cruel and unkind. I do also blame the school, though, for not picking up

on my decline having arrived as a pupil who was a year ahead of his peers. The people in charge, particularly the school staff who lived in the school, must have known what was going on. From my perspective, there was an utter failure by the school to protect children in their care.⁶⁷³

‘From my perspective, there was an utter failure by the school to protect children in their care.’

‘Peter’ explained his long-term suffering in this way:

The school gave me absolutely no preparation for the decisions they made, and my abuse of drugs and alcohol continued because I didn’t know what I wanted to do with myself. All I did know was that I didn’t want to be at college and I didn’t want to go to another school. I spent a lot of years being angry and confused. I wasn’t armed with any tools to deal with my emotions. I just wanted to escape them through drugs and alcohol. Those years were wasted and I can’t get those years back.⁶⁷⁴

He continued:

I think that I had a certain disregard for authority and disrespect for adults, which stemmed from what Ben Philip did. I never

672 Transcript, day 236: ‘Bob’ (former pupil, 1951–5), at TRN-8-000000029, p.17.

673 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.118–19.

674 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.153.

'I never had any problems at school before I went to QVS.'

had any problems at school before I went to QVS. I was a well-rounded 10 year old and I was wanting to go there. But from Primary 6 onwards, I was an absolute tearaway who had little respect for the teachers. I rebelled against them because I felt that if a teacher was prepared to do what Philip did, why should I trust any of them and why should I do what any of them told me to do? I think the chain reaction from that betrayal of trust led to me being put out of the school early.⁶⁷⁵

Childhood vulnerability

Typically, children do not have the experience to recognise abusive behaviour and, in particular, the precursors to sexual abuse. There is a high risk of them failing to realise that it is not normal, that it is wrong, that it is not well-motivated, that it is harmful, that they should not be subjected to it, and that it should simply not be a part of their lives.

James Clark's abuse is a case in point. In about 2010 he began a course of conduct that normalised contact. Donald Shaw spoke to the children involved, and 'they stated that they did not recognise that it was abuse at the time and therefore never reported it'.⁶⁷⁶ He went on: 'So they simply did not recognise that as a form of abuse until they had time to reflect on it when the main allegation came forward.'⁶⁷⁷

Ben Philip is another example. 'Hector' remembered how the teacher began stroking him:

I wasn't horrified at the time, I liked the feeling. I have three daughters and if anyone did that to my daughters I would probably kill them but at that age I didn't see anything wrong with it. I thought he was a nice teacher and he was stroking me.⁶⁷⁸

As 'James' observed: 'innocent naive children didn't know what [the nickname] "Bender" meant'.⁶⁷⁹

The QVS evidence emphasised the need to teach children about what is and is not appropriate conduct by an adult and to encourage them to come forward with any concerns. Donald Shaw did recognise the need to continually restate the message: 'Please come forward and report any concerns'.⁶⁸⁰

But this applies just as much to other forms of abuse, not only sexual abuse. 'Peter' recalled:

[There was] quite a lot of fighting, particularly in the younger years when a pecking order was established, but I wouldn't say there was any bullying. We were all very robust, independent boys who liked a lot of banter and there was typical teasing ... perhaps more

675 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Peter' (former pupil, 1990-6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.154.

676 Transcript, day 241: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.107.

677 Transcript, day 241: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.111.

678 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'Hector' (former pupil, 1984-91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.170.

679 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.104.

680 Transcript, day 241: Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.107.

‘It’s not enough that people can quote by rote a series of headings that they’re meant to be living their lives by.’

teasing than in a non-boarding school, but for me it was just banter.⁶⁸¹

However true that was for him, the culture as he saw it invited behaviour that could fall on either side of the line between banter and abuse, and allow it to become so normalised that the line was blurred or invisible.

As ‘Noah’ said: ‘A lot of what I now consider as abusive has only seemed to me to be inappropriate behaviour on reflection and mostly after having my own children. That ... is when I really started to question what I’d seen and experienced at Queen Victoria School.’⁶⁸²

‘That is when I really started to question what I’d seen and experienced at Queen Victoria School.’

‘Noah’ also rightly recognised that in the modern world harmful, abusive bullying is likely to be perpetrated insidiously via social media. Children at boarding schools will be just as, if not more, at risk of being subjected to it.

Colonel Clive Knightley made a similar point, albeit from a different perspective:

I have almost 46 years to reflect on from when I first joined the army, and again the change has been immense over that period. But we still come across examples of [silence or lack of openness] and simply creating a policy is not enough. It’s got to be enacted, it’s got to be assured, and people have got to look beyond the headlines. I was particularly taken by the sort of discussion about the types of abuse. It’s not enough that people can quote by rote a series of headings that they’re meant to be living their lives by. We need to have the means to show and see that people are living that, not just quoting it.⁶⁸³

His observations call to mind some of the evidence given in a different case study.⁶⁸⁴ Eddie Frizzell has extensive experience of governance in education, including in relation to residential establishments for children (though not those in the independent sector). Whilst observing that ‘it is quite important to have systems and policies’, he stressed that ‘just having them doesn’t do it’,⁶⁸⁵ because what matters

is getting the people to do what’s required of them in terms of the purpose of the organisation they work for, their role in it, what the values are, what the standards are that are expected of them, again a lead has to be set from the top on that. Setting standards is very important.

681 [Transcript, day 238](#): read-in statement of ‘Peter’ (former pupil, 1990–6), at TRN-8-000000029, p.137.

682 [Written statement of ‘Noah’](#) (former pupil, 1984–90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.23, paragraph 81.

683 [Transcript, day 241](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012–21), at TRN-8-000000032, p.119.

684 [Transcript, day 425](#): Eddie Frizzell, at TRN-12-000000057.

685 [Transcript, day 425](#): Eddie Frizzell, at TRN-12-000000057, p.186.

And working within the overall direction. There has to be some direction and some vision for the organisation that people buy into. Ideally they buy into it when they want to apply for a job there. It is already developed, then they should have been involved in developing it and then they need to be constantly encouraged to live it. And if you are new to the organisation, then the induction is very important and what will be expected of you and how you do your job is very important. That gets backed up with a proper performance management system.⁶⁸⁶

He referred to this advice as ‘the shortest management book you have probably ever heard’ and added that ‘vision and leadership from the top really is where it has to start’.⁶⁸⁷

I could not take issue with any of what he recommended in that ‘shortest management book’ and, on the evidence in this and other parts of the boarding schools case study, it could be applied equally to the whole of the boarding school sector.

Reporting

‘Andrew’ referred to the need for a child to be properly supported and feel able to report concerns:

There should be more individual support offered to children entering boarding school. They should be sat down and told what to expect and what is expected from them. There should be someone in the teaching staff who you can go to to talk to about anything that is causing you problems.⁶⁸⁸

He went on: ‘There should be a point of contact for a child to go to ... When they are sexually abused or bullied there should be someone available to help and prevent it from continuing.’⁶⁸⁹

He made an important point. There should be not only someone to help after abuse has occurred, but someone to help prevent it continuing. As ‘Noah’ said:

It was a major thing for me to have reported what I was experiencing but nothing ultimately happened. There has to be something in place to investigate what was happening, why it happened and how the school was going to stop it happening. There was none of that whatsoever when I was at the school and tried to report what was happening to me.⁶⁹⁰

Listening to children is all-important. Further, just like adults, children communicate through their behaviour, so listening to children must include listening with your eyes, watching their behaviour, and being alert to any changes.

Take, for example, ‘Andrew’:

I think I became very withdrawn and my attention to my work went downhill, definitely. And it has been borne out in my yearly form reports, which I received last year and it’s quite clear from the reports that ... my education had gone downhill quite dramatically. And I think now, being older, that it was due to being bullied, harassed, whatever you like to call it, sexually abused or whatever, yeah?

686 [Transcript, day 425](#): Eddie Frizzell, at TRN-12-000000057, pp.187-8.

687 [Transcript, day 425](#): Eddie Frizzell, at TRN-12-000000057, p.188.

688 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of ‘Andrew’ (former pupil, 1965-7), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.32-3.

689 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of ‘Andrew’ (former pupil, 1965-7), at TRN-8-000000027, p.33.

690 [Written statement of ‘Noah’](#) (former pupil, 1984-90), at WIT-1-000001133, p.32, paragraph 110.

‘I was probably in a lot of distress.’

I think that’s what happened there. And I was probably in a lot of distress.⁶⁹¹

always with people who were as aggressive as I was.⁶⁹⁴

‘James’, who exhibited changes in behaviour, offered this reflection:

My success or otherwise at secondary school depended on the teachers I had. My modern studies teacher was the only one who gave me a voice. Some of the teachers would squash any signs of individuality as soon as they saw them. I started losing faith in myself. There were periods when I was isolated and I couldn’t phone home to speak to my parents. I started acting up. I would make loud comments and the teachers started referring to me as the one with the loud voice. This was picked up by some of the other boys. I started getting into more and more trouble.⁶⁹²

Ironically, the headteacher Julian Hankinson did once show concern: ‘I remember him saying, “I worry about you and other boys who are as angry as you are.” He said he was worried about the impact my behaviour would have on me going forward.’⁶⁹⁵ However, that anxiety did not translate into any material effort to discover why there was such noticeable anger.

It was even worse for ‘Ann’ who was in obvious distress but with nobody trying to find out why: ‘Nobody really sat me down, even a couple of good teachers could have sat me down and discussed it and said: “Look, what’s really going on here?” because a child doesn’t cry infinitely for hours and hours of the day or night without there being a real reason.’⁶⁹⁶

‘There were periods when I was isolated and I couldn’t phone home to speak to my parents. I started acting up.’

‘Felix’, in offering his reflections on this matter, recalled a boy who

He went on: ‘By the time I got to Secondary 4 and Secondary 5 I had lost interest in school.’⁶⁹³ As he explained, with nothing having been done by the school to investigate the reasons behind this, ‘the more things fell apart for me, as I got more angry and frustrated, I got into more fights ... It was

played up to the role, played up to the mickey-taking, played up to the stereotype that he was given, and that would be in front of the teachers. So my reflection on being an adult 30 years later, I would be questioning why somebody would be acting out like that or acting in that way and asking them what was going on.’⁶⁹⁷

691 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of ‘Andrew’ (former pupil, 1965–7), at TRN-8-000000027, pp.68–9.

692 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.93.

693 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.111.

694 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.108–10.

695 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.121.

696 Transcript, day 236: ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.73.

697 Transcript, day 237: ‘Felix’ (former pupil, 1989–92), at TRN-8-000000028, p.140.

Graeme Beattie, a teacher well regarded by many applicants, agreed:

I think it is important to train staff about what behaviour tells us and how to help pupils. This will enable schools to understand the reason behind behaviour and protect children in the future. The school should have a child protection officer who is trained and everyone in the school community knows and trusts. The school protocols and practices should be evaluated annually by the school and regularly checked by external agencies.⁶⁹⁸

A particular feature of QVS was, and is, the pressures on children that arise when their parents are serving in the armed forces. As 'John' observed:

You had to realise that these kids were far from home, they were missing their parents. Their father or mother may have been in a very difficult physical situation, ie Iraq or Afghanistan. You had to be aware of those things ... You had to think to yourself: is this them or is this what's happening at home ... So you had to weigh these things up.⁶⁹⁹

'You had to realise that these kids were far from home, they were missing their parents.'

That is not to say it can be safely assumed that when a child's behaviour or performance deteriorates, the reason must be anxiety about their parents. Rather, it is a matter of recognising that the starting point for such children is that position of acute vulnerability.

698 [Written statement of Graeme Beattie](#) (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at WIT-1-000000498, pp.14–15, paragraphs 67–8.

699 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.31.

700 [Transcript, day 236](#): read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978–85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.127.

Positive aspects of the military culture and ethos

There were applicants who were proud of the school, despite the abuse they suffered. 'Martin' put it this way:

Was Queen Victoria School just a glorified car park or left luggage room for the children of those in the army? I suppose their intentions were honourable and of the best and it's easy to judge history by today's standard.

Some think abuse is only of a sexual nature but many of us think abuse is wider than that, especially when it impacts on a person's mental health. The fact that I am still involved in the alumni of the school shows that the school couldn't have been all bad. And of course it wasn't all bad. I would hope that I have got over to the Inquiry the excellence of the academic value of the school.

However, the school did not prepare you for the world or invest in a child's future and I think it simply assumed that most of us would go into the army. Many did and a boy in the year above me ended his career in the rank of Major General responsible for the army in Scotland. We are proud that one of our own ended up in charge of the whole shooting match in Scotland.⁷⁰⁰

Did QVS achieve its aims?

'Clifton' was positive about this:

My general sense of having been at the school was positive because, for the most part, I felt very safe ... They were my family. They shouldn't have been my family, but that's what

it felt like to me. That's where I belonged. And I've come away from that and thought about it over the years since, decades ... I still have that sense of it having been a more positive experience than negative.⁷⁰¹

However, others felt differently. For example, 'Andy' said:

I think my feeling is one of regret and missed opportunity at the boarding school because, you know, we're small classes. They could have done so much more, I feel. But perhaps that wasn't really what they were wanting to do ... I don't know what their sort of ethos behind the school, what they'd chosen to do. Perhaps they achieved it ... I think a lot of the boys have gone on to have successful military careers ... and they probably would think: what's he on about? It was brilliant.⁷⁰²

'Joe' was glad to be away from the culture when he went on to further education at college after QVS: 'I was away from that regimental disciplined life and it was totally uplifting.'⁷⁰³

'I was away from that regimental disciplined life and it was totally uplifting.'

Colonel Clive Knightley conceded that the military ethos of the school had, in the past, been unhelpful. He said:

The original minute of agreement from 1905 that established the school was explicit in saying that it was preparing children for a

career, in those days, in the Army or the Navy. I think, with the benefit of hindsight, we should perhaps have moved away from that negative aspect of the military connection and moved towards where I think we are now, which is a healthy reflection of the school's history which actually benefits the school. I think we could have moved to that a little faster in the past, that would have been of enormous benefit to all.⁷⁰⁴

Assessment of staff by applicants and other witnesses

A number of applicants identified what characteristics children valued in the QVS staff. 'Alex', speaking of the school chaplain, Mr Orich, said:

He was probably one of the best teachers in the school at that time ... I would say he was probably the most calm, involving, engaged teacher I'd ever sort of come across ... He had no reason to discipline a class ... I don't think there was ever any reason for him to discipline a class.⁷⁰⁵

'Keith' spoke well of Ben Philip, from the perspective of a senior pupil:

For S4 to S6 I was in Haig House. Ben Philip was the housemaster. I have fond memories of him. He was very calm and level-headed. The matron was Betty McKeitch but she retired whilst I was there and was replaced by Liz Evans. She formed a formidable team with Ben Philip. We were older so had more freedom. We felt respected by the housemaster and matron. If we crossed a line, we were made aware of that in a firm and polite way. Ben

701 Transcript, day 238: 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984-92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.55.

702 Transcript, day 237: 'Andy' (former pupil, 1966-72), at TRN-8-000000028, p.43.

703 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.68.

704 Transcript, day 241: Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012-21), at TRN-8-000000032, p.120.

705 Transcript, day 237: 'Alex' (former pupil, 1979-83), at TRN-8-000000028, pp.90-1.

‘[Alice Hainey] had a real connection with people, she could read them really well.’

Philip ensured that we were looked after but generally treated us like adults. The S6 boys sometimes visited Ben Philip’s flat and on occasion Liz Evans’ flat in small groups for coffee/biscuits and a chat. Ben Philip was always approachable, and you could always have a chat with him.⁷⁰⁶

‘Clifton’, speaking of Brigadier Tweedy, said: ‘He was gentle, he seemed caring. He was interested in you as a person. He was also interesting to us because he was, I suppose, in some ways a peculiar figure, not a type of person I’d ever come across before, but – yeah, he was just interesting.’⁷⁰⁷

He also spoke highly of Mr Silcox, the padre, saying: ‘I don’t know anyone who didn’t like him. Yeah, he was a nice man, approachable, certainly got that sense from him that he was approachable, that he was – he was interested in you, again. And that if you did have any problem, he would be on your side.’⁷⁰⁸

Glenn Harrison, referring to Julian Hankinson, said: ‘The headmaster of the school was Mr Julian Hankinson ... He was a good man and he was always very fair. The boys respected him.’⁷⁰⁹

Of Alice Hainey, ‘Mark’ said: ‘She had a real connection with people, she could read them

really well ... she was almost like a giant ear, I suppose, walking round and people just speak with her’.⁷¹⁰

‘Mark’ went on: ‘she was always visible, always interacting with pupils, staff, and I found her to be a very positive person’.⁷¹¹

‘James’ spoke of the great good an interested teacher can achieve for a child, even a disengaged child as he then was:

Towards the end of my exclusion from chemistry at Queen Victoria School I was removed from the corridor and had to go to the classroom of the deputy headteacher, Glen Paterson, who taught physics. He informally got me interested in electronics to keep me occupied. In Secondary 5 I achieved a Scotvec in Electronic Construction. I think I was the only student to do so at Queen Victoria School. Ironically I built on this tiny achievement by attending college in Wales and went on to complete a BTech in Electronics. It turned out I did have a bit of a brain, contrary to how I felt when I left QVS. It was this BTech qualification that allowed me to join the RAF as an avionics technician.⁷¹²

These qualities – calm, caring, interested, and engaged – are worthy of nurture if a boarding school is to establish and maintain a culture that does not facilitate abuse. But

706 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘Keith’ (former pupil, 1983–91), at TRN-8-000000029, p.179.

707 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.13.

708 Transcript, day 238: ‘Clifton’ (former pupil, 1984–92), at TRN-8-000000029, pp.39–40.

709 Transcript, day 238: Glenn Harrison (former science teacher and housemaster, 1989–91) at TRN-8-000000029, p.58.

710 Transcript, day 239: ‘Mark’ (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998–2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.15.

711 Transcript, day 239: ‘Mark’ (former English teacher and assistant housemaster, 1998–2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.14.

712 Transcript, day 238: read-in statement of ‘James’ (former pupil, 1985–92), at TRN-8-000000029, p.115.

relying on happenstance won't do; positive efforts need to be made to identify staff who have them, to support them, and to guide them.

Reflections by other witnesses

Honesty, openness, and transparency

Some reflections as to the necessary school culture were offered. 'John' felt that what was required was one where

pupils, staff, or parents have no worries about going to someone and saying: 'I think this is happening', and it won't reflect on them ... you've got to feel that if you bring something to – especially if it's someone more senior than you, that you're not going to be blamed and that your word is going to be accepted and it's going to be looked at. It might not be the outcome that you want, but it would be looked at.⁷¹³

Balancing practice with bureaucracy

Two senior teachers I heard spoke of the risk of bureaucracy overload. Steve Laing said:

I did ten years as a housemaster and then stepped down to be an assistant housemaster again for about three years and eventually retired from housemaster duties in March 2004. It changed quite a bit over the 10 years I was doing the role. There was much more paperwork involved latterly. I really preferred interacting with the children rather than the bureaucracy I had

to deal with. It was quite an arduous job as housemaster.⁷¹⁴

'John' said that as policies progressed, it was 'constant audits. Audits all the time ... by and large, the time taken to do them almost outweighed their usefulness.'⁷¹⁵

'I really preferred interacting with the children rather than the bureaucracy.'

Of the content of written policies, 'John' said:

I think people just got fed up with reading the same introduction to everything. You know, instead of just getting to the point, you had to go through all this, you know, preamble and it was the same preamble over and over again instead of just saying: 'These are the points you want to do, one, two, three, four', and it just put you off reading them, actually ... Verbiage, yeah.⁷¹⁶

Further, headteacher Wendy Bellars said:

The language of the Scottish government when it comes to publishing education guidance in particular is very unreadable. It's not easy to take in. It's almost as if somebody has put down keywords that he or she thinks are important and then publishes them rather than being a description of what might actually happen on the ground or what a teacher might want to know ... We did have to take an awfully long time working out what they meant.⁷¹⁷

713 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.77.

714 Transcript, day 240: read-in statement of Steve Laing (former technical studies teacher, assistant housemaster, and housemaster, 1984–2019), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.98–9.

715 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.70 and 71.

716 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997–2012), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.72 and 73.

717 Transcript, day 240: Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.130–1.

‘You must always be on your guard for any incident of abuse. Always.’

Reflections by the school

Donald Shaw saw the need for thoughtful child protection at all levels of the school. Looking broadly, he said: ‘From every incident that occurs you simply have to make your policies, your protocols, your procedures better. You have to learn from every single one ... You must always be on your guard for any incident of abuse. Always.’ He also said ‘You have to be alive to everything ... You must keep your eyes open at all times for any aspect of abuse.’⁷¹⁸

He also demonstrated that he had listened to the evidence and considered it at less obvious levels, recognising that past failings

had resulted in ‘a massive impact on those who have suffered abuse.’⁷¹⁹ He went on:

What I recognise is that if somebody makes a flippant comment to somebody and they think it’s just a flippant comment, that that could have a massive impact on the person they’ve made that comment to ... I need to get across to my staff that flippant comments can cause a world of hurt to somebody else.⁷²⁰

The final reflection I wish to refer to is from ‘Ann’, who, at the end of her oral evidence, requested so reasonably: ‘Just make sure it doesn’t all happen again to anybody, please. That’s all I ask.’⁷²¹

718 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, pp.69, 70, and 96.

719 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, pp.114–16.

720 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, pp.116–17.

721 [Transcript, day 236](#): ‘Ann’ (former pupil, 1965–70), at TRN-8-000000027, p.98.

12

Records

Introduction

Queen Victoria School does not have records covering the entirety of the period under consideration⁷²² and so cannot demonstrate adherence to good record-keeping policies and practices for the entire duration of this investigation.⁷²³ The earliest pupil records available date from 1962, though there are many older documents including minutes of meetings of the Commissioners from 1929 onwards. The school invited me to accept 'that QVS [would have] adhered to any relevant War Office/MOD policies or procedures, and followed educational best practice'⁷²⁴ on the basis that 'as a Department of State, the War Office (now MOD) was required to meet all relevant statutory direction in respect of the children at the school'.⁷²⁵ That may have been so, but without seeing the records it is not possible to confirm such adherence.

The school did have policies and procedures for record-keeping from the 1990s and adhered to them 'through making the appropriate records available for review/

inspection by appropriate bodies ... Other records have been retained, transferred, or destroyed as required by MOD policy and relevant legislation/professional guidance.'⁷²⁶ Record-keeping policies were, at least in the later stages covered by SCAI's investigation, subject to review to 'reflect changes in statutory direction and professional guidance, and MOD policy'.⁷²⁷ Changes following such reviews were documented.⁷²⁸

QVS has been clear that it has 'been more able to collate information from approximately 1990 to 2014' but acknowledged that 'we are able to provide more information as we get closer to 2014'.⁷²⁹ A plan is being put in place to deal with file retention and the destruction of records in line with current regulations.⁷³⁰

HM Commissioners' records

Minute books exist for meetings of HM Commissioners from 1929 onwards; they contain extensive records including the noting of concerns about welfare and appropriate use of discipline; the termly

722 QVS, MOD covering letter regarding section 21 notices, 20 February 2019, at MOD.001.001.0001.

723 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.12.

724 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.33.

725 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.16.

726 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.37.

727 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.35.

728 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.35.

729 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice, addendum to appendix](#), at MOD-000000541.

730 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.38.

reports of Visiting Commissioners; and reports from the commandant and, later, the headmasters. In combination they provide good evidence that the governing body took its responsibilities in relation to governance and management of the school seriously.

Staff records

The school currently holds basic records for existing staff. Full records for existing and former staff are held by MOD Defence Business Services.⁷³¹ Staffing policies and procedures were 'recorded in the MOD's Military and Civilian policies, as updated, and were retained in the HQ organisations of the day. Since the 1990s the Policies have been gradually transferred to centrally maintained electronic documents.'⁷³² QVS continues to follow MOD policies and procedures for the creation, maintenance, and retention of such records.

Pupil records

Pupil records (including admissions information) dating back to 1962 have been retained.⁷³³ Such files include, for each pupil, details of significant events and/or complaints, and the school's response to those complaints. Currently, MOD and QVS policies and procedures set out the requirement to maintain and retain individual records for each pupil. A detailed file continues to be kept on each pupil, with a record of all matters relating to discipline, complaints, and support measures.

Childcare and child protection

In relation to the existence of, and adherence to, policies and procedures for caring for children at QVS, the school holds limited records covering the early period of interest to the Inquiry, namely Commissioner Reports, minutes of meetings of the Board of HM Commissioners, and the commandant's beat book for the period 1940-58.⁷³⁴ QVS states that it has always 'been accountable to the War Office/MOD'⁷³⁵ and the documents demonstrate adherence.

There is evidence that, as at 1985, the school maintained a corporal punishment book and that some of the entries in it were such that the Visiting Commissioner 'welcomed the decision to supervise more closely the use of such punishment'.⁷³⁶

There are no records documenting reviews of policies and procedures concerning the care of children, but the school believes that 'policies and procedures have been reviewed regularly'.⁷³⁷ For example, there was a major review of policy in relation to bullying in the early 1990s⁷³⁸ and, from 1994, changes were made to policies in preparation for the first admission of girls in 1996.

Record-keeping systems

Currently, records are kept using the 3sys information management system. All discipline, house, and boarding issues,

731 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.38.

732 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.13.

733 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.6.

734 QVS, Commandant's Punishment Book, 1940-58, at MOD-000000075.

735 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, pp.10 and 12.

736 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 10 November 1985, at MOD-000000574, p.26.

737 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.10.

738 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.10.

alongside concerns about wellbeing, are recorded on this system to which all staff can log in.⁷³⁹ Donald Shaw explained that 3sys is 'a reporting system where anyone can put in a report about a child at any point of concern, and that goes straight to the child protection co-ordinator and the senior team'.⁷⁴⁰ He continued: 'Absolutely everything is on that database system. So teachers and tutors are using it on a daily basis.'⁷⁴¹

He provided further clarification, saying: 'The idea of starting a process of recording those concerns means that a pattern can be clearly identified by the information which is within the system. That pattern has to be identified by a human being, of course, because the system can't identify it itself.'⁷⁴²

Discipline records 'are kept in a child's chronology, in line with "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC). Every pupil has an individual file and all discipline issues and sanctions are included in that file.'⁷⁴³ QVS has recently moved to 'making this an electronic record'.⁷⁴⁴

From 2019, following the uncovering of James Clark's sexual abuse of children over a lengthy period, QVS introduced a method

of reporting and recording whereby a staff member or pupil can report any concerns to the child protection co-ordinator by scanning a QR code. This allows the concerns to be recorded and investigated.⁷⁴⁵

Donald Shaw stated that:

all incidents ... categorised as abuse are fully recorded and filed; this includes notes of the initial disclosure, interview notes, police or social services involvement, and the final conclusion. In instances of child protection, this is fully summarised in a child protection incident log which is open and fully accessible to all regulatory bodies such as the Care Inspectorate and HMLe.⁷⁴⁶

Recording of complaints

The recording of complaints at QVS

involves the process of initial disclosure, observation, recording and reporting via an official referral form which is handed to the Child Protection Office. The child should not be interviewed by a staff member. The child protection co-ordinator collates all relevant details, which may include interview, and there is a meeting with relevant staff and the Head to make a final decision, which may involve

739 [Written statement of 'Grant'](#) (teacher, 1996–present), at WIT-1-000000472, p.10, paragraph 52.

740 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.71.

741 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.72.

742 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, p.74.

743 [Written statement of Donald Shaw](#) (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at WIT-1-000000479, p.12, paragraph 58. [GIRFEC](#) is a Scottish Government policy that seeks to improve outcomes for children and young people by placing the child at the centre. It was first introduced in 2006.

744 [Written statement of Donald Shaw](#) (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at WIT-1-000000479, p.12, paragraph 58.

745 [Transcript, day 218](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000009, pp.67–9.

746 [Written statement of Donald Shaw](#) (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at WIT-1-000000479, pp.18–19, paragraph 97.

external agencies. The pupil's confidential child protection profile is also updated.⁷⁴⁷

Guidance and instruction is given to staff on 'how to handle, and respond to, reports of abuse or ill-treatment of children by staff, other adults, or fellow pupils at in-service training on the Observe, Record and Report process'.⁷⁴⁸

Donald Shaw explained further:

The basic process for a complaint since 2006 has been that the parent/student makes a complaint and then all parties involved are interviewed. In my experience, senior staff have never shied away from being direct about complaints and those who have been subject to a complaint have understood and respected that directness. Once a conclusion is reached, it is communicated to all parties and recorded in the complaints log.⁷⁴⁹

It is common that 'many parents and children [try] to bypass the official complaints policy and complain directly to senior staff via email. Complaints, whether formal or informal, are recorded in the complaints log which is then subject to scrutiny from the Care Inspectorate'.⁷⁵⁰

The complaints log has been available since around 2004/2005. It is viewed annually by the Care Inspectorate.

For investigations and disciplinary matters, detail is contained in pupil records and/or MOD files, depending on the nature of the investigation.⁷⁵¹

Pupils' recollections of record-keeping

'James' wasn't 'aware of what records were being kept by staff. I am not aware of any records of punishment or discipline'.⁷⁵² Regarding pupil reports, he recalls: 'There were school reports which were very candid and they were sent home to parents'.⁷⁵³

'Clifton' remembered his mother 'giving me some that she kept in an envelope. I don't remember seeing any, I can only imagine they were posted straight home. I can't remember ever being handed one to take home'.⁷⁵⁴

Applicants' experiences of retrieving their records from QVS varied. In 2017 'Andrew' wrote to the then headteacher Wendy Bellars to see if the school held records of his time there: 'She wrote back to say that no records existed at the school covering that period. I had written previously over the years, since I had left, but this was the first time that I had received a reply. I still have not seen my school records'.⁷⁵⁵

'Alex' did recover his records from the school:

747 Written statement of 'Grant' (teacher, 1996–present), at WIT-1-000000472, p.11, paragraph 60.

748 Written statement of 'Grant' (teacher, 1996–present), at WIT-1-000000472, p.13, paragraph 72.

749 Written statement of Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at WIT-1-000000479, p.14, paragraph 72.

750 Written statement of Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at WIT-1-000000479, p.14, paragraphs 73–4.

751 QVS, Part C response to section 21 notice, at MOD.001.001.0036, p.38.

752 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985–92), at WIT-1-000000447, p.32, paragraph 133.

753 Written statement of 'James' (former pupil, 1985–92), at WIT-1-000000447, p.32, paragraph 133.

754 Written statement of 'Clifton' (former pupil, 1984–92), at WIT-1-000000466, p.24, paragraph 104.

755 Written statement of 'Andrew' (former pupil, 1965–7), at WIT-1-000000449, p.12, paragraph 58.

They are heavily redacted. A lot of it is illegible because of the quality of the copies that have been made. The sections are all over the place. There is nothing whatsoever mentioned in the records I recovered about my behaviour or the punishments that they gave me. The only reference in the records I view as of any significance to my reporting of my abuse is a section which talks about someone coming in from, I think, from the education authority ... That was the only mention I could find in all the records that might refer to what happened to me ... I suspect that even if it was written down it will have been put in the bin by now.⁷⁵⁶

‘Clifton’ was clear about the type of records he believes ought to have been kept:

It would be subjective thinking about the type of records that should exist, rather than things I’ve seen. If you go back to the incident with the clampdown and the corporal punishment in Wavell House, there should be a record of every child that went through that, the number of times, the number of whacks they had along with the date and the reasons why. This should all be recorded. The detentions, ‘days’, and ‘gating’ should be recorded. Trips away should be recorded, who went where, and who authorised it. Travel records and where people went travelling around the world unescorted should be recorded. The travel warrant should also be recorded.⁷⁵⁷

In responding to requests for their records from former pupils, QVS follows MOD policies based on the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and subsequent data protection legislation,⁷⁵⁸ for example in relation to subject access requests.⁷⁵⁹

Staff recollections of record-keeping

Graeme Beattie, recalling the beginning of his career at QVS in 1984, said that he did not

remember much record-keeping ... There is now a very robust system and we use an electronic information management system to report and record all concerns raised, including child protection. The historical position of record-keeping was minimal, and I can’t remember a policy being explained to me.⁷⁶⁰

Alice Hainey was not aware of ‘complaints or reporting processes’ when she arrived at QVS and nor was she ‘aware of any dedicated recording process regarding complaints’.⁷⁶¹ She said:

If a pupil exhibited any significant indiscipline it was treated as a pastoral concern and the pupil was quietly spoken to in a counselling interview to find out what was amiss. This was done either by a housemaster or myself. Following such an interview, a normal factual note would be put on the pupil’s file. No special record was needed.⁷⁶²

756 [Written statement of ‘Alex’](#) (former pupil, 1979–83), at WIT.001.002.9378, pp.31–2, paragraphs 140–2. In fact other records did exist but were held in the pupil file of ‘Alex’s’ abuser; see MOD-000000568.

757 [Written statement of ‘Clifton’](#) (former pupil, 1984–92), at WIT-1-000000466, p.24, paragraph 103.

758 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, p.34.

759 QVS, [Part C response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0036, pp.37–8.

760 [Written statement of Graeme Beattie](#) (former primary teacher, 1984–6; assistant housemaster and deputy housemaster, 1986–90 and 1993–2012; assistant principal and principal teacher of learning support, 1999–2022), at WIT-1-000000498, p.12, paragraphs 52–3.

761 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992–2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.118.

762 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992–2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.115.

Evelyn Smith had a similar recollection: 'When I took up employment at the school, I could not see an existing policy on record-keeping by staff in my office. The quality of the records I had to use was insufficient.'⁷⁶³

Wendy Bellars said:

During the time I was at QVS, each pupil would have a file kept in the Head's office. Over and above that records were held in Houses. The records in the Houses were not necessarily in the same format as the ones kept in the Head's office. I would say that there was only an informal record-keeping system in place when I arrived.⁷⁶⁴

She continued: 'Record-keeping was formalised with the introduction of the GIRFEC processes. Although very, very time-consuming, the requirements of record-keeping, pupil in-school "case conferences", compiling "chronologies" and so on meant that there were extensive well-kept records on pupils by the time I left.'⁷⁶⁵

Wendy Bellars recalled an occasion whereby the MOD requested records on behalf of a former pupil who 'was making allegations of ill-treatment elsewhere in his life as a child, and had apparently asked for his school records as part of his case'.⁷⁶⁶ The records recovered in the archives were hand-written, uncatalogued, and meagre. She said:

Should a similar request be made nowadays about pupils who were at the school in my time, there would be a considerable body of information. That would be particularly so from the period following GIRFEC becoming the norm. Even with pupil records from those earlier days, some House records and logs, pupil files and so on would probably be available.⁷⁶⁷

The school's response

Donald Shaw advised that in QVS's archives, student records from the 1960s 'often contain details of any allegations of abuse and the resulting actions'.⁷⁶⁸ Expanding on this, he described these files 'from the 1960s/1970s [as] sparse and potentially justifiably so: we really shouldn't have personal records stretching that far back. Files from around 2000 onwards have a wealth of information contained in them which details incidents and responses to them.'⁷⁶⁹

He added, candidly:

We have great records, but if you'll excuse the use of the phrase higgledy-piggledy, occasionally because of the various systems that we use within the school, if someone was to say, 'Can you give me your pupil file on pupil X?', then we would probably just have to get document A from this source, document B from this source.'⁷⁷⁰

763 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), at TRN-8-000000030, p.154.

764 [Written statement of Wendy Bellars](#) (former headteacher, 2017-16), at WIT-1-000000592, p.40, paragraphs 144-5.

765 [Written statement of Wendy Bellars](#) (former headteacher, 2017-16), at WIT-1-000000592, p.40, paragraph 146.

766 [Written statement of Wendy Bellars](#) (former headteacher, 2017-16), at WIT-1-000000592, pp.40-1, paragraph 147.

767 [Written statement of Wendy Bellars](#) (former headteacher, 2017-16), at WIT-1-000000592, p.40, paragraph 147.

768 [Written statement of Donald Shaw](#) (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at WIT-1-000000479, p.19, paragraph 99.

769 [Written statement of Donald Shaw](#) (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at WIT-1-000000479, p.19, paragraph 100.

770 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006-12; senior deputy head, 2012-16; headteacher, 2016-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.106.

The MOD safeguarding reviewer has recommended that QVS try to make the process more efficient.

Conclusions about records

In some respects, the extant QVS records, particularly the minute books from 1929 onwards, do provide a reasonable picture of the school's operation at a high level, with occasional details of individual child protection concerns and the school's

responses. Beyond that, however, record-keeping at QVS, like that of many of the boarding schools in the case study, was inconsistent until the 1990s at the earliest, and available records do not give a clear picture of the nature and extent of the abuse inflicted on children. Even now, in light of Donald Shaw's observations, there is scope for improvement, though it is clear that the school, and the MOD, are willing to learn and to develop record-retention policies that allow greater support for its pupils.

13

Inspections

Introduction

Until Part V of the Education (Scotland) Act 1946 came into force in 1957, there was no statutory control of either the setting up or the running of independent boarding schools by private individuals, organisations, or religious groups.⁷⁷¹ Thereafter, and until 1995, the regulation that did exist afforded the state little oversight of how independent boarding schools operated, or any real power to provide effective protection of children resident there.

Inspection of boarding facilities: background

While there was no formal requirement to inspect independent schools prior to 1946, archived Scottish Education Department files released to SCAI confirm that inspections of boarding schools were taking place regularly from at least the 1920s and, in the case of QVS, from the late 1930s.

Education (Scotland) Act 1946

The Education (Scotland) Act 1946 introduced a number of significant changes to the inspection of schools generally and, in particular, to the oversight of independent schools. Section 61 of the 1946 Act placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Scotland

to arrange for the inspection of every educational establishment.⁷⁷² The Secretary of State had discretion as to the frequency and focus of such inspections.

Section 62 of the 1946 Act allowed independent schools to request an inspection, with the cost of the inspection being met by the school. Whilst section 61 theoretically applied to both state and independent schools, in practice it was section 62 of the 1946 Act that applied to independent schools.⁷⁷³

Part V of the 1946 Act required independent schools to register with the newly created Registrar of Independent Schools in Scotland; failure to do so was a criminal offence. However, it was only with the Registration of Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations 1957 that the relevant provisions came into force. The 1957 Regulations detailed the registration procedure and the information required. Whilst the 1957 Regulations did not establish standards for the care or education of pupils, they bolstered the inspection provisions outlined in Part V of the 1946 Act, by bringing into effect a complaints mechanism. As Professor Norrie stated, this

added teeth to the inspection process that had existed by then for the previous ten years.

771 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.318.

772 [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1946](#), sections 61 and 62.

773 NRS ED48/1377, Registration of Independent Schools: General Policy, 1953-67, Minutes, 6 October 1955, at SGV-000007325, pp.41-2.

Under this mechanism the Secretary of State could specify in a Complaint shortcomings that required to be rectified (having presumably been identified at inspections), in terms of the efficiency and suitability of the education being provided; the suitability of the school premises; the adequacy or suitability of the accommodation provided; the Secretary of State could also conclude that the proprietor of the school or any teacher was not a proper person to be such proprietor or teacher.⁷⁷⁴

The Secretary of State or the Scottish Education Department could strike a school off the register or disqualify a proprietor or teacher. No further details were provided as to the criteria to be applied when considering whether or not to do so.

The 1957 Regulations remained in place until their revocation by the Registration of Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2005, which were in turn replaced by the Registration of Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2006.⁷⁷⁵ The 2006 Regulations continue to apply.

QVS has been registered as an independent school since 1957.⁷⁷⁶

Education (Scotland) Acts 1962 and 1980

Section 61 of the 1946 Act was replaced, unaltered, by section 67 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1962, which in turn was replaced by section 66 of the Education

(Scotland) Act 1980.⁷⁷⁷ Section 62 of the 1946 Act was not repeated in the 1962 Act. This meant that, from 1962, independent schools were no longer able to request an inspection themselves, and – like state schools – were subject to inspection only at the discretion of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The 1980 Act remains in force today, though substantially amended. One significant amendment was made by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. It altered section 125 of the 1980 Act, making it a duty of local authorities and schools' managers or boards to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people whilst resident at a school.⁷⁷⁸ It also gave HM Inspectors of Schools (HMIs) the power to inspect a school in order to determine whether pupils' welfare was being adequately safeguarded and promoted. Until 2001 it was the responsibility of HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) to inspect the boarding facilities within a school.

Inspections at QVS

At QVS, inspections involving the War Office and the Institute of Army Education seem to have taken place regularly.

As early as December 1937, the commandant of QVS wrote to the Scottish Education Department to make the sensible suggestion 'that the question of a Scottish Education Department inspector occasionally visiting the school with the inspecting officer from the War Office should

774 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.319.

775 [The Registration of Independent Schools \(Scotland\) Regulations 2005](#); [The Registration of Independent Schools \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#).

776 The current provisions on the registration of independent schools can be found in the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#) (as amended), and [The Registration of Independent Schools \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#).

777 [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1962](#), section 67; [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#), section 66.

778 [Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#), section 35; [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#), section 125A.

be put up to the War Office after consultation with His Majesty's Commissioners'.⁷⁷⁹

That was thought to be 'a good move' by the Department, and His Majesty's Inspector of Schools for the District joined the Inspector of the Army Educational Corps when he visited the school on 9 June 1938.⁷⁸⁰

That process continued thereafter with regular communication and joint inspections carried out by the two departments.⁷⁸¹ These inspections appear to have been essentially informal, and it was only in November 1966 that a report actually mentioned the inspection being made under section 62 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1946.⁷⁸²

The frequency of inspections by the Scottish Education Department diminished, however, and there appears to have been only one inspection of QVS between 1966 and 1985, taking place in 1975. I am prepared to assume that military inspectors continued visiting until the withdrawal of Royal Army Educational Corps involvement in 1973. Inspection of the school's educational provision continued to be carried out by HMIE until 2011, when Education Scotland was formed and took over responsibility for the inspection of schools. Education Scotland has inspected the education provided at QVS since 2012.⁷⁸³

Other significant amendments to the 1980 Act were made by the Standards in

Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and the School Education (Ministerial Powers and Independent Schools) (Scotland) Act 2004. The 2000 Act introduced new grounds for refusing registration of a school and new grounds for complaint.⁷⁸⁴ The 2004 Act restructured the registration rules found in the 1980 Act, and for the first time included the criteria for the granting of registration.

The Care Commission and the Care Inspectorate

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, section 1, provided for the establishment of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (the Care Commission).⁷⁸⁵ On its establishment in 2002 the Care Commission took over the regulation and inspection of care services, including boarding facilities at independent schools. The first *National Care Standards* were published in 2002.

In 2011 the Care Inspectorate took over the functions of the Care Commission, the Social Work Inspection Agency, and the child protection unit of HMIE. The Care Inspectorate, accordingly, became responsible for the regulation and inspection of residential facilities at boarding schools in Scotland. The *National Care Standards* were replaced by the *Health and Social Care Standards* in 2018.⁷⁸⁶

The Care Commission had, and the Care Inspectorate had and has, the power to

779 QVS, Letter to the Scottish Education Department, 17 December, 1937, at SGV-000067153, p.1.

780 QVS, Correspondence from the Scottish Education Department, December 1937 and May 1938, at SGV-000067153, pp.3-5.

781 See Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, November 1966, at SGV-000064484 and Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 26 and 27 June 1940, at SGV-000064487.

782 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, November 1966, at SGV-000064484, p.76.

783 Education Scotland, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 1 May 2012, at SGV-000010320.

784 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.323.

785 [Regulation of Care \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#), section 1.

786 [Health and Social Care Standards | Care Inspectorate Hub](#).

make recommendations and to set out requirements. Recommendations are, of their nature, neither mandatory nor enforceable. Requirements, on the other hand, are, when issued, both mandatory and enforceable. The care service provider must make the required improvements within a given timescale. A service's registration may be cancelled if a requirement is not met within that timescale. The Care Inspectorate can apply to the Sheriff Court for emergency cancellation of a service's registration if it believes that there is a serious and immediate threat to life or wellbeing.

The Care Inspectorate has developed several quality frameworks to apply when evaluating care services. To do so, it has drawn on the National Care Standards and, since 2018, the Health and Social Care Standards. In 2021 the Care Inspectorate published its quality framework for evaluating boarding schools in Scotland.

Prior to the development of the frameworks referred to above, the Care Commission and the Care Inspectorate applied certain themes and statements in the course of their inspections. QVS was registered with the Care Commission from 2006 until 2011, and has been registered with its successor, the Care Inspectorate, since 2011.

Visiting Commissioners

Unlike other boarding schools in the case study, QVS was and is subject to the additional oversight and inspection provided by HM Commissioners:

There is also a Visiting Commissioner visit, which happens at least once per year,

sometimes twice a year, when usually two Commissioners together will visit the school, very often with a particular purpose in mind, and they at the end of that prepare a report for the Board as a whole to discuss and comment on and act upon if necessary.⁷⁸⁷

Commissioners have thus been able to identify and raise concerns about pastoral matters, including, for example, appropriate punishment, and have responded to complaints received.

Inspection records

In its section 21 response, QVS stated that the school was routinely inspected by HMIE and by the Care Inspectorate as well as by their predecessor organisations. Details of inspections carried out by members of the Board of HM Commissioners; the Scottish Education Department and War Office; HM Inspectors (including Education Scotland); the Care Commission; and the Care Inspectorate, to the extent known by SCAI, are set out in Tables 6-10 in [Appendix C](#). In addition, the school was regularly visited by relevant specialists from within the MOD.⁷⁸⁸

The oversight of QVS by the Secretary of State for Defence has evolved over the period and has seen professionally qualified teaching and safeguarding staff from the MOD increasingly providing both advice and assurance during formal and informal visits to the school.

QVS, along with every other school in Scotland, remains subject to visits from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate whose reports are a matter of public record.

787 [Transcript, day 218](#): Alan Plumtree (former chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, 2012-22), at TRN-8-000000009, p.59.

788 QVS, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice](#), at MOD.001.001.0002 and MOD-000000653.

Evidence from applicants about inspections

Most applicants recalled external visits to the school taking place but were unsure about the status of the inspection and who was involved. Bob said: 'We only really saw the commandant of the school when dignitaries visited. I couldn't say whether there were any official inspections.'⁷⁸⁹

'Andrew' said: 'I don't remember any formal school inspection in the time I was there. Quite a few dignitaries visited the schools at different times.'⁷⁹⁰

'Joe' said: 'I can't remember who the visiting inspectors were each year but it was always someone very high up in the military. A lot of politicians, majors, and generals visited the school.'⁷⁹¹

'Martin' said: 'There were military heads, top people, who came into the school to look at various aspects of the school and I'm sure ministers from the Scottish Education Department attended to review the school and its procedures. It wasn't unusual to have a VIP personage attend the school.'⁷⁹²

It seems likely that these visits, other than those that were regular Commissioner assessments, were not formal inspections. That is in line with the impression given by other boarding schools to the effect that

statutory inspections were at best rare during the 1960s to mid-1990s.

Evidence from staff about inspections

Alice Hainey recalled that 'individual Commissioners visited the school from time to time ... Commissioners spoke to groups of children and Lord Cullen⁷⁹³ sat with a group of Primary 7 boys in my early days to find out what PSE and circle time was all about'.⁷⁹⁴

'John' conceded that whilst the Visiting Commissioners' visits were taken seriously by the senior management team, 'I don't think they were taken as seriously as an HMI visit or a Care Commission visit'.⁷⁹⁵

Wendy Bellars said: 'With the Commissioners, the relationship was much closer. We saw them far more often. A lot of them were local. They understood, to a greater or lesser extent depending upon the Commissioner, how the school worked and what the ethos was.'⁷⁹⁶

Wendy Bellars made the point that the closer relationship and the understanding HM Commissioners had of the school meant they had something to offer that was different from the inspectors:

The inspectors who came from HMIE or SSSC or ... the Care Inspectorate, very often came from very different backgrounds and it was

789 Transcript, day 236: 'Bob' (former pupil, 1951-5), at TRN-8-000000027, p.8.

790 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Andrew' (former pupil, 1965-7), at TRN-8-000000027, p.26.

791 Transcript, day 237: read-in statement of 'Joe' (former pupil, 1977-85), at TRN-8-000000028, p.60.

792 Transcript, day 236: read-in statement of 'Martin' (former pupil, 1978-85), at TRN-8-000000027, p.112.

793 Lord Cullen was Lord Justice Clerk of the Court of Session from 1997 until 2002. He was also one of HM Commissioners.

794 Transcript, day 239: read-in statement of Alice Hainey (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 1992-2002), at TRN-8-000000030, p.121.

795 Transcript, day 240: 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.33.

796 Transcript, day 240: Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.126.

difficult sometimes for, say, an inspector who had a background in childcare, in foster care, in social work or the state sector, thinking of HMle, to understand that things were just a bit different in QVS, and even more so I think in the other independent schools.⁷⁹⁷

Her impression was that that did not change prior to her departure in 2016.

As Mark Pyper explained in relation to Gordonstoun,⁷⁹⁸ inspection can be of real assistance to a school. Brian Raine said: 'I had started disciplinary proceedings against Lyn Smith but in conversation with one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, I mentioned that I was having problems with a teacher and would be delighted if we could have our next inspection soon.'⁷⁹⁹

'Grant' also recalled this particular time and confirmed that staff who had concerns would bring them up with HMle inspectors during their visit.⁸⁰⁰

'John' said:

I think we saw the value of them, that was for sure, because when you're not in the state system properly, you can feel ... slightly isolated, and you wonder whether what you're doing is right. And it was a way of somebody saying 'yes, it is' or 'that could be done better' or 'that could be done differently'.⁸⁰¹

Seeking assistance from inspectors was a recurring theme at QVS, and as far back as 1965 the school sought a full HMle inspection as a way of assessing its educational efficiency.⁸⁰² Headteacher Julian Hankinson and HM Commissioners also did this in December 1991 when faced with allegations of widespread bullying at the school: 'He had asked for an Independent Review, and he had got it. It was blunt, positive, it suggested ideas and he had asked for all that.'⁸⁰³

Evelyn Smith spoke of an approach that showed the school valued the learning an inspection could provide: 'My recollection of the school's strategic approach ... was that the school management team would work through any recommendations from previous inspections or Commissioner visits to produce plans for implementing these.'⁸⁰⁴

Wendy Bellars acknowledged the burden but also the real benefits of inspections:

I think heads have mixed feelings about it. Yes, we want to know that the school is doing as well as possible, and if there is a problem we want to know about it so we can get it sorted, but goodness, it's a stressful experience. Not least getting all the paperwork assembled so that the inspectors can see it all. But it's worth doing. It's worth all the hassle. It's worth the

797 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007-16), at TRN-8-000000031, pp.126-7.

798 [Transcript, day 234](#): Mark Pyper (former headmaster, Gordonstoun, 1990-2011; principal from 1999), at TRN-8-000000025, pp.115-16.

799 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Brian Raine (former deputy head, 1993-4; headteacher, 1994-2006), at TRN-8-000000030, p.180.

800 [Transcript, day 241](#): 'Grant' (teacher, 1996-present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.45.

801 [Transcript, day 240](#): 'John' (former teacher, 1997-2012), at TRN-8-000000031, p.37.

802 QVS, Letters seeking HMI inspection, November 1965, at SGV-000067150, pp.1-4.

803 QVS, Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Her Majesty's Commissioners, 9 March 1992, at MOD-000000601, p.99.

804 [Transcript, day 239](#): read-in statement of Evelyn Smith (former assistant headteacher (pastoral), 2002-5), at TRN-8-000000030, p.139.

stress. Because you get an external specialist's view of what's going on in the school.⁸⁰⁵

QVS, as a military school, has another layer of inspections through the MOD, which recently appointed a chief safeguarding officer, Bev Martin. Donald Shaw said:

DCS [Defence Children Services], because of the change in system and because of being able to recruit more staff, have been able to appoint a chief safeguarding officer and that chief safeguarding officer has come in from an external agency who were used to regular reviews of safeguarding in establishments. So a system has been put in place to have a safeguarding review in school, every MOD school every three years, and it just so happened that QVS, I believe, happened to be the first of those schools to have this safeguarding review.⁸⁰⁶

Conclusions about inspections

QVS is inspected more regularly than other schools and, on the evidence, that has highlighted matters needing to be addressed. It seems significant that some of the worst abuse occurred in the decades between the 1960s and 1990s, when inspections were at their lowest frequency

and at times non-existent, rather than, as is required, current and regular.

QVS continues to have the right mindset about the need for oversight, as demonstrated by the current leadership. Donald Shaw said:

We are very open to this kind of inspection and I know that the child protection co-ordinator, the deputy head (pupil support), have both been very keen to have the process reviewed independently and be given items to improve. Obviously you want to have areas of strength identified, but ... it has given me an idea of what we do well and what we can improve on as we move forward.⁸⁰⁷

Colonel Clive Knightley, deputy head at the time, said:

Inspections did take place before but seem to have come back into a much more formal routine so that we know that those inspections will take place and there won't be an interval that will end up being too long and people will not notice that actually whatever assurance was provided in that inspection is in reality no longer valid because far too much time has elapsed.⁸⁰⁸

805 [Transcript, day 240](#): Wendy Bellars (former headteacher, 2007–16), at TRN-8-000000031, p.126.

806 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.102.

807 [Transcript, day 241](#): Donald Shaw (former head of maths, 2006–12; senior deputy head, 2012–16; headteacher, 2016–present), at TRN-8-000000032, p.102.

808 [Transcript, day 241](#): Colonel Clive Knightley (former deputy head, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding, 2012–21), at TRN-8-000000032, p.104.

Appendix A – Terms of Reference

Introduction

The overall aim and purpose of this Inquiry is to raise public awareness of the abuse of children in care, particularly during the period covered by SCAI. It will provide an opportunity for public acknowledgement of the suffering of those children and a forum for validation of their experience and testimony.

The Inquiry will do this by fulfilling its Terms of Reference which are set out below.

1. To investigate the nature and extent of abuse of children whilst in care in Scotland, during the relevant time frame.
2. To consider the extent to which institutions and bodies with legal responsibility for the care of children failed in their duty to protect children in care in Scotland (or children whose care was arranged in Scotland) from abuse, regardless of where that abuse occurred, and in particular to identify any systemic failures in fulfilling that duty.
3. To create a national public record and commentary on abuse of children in care in Scotland during the relevant time frame.
4. To examine how abuse affected and still affects these victims in the long term, and how in turn it affects their families.
5. The Inquiry is to cover that period which is within living memory of any person who suffered such abuse, up until such date as the Chair may determine, and in any event not beyond 17 December 2014.
6. To consider the extent to which failures by state or non-state institutions (including the courts) to protect children in care in Scotland from abuse have been addressed by changes to practice, policy or legislation, up until such date as the Chair may determine.
7. To consider whether further changes in practice, policy or legislation are necessary in order to protect children in care in Scotland from such abuse in future.
8. To report to the Scottish Ministers on the above matters, and to make recommendations, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Definitions

‘Child’ means a person under the age of 18.

For the purpose of this Inquiry, ‘Children in Care’ includes children in institutional residential care such as children’s homes (including residential care provided by faith-based groups); secure care units including List D schools; Borstals; Young Offenders’ Institutions; places provided for Boarded Out children in the Highlands and Islands; state,

private, and independent Boarding Schools, including state-funded school hostels; healthcare establishments providing long-term care; and any similar establishments intended to provide children with long-term residential care. The term also includes children in foster care.

The term does not include children living with their natural families; children living with members of their natural families; children living with adoptive families; children using sports and leisure clubs or attending faith-based organisations on a day-to-day basis; hospitals and similar treatment centres attended on a short-term basis; nursery and daycare; short-term respite care for vulnerable children; schools, whether public

or private, which did not have boarding facilities; police cells and similar holding centres which were intended to provide care temporarily or for the short term; or 16- and 17-year-old children in the armed forces and accommodated by the relevant service.

‘Abuse’ for the purpose of this Inquiry is to be taken to mean primarily physical abuse and sexual abuse, with associated psychological and emotional abuse. The Inquiry will be entitled to consider other forms of abuse at its discretion, including medical experimentation, spiritual abuse, unacceptable practices (such as deprivation of contact with siblings), and neglect, but these matters do not require to be examined individually or in isolation.

Appendix B - Corporal punishment in Scottish schools and related matters

The parental right of chastisement

The common law of Scotland granted parents the right to inflict corporal punishment upon their children.⁸⁰⁹ This right was statutorily acknowledged in 1889 by the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act, and repeated by its successors – including the Children Act 1908 and the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937.⁸¹⁰ However, corporal punishment was only lawful if it was '(i) aimed at chastisement, in the sense of educative punishment, and (ii) within a moderate and reasonable level of severity. Acting in a manner beyond “reasonable chastisement” has long been a legal wrong.’⁸¹¹ Although the concept of ‘reasonableness’ has changed over time according to society’s changing views on the rights of children and their parents, ‘cases from the earliest period indicate a judicial awareness of the dangers to vulnerable children of excessive physical punishment’.⁸¹² Therefore, although parents did have the right to punish their children, this parental right was not without limits – it had to have a purpose and had to be reasonable.

Corporal punishment in Scottish schools and the views of the courts

Throughout much of the period examined in this case study, corporal punishment was permitted in Scottish schools. Traditionally, in state schools, it took the form of striking the palm of the pupil’s hand with the Lochgelly tawse.⁸¹³

A teacher’s power to chastise was not delegated by parents ‘but was a self-standing privilege arising from the obligation of the teacher to maintain school-room discipline’ which in the boarding schools extended to the residential side. Nineteenth-century court cases involving teachers emphasised that corporal punishment had to be ‘without any cruel or vindictive feeling or passion’,⁸¹⁴ and that a ‘schoolmaster is invested by law with the power of giving his pupils moderate and reasonable corporal punishment, but the law will not protect him when his chastisement is unnatural, improper, or excessive’.⁸¹⁵

Little changed for much of the twentieth century. In *Gray v Hawthorn*,⁸¹⁶ in 1964, the

809 See Alexander Birrell Wilkinson and Kenneth McK. Norrie, *The Law Relating to Parent and Child in Scotland*, 3rd edn. Edinburgh: W. Green (2013). See also Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.346.

810 See Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.346.

811 See Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.346.

812 See Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.347.

813 See ‘How the Tawse Left its Mark on Scottish Pupils’, *BBC News*, 22 February 2017. The Lochgelly tawse was so called because most teachers preferred tawses manufactured by a leather business based in Lochgelly, Fife.

814 *Muckarsie v Dickson* (1848) 11 D 4, p.5.

815 *Ewart v Brown* (1882) 10 R 163, p.166.

816 *Gray v Hawthorn* (1964) JC 69.

Court of Appeal emphasised the importance of discretion when it affirmed a teacher's conviction for assault:

There is no doubt that a school teacher is vested with disciplinary powers to enable him to do his educational work and to maintain proper order in class and in school, and it is therefore largely a matter within his discretion whether, and to what extent, the circumstances call for the exercise of these powers by the infliction of chastisement ... If what the schoolmaster has done can truly be regarded as an exercise of his disciplinary powers, although mistaken, he cannot be held to have contravened the criminal law. It is only if there has been an excess of punishment over what could be regarded as an exercise of disciplinary powers that it can be held to be an assault. In other words the question in all such cases is whether there has been dole⁸¹⁷ on the part of the accused, the evil intent which is necessary to constitute a crime by the law of Scotland. The existence of dole in the mind of an accused person must always be a question to be decided in the light of the whole circumstances of the particular case ... such matters as the nature and violence of the punishment, the repetition or continuity of the punishment, the age, the health and sex of the child, the blameworthiness and the degree of blameworthiness of the child's conduct, and so on, are all relevant circumstances in considering whether there was or was not that evil intent on the part of the accused at the time of the alleged offence.⁸¹⁸

The child was 11 and was belted eight times in the space of two hours for being dirty, having an untidy schoolbag, performing poorly in schoolwork, making spelling

mistakes, and having poor handwriting, a factor exacerbated by the injuries caused by the repetitive belting. From today's perspective, aspects of the sheriff substitute's reasoning seem surprising:

[I] found no fault with the appellant regarding the punishments inflicted for having dirty hands and knees. I attached no importance to the total number, as such, of strokes delivered on the morning in question. What I found fault with was the succession of punishments and reasons (or lack of just reasons) therefore, as narrated in my findings. At some stage their repetition amounted to what I can only describe as a degree of unjust persecution. I inferred dole only from the excess of punishment in the circumstances narrated.⁸¹⁹

I would not have considered it appropriate to belt a child for any of the reasons set out. I would consider it abusive.

The reasoning in *Gray v Hawthorn* was followed in the 1980 case of *Stewart v Thain*,⁸²⁰ which involved a headteacher smacking a 15 year old on the buttocks, apparently with parental approval. The Court remained loath to interfere in school discipline which was still very much a matter of educational discretion, where 'each case must be considered in the light of the whole circumstances relevant to it'.⁸²¹

Corporal punishment in boarding schools

In the boarding sector, the use of the cane by both staff and senior pupils was common, as was the use of other implements, particularly the slipper or gym shoe.

817 In Scots law 'dole' means corrupt, malicious, or evil intention.

818 *Gray v Hawthorn* (1964) JC 69.

819 *Gray v Hawthorn* (1964) JC 69, p.72.

820 *Stewart v Thain* (1980) JC 13.

821 *Stewart v Thain* (1980) JC 13.

Outwith the classroom, teachers' powers to use corporal punishment were commonly delegated, especially in the boarding houses, to senior pupils, usually school or house prefects.

That may have always been the norm given staffing numbers but might also reflect the language of both section 37 of the Children Act 1908 and section 12(7) of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, both of which concerned cruelty to persons under 16. The 1937 provision, for example, which concerned behaviour of persons who had 'attained the age of sixteen years' stated: 'nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the right of any parent, teacher, or other person having the lawful control or charge of a child or young person to administer punishment to him'.⁸²²

This case study has demonstrated that there was inadequate, if any, consideration given by schools to the legal position. Individual institutions followed their own traditions and styles although there was a general understanding from witnesses that the maximum number of blows that could be given was six, even if that was not infrequently disregarded. As for the delegation of corporal punishment to pupils – as happened in most of the schools – it was simply the way that things were done and was often ill considered and inadequately supervised. And the lack of supervision exposed children to a risk of abuse; serious harm could obviously ensue.

Societal change in the approach to corporal punishment

While the courts and the boarding schools may have thought corporal punishment

acceptable as a means of maintaining order until relatively recently, that was not the case in other areas of society.

Curtis Report

In September 1946, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Education presented a report to Parliament from the Care of Children Committee, chaired by Miss Myra Curtis. It was the result of detailed inquiry into the provision for children in care and its recommendations, strongly urged on the government, included:

We have given much thought to this question and have come to the conclusion that corporal punishment (i.e., caning or birching) should be definitely prohibited in children's Homes for children of all ages and both sexes, as it already is in the Public Assistance Homes for girls and for boys of 14 and over. We think that the time has come when such treatment of boys in these Homes should be unthinkable as the similar treatment of girls already is and that the voluntary Homes should adopt the same principle. It is to be remembered that the children with whom we are concerned are already at a disadvantage in society. One of the first essentials is to nourish their self-respect; another is to make them feel that they are regarded with affection by those in charge of them. Whatever there is to be said for this form of punishment in the case of boys with a happy home and full confidence in life, it may, in our opinion be disastrous for the child with an unhappy background. It is, moreover, liable to ... abuse. In condemning corporal punishment we do not overlook the fact that there are other means of enforcing control which may have even more harmful effects. We especially deprecate nagging, sneering,

822 [Children and Young Persons \(Scotland\) Act 1937](#), section 12(7) as originally enacted.

taunting, indeed all methods which secure the ascendancy of the person in charge by destroying or lowering the self-esteem of the child.⁸²³

This showed remarkable insight, and boarding schools should have had regard to it; they provided residential care for children living away from home – some from an early age – and their circumstances made them vulnerable. Had the Committee addressed the punishment practices at QVS, I conclude that it is likely that their criticisms of corporal punishment would have applied to them with equal force.

The Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959

Although not applicable to boarding schools, the Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959, which applied to both local authority and voluntary homes from 1 August 1959, reflected a shift in social attitudes to the punishment of children in any institution.

The Regulations 'contained rules for the administration of homes, the welfare of children accommodated therein, and for oversight of both these matters'.⁸²⁴ Regulation 1 required those responsible for the administration of the home to ensure that it was 'conducted in such manner and on such principles as will secure the well-being of the children of the home'.⁸²⁵ Regulation 11 provided that corporal punishment may 'exceptionally be administered'.⁸²⁶

Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961

Again, though not applicable to boarding schools, the standards noted in the Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961 should have had an impact on the thinking of boarding schools in relation to their use of corporal punishment.

Rule 31 dealt specifically with corporal punishment. Some of the conditions referred to were apt for all boarding schools in Scotland at that time:

- (a) for an offence committed in the course of ordinary lessons in the schoolroom the principal teacher may be authorised by the Managers to inflict on the hands not more than three strokes in all;
...
- (c) except when the punishment is inflicted in the presence of a class in a schoolroom, an adult witness must be present;
- (d) no pupil may be called upon to assist the person inflicting the punishment;
...
- (f) for boys under 14 years of age, the number of strokes may not exceed two on each hand or four on the posterior over ordinary cloth trousers;
- (g) for boys who have attained the age of 14 years, the number of strokes may not exceed three on each hand or six on the posterior over ordinary cloth trousers;

823 The Curtis Report (1946), at LEG.001.001.8722, pp.168-9, paragraph xviii.

824 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.204.

825 The Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations (1959), regulation 1, at LEG.001.001.2719.

826 The Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations (1959), regulation 11, at LEG.001.001.2723.

- (h) only a light tawse may be used: a cane or other form of striking is forbidden ... and any person who commits a breach of this Rule shall be liable to dismissal or other disciplinary action.⁸²⁷

Rule 32 provided that full particulars of any corporal punishments should be recorded in a punishment book by the headmaster.

It is not obvious that much regard was had to these rules in the operation of the boarding schools considered in this case study, and the approach taken to corporal punishment, just as with the recording of punishments, was variable. The tone of each school very much depended, for decades, on the outlook of the headmaster. Some were progressive, others not. Far too much was left to the discretion of individual teachers, some of whom had dreadful reputations amongst pupils for their excesses, which only demonstrates an absence of necessary oversight.

The position was even worse when corporal punishment by senior pupils is considered. While there was evidence of a change of outlook from the pupils themselves during the 1960s,⁸²⁸ there was often no oversight by the schools, on occasion, consciously.

Elimination of corporal punishment in state schools

By the late 1960s, following agreement in principle that the teaching profession should be encouraged to move towards the gradual elimination of corporal punishment, a consultative body – the Liaison Committee

on Educational Matters – issued a booklet entitled *Elimination of Corporal Punishment in Schools: Statement of Principles and Code of Practice*.⁸²⁹ It set out rules designed to limit the use of corporal punishment including:

It should not be administered for failure or poor performance in a task, even if the failure (e.g., errors in spelling or calculation, bad homework, bad handwriting, etc.) appears to be due not to lack of ability or any other kind of handicap but to inattention, carelessness or laziness. Failure of this type may be more an educational and social problem than a disciplinary one and may require remedial rather than corrective action.

Corporal punishment should not be inflicted for truancy or lateness unless the head teacher is satisfied that the child and not the parent is at fault.

Where used, corporal punishment should be used only as a last resort and should be directed to punishment of the wrong-doer and to securing the conditions necessary for order in the school and for work in the classroom.

It should normally follow previous clear warning about the consequences of a repetition of misconduct.

Corporal punishment should be given by striking the palm of the pupil's hand with a strap and by no other means whatever.⁸³⁰

The Secretary of State for Scotland welcomed the issue of this booklet. The thinking as to what was acceptable even

827 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules (1961), rule 31, at LEG.001.001.2696, pp.9-10.

828 See, for example, [Transcript, day 220](#): Kenneth Chapple (former pupil, Loretto School, 1961-6), at TRN-8-000000011, p.74.

829 See Corporation of Glasgow, Education Department, Meeting of Schools and School Welfare Sub-Committee, 6 May 1968, at GLA.001.001.0703. The booklet was sent to all education authorities in February 1968.

830 Liaison Committee on Educational Matters, *Elimination of Corporal Punishment in Schools: Statement of Principles and Code of Practice*, February 1968, at GLA.001.001.0706.

in the school setting had begun to shift significantly.

Further developments

In 1977 the Pack Committee, chaired by Professor D.C. Pack, and set up by the Secretary of State for Scotland, reported on indiscipline and truancy in Scottish schools. It reported that 'corporal punishment should, as was envisaged in 1968, disappear by a process of gradual elimination rather than by legislation'.⁸³¹

A working group appointed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities reviewed that process and produced a report entitled *Discipline in Scottish Schools* in 1981. The Secretary of State for Scotland considered the report and concluded, in a letter of 9 February 1982, 'that the way is now open for progress leading to the elimination of corporal punishment in Scottish schools within the foreseeable future'.⁸³²

The case of *Campbell and Cosans v UK*⁸³³ was held just three weeks after the Secretary of State's conclusions. In its decision, the European Court of Human Rights, while rejecting an argument that the use of corporal punishment in Scottish schools was contrary to Article 3, 'found the United Kingdom in breach of Article 2 Protocol 1 for failing to respect the parents' philosophical conviction against corporal punishment. The Government ... considered it impractical to prohibit corporal punishment only of children whose parents objected, and

so instead, all pupils at public schools were granted protection from corporal punishment by their teachers'.⁸³⁴

Consequently, section 48 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 introduced a new section 48A to the Education Act (Scotland) 1980 which came into force on 15 August 1987 and abolished corporal punishment for some pupils. Section 48A(5)(a) provided that a 'pupil' included a person for whom education was provided at

- (i) a public school,
- (ii) a grant-aided school, or
- (iii) an independent school, maintained or assisted by a Minister of the Crown, which is a school prescribed by regulations made under this section or falls within a category of schools so prescribed.

Although the legislation did not apply to independent schools, specific provision was made to prescribe the Queen Victoria School at Dunblane, funded by the Ministry of Defence, under section 48A(5)(iii) on 15 August 1987.⁸³⁵

In general guidance, issued by the Scottish Education Department on 17 June 1987, corporal punishment was defined as 'any act which could constitute an assault. This covers any intentional application of force as punishment and includes not only the use of the cane or the tawse, but also other forms of physical chastisement, e.g., slapping,

831 Scottish Council of Independent Schools, *Corporal Punishment in Scottish Schools*, at SCI-000000009, p.2.

832 Scottish Council of Independent Schools, *Corporal Punishment Abolition in Scotland*, at SCI-000000007, p.1.

833 *Campbell and Cosans v United Kingdom* (1982) 4 EHRR 293.

834 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), p.354.

835 The Education (Abolition of Corporal Punishment: Prescription of Schools) (Scotland) Order 1987.

throwing missiles such as chalk, and rough handling.⁸³⁶

Other than in the case of QVS, the legislation did not prevent boarding schools from continuing with corporal punishment, although that would have led to a two-tier approach given the prohibition of its use for pupils on assisted places. However, consistent with the change in society, many independent boarding schools, as well as day schools, were either thinking of or had already abolished it.

The Independent Schools Information Service (Scotland), the forerunner to the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), surveyed its members in 1984 and found that 36 no longer had corporal punishment while 24 retained it, although half of them were considering abolition. Looking to the schools in the case study, only Fettes Prep School had stopped using corporal punishment. Keil School, Loretto

Junior School, Merchiston Castle School, Morrison's Academy, and QVS retained it although were contemplating abolition, while Loretto senior school and Gordonstoun were not. The Edinburgh Academy did not feature in that survey.⁸³⁷

A similar survey in October 1988 revealed that only five prep schools and two senior schools retained corporal punishment, though four either had unofficially abolished it or were phasing it out. That included The Edinburgh Academy. The only senior school to retain it was Loretto,⁸³⁸ although by 1991 a further SCIS survey confirmed that it was no longer used by any of its member schools.⁸³⁹ Loretto, it appears, had stopped the use of the cane in 1990.⁸⁴⁰

Finally, section 16 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 extended the prohibition against corporal punishment to all schools and repealed section 48A of the 1980 Act.

836 Scottish Council of Independent Schools, Corporal Punishment Files, at SCI-000000023, p.8.

837 Independent Schools Information Service (Scotland), at SCI-000000038.

838 Independent Schools Information Service (Scotland), at SCI-000000039.

839 Scottish Council of Independent Schools, at SCI-000000025.

840 Loretto School, note on a comparison of witness observations/recommendations with Loretto School today, at LOR-000000771, p.6.

Appendix C - Inspection reports relating to QVS

Given the number and scale of the available reports, edited summaries are produced below. A selection of Commissioner inspection reports has been provided, with references to others. Full copies of more recent documents may be accessed via the websites of the respective organisations.

Table 6: Commissioner inspections, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, 1934-2021

<p>Date of inspection/report: 28 February 1934⁸⁴¹</p> <p>Dormitories are clean and tidy. Staff are zealously devoted to the best interests of the boys.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 13 November 1934⁸⁴²</p> <p>Dormitories are in the process of being redecorated. The boys are educationally inferior to Secondary School boys of a similar age, [but] they are much more mentally alert and active.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 12 March 1935⁸⁴³</p> <p>The interior of the school has improved with new paint. The administration is satisfactory; staff take an interest in the boys; and grounds and policies are in a neat and tidy condition. Passage windows should be closed.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 24 March 1937⁸⁴⁴</p> <p>The food is excellent. The hospital is clean and tidy. The boys do exercise well. Dormitories are clean and tidy.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 6 October 1937⁸⁴⁵</p> <p>The school is well managed both educationally and domestically. The boys are happy and healthy. The relations between pupils and staff seemed good. Dormitories were clean and tidy. The school is inspected by the War Office and thus inspection by SED is duplication.</p>

841 NRS ED48/871, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 28 February 1934, at SGV-000007282, pp.44-7.

842 NRS ED48/871, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 13 November 1934, at SGV-000007282, pp.24-7.

843 NRS ED48/871, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 12 March 1935, at SGV-000007282, pp.17-18.

844 NRS ED48/873, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 24 March 1937, at SGV-000007285, pp.23-5.

845 NRS ED48/873, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 6 October 1937, at SGV-000007285, pp.6-9.

Date of inspection/report: 21 February 1939⁸⁴⁶

The school had an ambience of efficiency, keenness and contentment. The buildings and policies were tidy and well kept. The hospital was clean, warm and comfortable. The workshop showed energetic concentration. The art room was rather crowded. The instruction in the classroom was efficient and boys were alert. The staffroom was more homely than the last visit. The staff work whole-heartedly and harmoniously for the good of the School.

Date of inspection/report: 13 May 1941⁸⁴⁷

Boys were interested in their work and teachers were efficient. Dormitories, hospital, and matron's wing were beautifully kept. Play hall needs a projector. Workshop, art room, tailor's shop, gym, swimming pool, and playing fields were in perfect order.

Date of inspection/report: 2 July 1941⁸⁴⁸

There were 201 QVS boys, 65 Duke of York boys, 266 total. The art room was in a transitory state. The physical education instructor had a kindly, capable, and efficient manner. The food is of excellent quality and quantity. The dormitories were disappointing and had not been prepared for inspection; the cleanliness was unsatisfactory. There is a fine team spirit permeating the whole staff.

Date of inspection/report: 13 March 1943⁸⁴⁹

The turn-out, appearance, and bearing of the boys was exceptional. Classrooms were overheated and boys were sharing books. The physical education was beyond reproach. The staff recreation room was comfortable – but only for the male staff, not for the female staff. This needed to be rectified. The kitchen was clean and the food looked appetising. The dormitories were very clean, but there were too few lavatories.

846 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 21 February 1939, at SGV-000007276, pp.2-4. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 1 June 1939, at SGV-000007276, pp.2-6.

847 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 13 May 1941, at SGV-000007276, p.7. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 17 June 1941, at SGV-000007276, pp.8-10.

848 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 2 July 1941, at SGV-000007276, pp.11-16. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 10 November 1941, SGV-000007276, pp.17-18 and NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 17 November 1942, at SGV-000007276, p.21.

849 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 13 March 1943, at SGV-000007276, pp.23-4. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 1 June 1943, at SGV-000007276, pp.26-7. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 22 to 24 September 1943, at SGV-000007276, p.30, and NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 12 October 1943, at SGV-000007276, p.28.

Date of inspection/report: 14 and 15 September 1944⁸⁵⁰

Inspection by Lieutenant Colonel B. Storrs of Army Educational Corps

The quality of the teaching, the demeanour and vitality of the boys, the keenness of the whole staff and the smooth running of the school – in so far as these things could be observed in so short a visit – were all impressive.

Date of inspection/report: 6 February 1945⁸⁵¹

The boys were fit, active, and mentally alert. The dormitories were well kept but flooring needed replaced. The heating in the hospital is still unsatisfactory. The classrooms and corridors are dull and need repainted. The classrooms are badly lit, dull, and unattractive. In the Chapel, a plaque of the 'Old Boys' who were killed in action should be erected.

Date of inspection/report: 9 June 1947⁸⁵²

Some staff had not wanted to be posted and thus there was a deficiency in skill set. Dormitories were clean, tidy, and bright. Gym shoes were missing laces and the practice of removing them for private purposes must stop. Bathrooms were inadequate. Kitchen was clean and meals were excellent. Hospital was clean. A new house manager is required as the current one was full of moans and groans and this was reflected in the female staff under her.

Date of inspection/report: 10 February 1948⁸⁵³

Staff were young (21 years old) and they did not want to remain in post as it was too far away from their homes. Dormitories were clean and tidy. Boys appeared alert. Bathrooms are showing signs of wear and urinals have not been replaced. The school is well run and the boys are content.

850 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 14 and 15 September 1944, at SGV-000067153, pp.11-13. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 20 June 1944, at SGV-000007276, pp.30-2. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 9 November 1944, at SGV-000007276, pp.33-4.

851 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 6 February 1945, at SGV-000007276, pp.35-8. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 21 February 1939, at SGV-000007276, p.39.

852 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 9 June 1947, at SGV-000007276, pp.49-50. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 22 October 1947, at SGV-000007276, p.51.

853 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 10 February 1948, at SGV-000007276, pp.53-4.

Date of inspection/report: 17 May 1948⁸⁵⁴

Impressed by the keenness and interest of staff. Hospital found to be in excellent order. The food seemed excellent and well cooked. Impressed with boys' demeanour. The standard of keenness and intelligence seems high. I formed the view that the school was being run with great efficiency yet in an atmosphere of goodwill. I thought the boys happy yet disciplined, and the staff efficient and understanding.

Date of inspection/report: 3 December 1948⁸⁵⁵

New urinals completed. Basins need replaced. The school is in excellent conditions and the boys well cared for.

Date of inspection/report: 22 March 1949⁸⁵⁶

After many years as one of His Majesty's Commissioners, I have never seen the School in better condition, or a more contented looking body of boys.

Date of inspection/report: 8 November 1949⁸⁵⁷

The general atmosphere is a very happy one; all departments are efficiently run and the house matron keeps a kindly eye over the boys.

Date of inspection/report: 8 June 1950⁸⁵⁸

The boys seemed happy and contented. The school premises were inspected and found to be in a thoroughly satisfactory state. The dinner served by the new cook was appetising and eaten with gusto by the boys. The prospect of a fire was receiving attention – the fire drills worked well.

854 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 17 May 1948, at SGV-000007276, pp.55-6. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 9 June 1948, at SGV-000007276, p.57, and NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 6 October 1948, at SGV-000007276, pp.58-9.

855 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 3 December 1948, at SGV-000007276, p.61.

856 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 22 March 1949, at SGV-000007276, p.64. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 31 May 1949, at SGV-000007276, p.65.

857 NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 8 November 1949, at SGV-000007276, p.66.

858 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 8 June 1950, at SGV-000007276, at SGV-000007276, p.70. See also NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 26 March 1950, at SGV-000007276, p.67; Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 21 September 1950, at SGV-000007276, SGV-000007276, pp.71-2.

Date of inspection/report: 7 December 1950⁸⁵⁹

Most satisfactory. The Commandant arranged for all sons of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to be assembled for interview with me, an opportunity I much appreciated.

Date of inspection/report: 29 March 1951⁸⁶⁰

The high standard of the past is being fully maintained. The alterations and improvements contemplated should help to solve some of the outstanding problems.

Date of inspection/report: 15 January 1952⁸⁶¹

I am most favourably impressed by what I saw. The only weakness is that some of the instructors – not teaching staff – struck me as being ancient.

Date of inspection/report: 30 April 1952⁸⁶²

Everything was in excellent order. The School is well commanded and well staffed. I agree with the comments that staff should not have their tours extended beyond the age of 60 unless under very exceptional circumstances.

Date of inspection/report: 16 December 1952⁸⁶³

All the masters seemed to be keenly interested in their work and the civilian masters are settling in well. I was much impressed by the alert and clean appearance of the boys and by the frank and intelligent way in which they answered the questions put to them. Dormitories were clean and tidy. I inspected two or three of the classrooms and though some are satisfactory, others are too small and not well lighted. Plans for the erection of new huts for classrooms have been approved. The headmaster raised the question of whether a higher educational standard should not be imposed for admission to the school. The dining and kitchen premises are tidy and clean, and the menu showed that the boys are given an interesting, nourishing, and varied diet. I am very favourably impressed by the keenness of the staff and the smart and happy appearance of the boys.

859 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 7 December 1950, at SGV-000007276, p.73.

860 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 29 March 1951, at SGV-000007276, pp.74-5. See also Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 31 May 1951, at SGV-000007276, p.76 and Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 11 October 1951, at SGV-000007276, p.78.

861 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 January 1952, at SGV-000007276, pp.79-81. See also Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 5 March 1952, at SGV-000067153, p.28-9.

862 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 30 April 1952, at SGV-000007276, pp.82-3. See also Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 30 June 1952, at SGV-000007276, pp.84-6, and NRS ED48/1379, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 3 October 1952, at SGV-000007276, p.86.

863 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 16 December 1952, at SGV-000007276, pp.94-7.

Date of inspection/report: 17 March 1953⁸⁶⁴

The buildings throughout are extremely well kept, clean, and tidy. There is obviously a happy and keen spirit which pervades the school.

Date of inspection/report: 18 January 1954⁸⁶⁵

It would be an advantage to have the headmaster on the Board of one of the Scottish boarding public schools.

Date of inspection/report: 31 January 1955⁸⁶⁶

Teaching staff and classrooms appeared to be eminently satisfactory. Food looks appetising. Dormitories found to be clean and tidy. Books in library were rather advanced for the type of reader school catering for.

Noticeable quiet air of efficiency blending with a spirit of co-operation among masters and boys. The boys looked clean and good humoured and the teachers were doing a good job.

Headmaster explained difficulties in retaining good staff and put much of that down to the fact that few of the pupils took Scottish Educational Certificates. Made the Masters think they were in a dead end job. In the Headmaster's opinion the situation could only be remedied by the acceptance of a proportion of the entry at the age of 12 years, with a sufficiently high standard to make the gaining of a Certificate a distinct possibility.

Date of inspection/report: 8 November 1955⁸⁶⁷

Dormitories, Bathrooms, Classrooms, Library, Woodwork shop, Laboratory, Stores, Laundry, Hospital, Art School, Dining Hall, Kitchens, Gymnasium, Rifle Range, and Swimming Pool all inspected and found to be well cared for, very clean, tidy, and warm.

General level of the boys was average. I was told the 12 year old entry is a success and is already showing signs of increasing the general academic standard.

Very favourably impressed by the boys. They listened intelligently to what they were asked and gave an unhesitating and confident answer. They are good mannered and respectful. From what I saw the standard of responsibility amongst the monitors was high and they set about their duties with quiet but firm authority.

864 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 17 March 1953, at SGV-000007276, pp.106-7. See also Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 10 June 1953, at SGV-000007276, pp.108-9 and Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 22 October 1953, at SGV-000007276, pp.110-11.

865 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 18 January 1954, at SGV-000007276, pp.112-14. See also Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 10 May 1954, at SGV-000007276, pp.114-15 and Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 7 October 1954, at SGV-000007276, pp.116-17.

866 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 31 January 1955, at SGV-000007626, pp.118-19.

867 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 8 November 1955, at SGV-000007276, pp.120-1.

Date of inspection/report: 1 February 1956⁸⁶⁸

Most impressed by the general type of the Masters and the way they handled the boys. The Masters were keen – spoken to collectively and privately. The boys were in excellent form, manners good, physique good.

Date of inspection/report: 8 June 1956⁸⁶⁹

Favourably impressed by the way classes were conducted. There were many new teachers but all seemed enthusiastic. Gymnasium is a good building but lacks equipment. The laundry is well run but existing equipment is obsolescent. New equipment is to be installed.

Discussed the matter of the disappointing numbers of boys coming forward to join the Services at the end of their time at School.

Date of inspection/report: 28 January 1957⁸⁷⁰

The School is going through a transitional stage including in staff and personnel.

Date of inspection/report: 20 January 1958⁸⁷¹

I inspected and found in good order a dormitory in Haig House. I saw the boys at work. Visited the modernised gymnasium and the renovation of the swimming bath building. I watched dinner in progress. The boys made short work of the dinner. The school appears in good health, the atmosphere congenial and the staff were doing their best to ensure that all boys were being looked after, both physically and mentally.

Date of inspection/report: 3 February 1960⁸⁷²

The dormitories were clean, tidy and well aired. Classes seen were working diligently and I was impressed by the pleasant address and frankness of the boys with whom I spoke. Commendable features were the number of hobbies and similar activities in which the boys engaged. The general impression on the visit was one of good work by both pupils and members of staff of all kinds, in a friendly atmosphere and under supervision, that is at once sympathetic and effective.

868 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 1 February 1956, at SGV-000007276, pp.122-3.

869 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 8 June 1956, at SGV-000007276, pp.124-5.

870 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 28 January 1957, at SGV-000007276, pp.126-7.

871 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 20 January 1958, at SGV-000007276, pp.128-9. See also Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 October 1959, at SGV-000007276, pp.132-3.

872 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 3 February 1960, at SGV-000007276, pp.143-4.

Date of inspection/report: 8-11 November 1965⁸⁷³

The Headmaster made it clear that he was primarily concerned to secure an up to date assessment of the educational efficiency of the school. He said there had been no inspection for ten years and one was overdue.

Mr Crichton Miller said that there had been considerable changes in the school in recent years and some of the innovations, e.g. the house system, had not been effective for a sufficiently long period to warrant 'inspection'. I thought the best course was for the Commissioners to ask simply for a full inspection.

The last inspection was in October 1958 in association with the Army Inspectorate and the report was confined to 'educational aspects' except in so far as questions of administration directly affected the education provided.

Date of inspection/report: 20 March 1979⁸⁷⁴

Visiting Commissioner's report - D. Crichton Miller

- I was favourably impressed by [the boys'] character and behaviour.
- The average age of staff is 44 which is high for a boys' boarding school.
- Only two masters had any experience or training in this before coming to QVS.
- Staff ratio is 1 master to 12 boys. This is high for a school without a substantial 6th Form.
- Half of the staff have University degrees, 8 with honours. This is probably better than the average state school but not so good as the big independents. The weakness is in outside recommendations, such as Territorial Army Service, athletic distinctions, industrial experience, musical abilities and so on. The range here is well below Public School standards; and the almost total lack of boarding school experience is equally discouraging.
- Staff and the Headmaster were unanimous that morale was low and complaints widespread.
- It was widely held that communication was poor.
- Housemasters' remuneration - it was an almost unanimous opinion that this was too low.

Recommendations:

- There should be one man in charge of the staff - not two.
- Liaison between staff and Commissioners should be improved.
- The pay structure should be revised.

873 QVS, Letters seeking HMI inspection, November 1965, at SGV-000067150, pp.1-4.

874 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 20 March 1979, at MOD-000000574, pp.97-102.

Date of inspection/report: 20 March 1979

With firm but sympathetic leadership there seems no reason why the masters should not settle down when the major problems outlined above have been resolved. They could then give useful service. But it is fruitless to pretend that this is a distinguished staff, or even one particularly suited to our needs. In the long term the only solution lies in more judicious recruitment. In this connection it might be useful to advise the Commandant that in the future, when appointing staff, he should pay special attention to age, previous experience in boarding school work, and outside qualifications. It would be no bad thing if the staff knew we were thinking on these lines.

Date of inspection/report: 25 February 1985⁸⁷⁵

Visiting Commissioner's report – Air Marshal Sir Peter Bairsto KBE CB AFC CBIM

Impressed by motivated staff and the general cleanliness and cheerfulness of boys. However he felt there were three areas that required urgent attention:

- (a) gross overcrowding in the dormitories of the senior houses, especially Cunningham and Trenchard, the two intermediate houses
- (b) the woefully inadequate facilities for private study and recreation for 180 boys living in the Main Building
- (c) the ablutions and toilets in the Main Building, including those recently renovated, which fell short of the standard expected in his own service.

Date of inspection/report: 4 June 1985⁸⁷⁶

Visiting Commissioner's report – Mr Scott

He gained the impression that the administration of the School was entangled in a number of overlapping bureaucracies.

He closed his remarks by saying that he had found a very cheerful atmosphere. He had inspected the corporal punishment book, found some eccentricities, and welcomed the decision to supervise more closely the use of such punishment.

Now that the MOD had accepted their continuing responsibility for the School, he believed that they should be invited to accept the necessity for a long term plan and guarantee its continued financing.

875 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 25 March 1985, at MOD-000000574, p.48.

876 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 10 November 1985, at MOD-000000574, p.26.

Date of inspection/report: 3 February 1986⁸⁷⁷

Impressed by boys – polite, cheerful and enjoyed being in the School. Lack of privacy for older boys and the facilities for private study fall short of what should be provided.

Date of inspection/report: 3 November 1986⁸⁷⁸

Visiting Commissioner's report – Major General Lyon

He has seen all types of accommodation and applauded the efforts being made to improve this difficult, unattractive, and inappropriate building. He was especially pleased with the improvisation to meet the important requirement to provide quiet study areas. New classrooms were impressive. He had spoken to the boys and was favourably impressed by their frank, cheerful answers and general morale. The Monitors and Prefects were mature and responsible young men who had clearly gained from their time at QVS. His enquiries into pastoral care convinced him that this has adequate emphasis in QVS with a caring staff.

Date of inspection/report: 2 March 1987⁸⁷⁹

There is apparently no regular and formal meeting at which those boys in authority could express their views and make suggestions in a prepared fashion ... if boys are to execute a degree of School authority and to apply aspects of discipline on behalf of the Headmaster, some such consultation would be beneficial and proper.

The boys appeared to be healthy, as hard working and contented schoolboys ever are, and to be using fully the many outlets provided for their interests and energy.

The present and future scope and condition of the school estate, and the conditions of service of some of the staff are the two aspects which require resolution.

Date of inspection/report: 26 September 1989⁸⁸⁰

Visiting Commissioner's report – Mr Gerald Wilson

He had no indication during his meeting with teaching staff of any wish to raise any extraneous matters, and that he had been most impressed by the reaction of both staff and boys to his questions about educational provision.

877 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 17 March 1986, at MOD-000000574, p.18.

878 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 10 November 1986, at MOD-000000574, pp.6-13.

879 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 2 March 1987, at MOD-000000574, p.3.

880 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 6 October 1989, at MOD-000000574, p.108.

Date of inspection/report: 29 October 1991⁸⁸¹

Visiting Commissioner's report – Dr S.E. McClelland

Three concerns noted:

- the future of the School under Agency status
- its viability at its present size
- the morale and discipline of the boys

There is clearly a feeling of uncertainty among the staff about the continuing viability of the School. There appeared to be a feeling that Agency status was the first step along a road leading to MOD distancing itself from support for the School. The concern was linked to the second area: the lack of a thriving S5/S6 group is seen as a major weakness.

The staff expressed that with the passing of corporal punishment there was a limit to the number of sanctions at their disposal to deal with persistent offenders. The view was expressed that there would be value in having smaller pastoral units. I had the impression that house duties were not seen as particularly satisfying by those involved and some doubt was expressed about the future supply of candidates for Housemaster posts.

Date of inspection/report: 6 May 1992⁸⁸²

Visiting Commissioner's report – Major General R. Lyon

- There are only five senior boys at the top of the school and this small number limits the degree of supervision that can be expected from these key pupils – that is, it leaves too few boys to assist in the management of the school.
- They [the senior boys] had to date received no proper instruction on how they should act with regard to the supervision of their juniors and on the correct methods of exercising their authority.
- There was a strong feeling that some punishments were ineffective, in particular detention for intermediate houses.
- There was a marked hostility to the HMI Report.
- It was clear that communication between the Headmaster and the staff left a lot to be desired.
- A large number of staff felt that too many boys who were clearly disruptive elements were being retained at the school long after their bad influence had been confirmed. The headmaster acknowledged that perhaps he had erred too much in retaining bad boys, but that he had done this usually for compassionate reasons.
- Major accommodation changes were necessary.

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881 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 11 November 1991, at MOD-000000601, p.119.

882 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 1 June 1992, at MOD-000000601, pp.90 and 93-7.

Date of inspection/report: 6 May 1992

- It was felt that some members of staff allocated to assist in the running of the houses could do much more to help and co-operate more with housemasters.
- The junior house contained too many boys (80) for effective supervision by one housemaster.
- The Headmaster was urged to 'weed out' any members of staff who were clearly not pulling their weight and was assured the full backing of HMC in this regard.
- The Headmaster was encouraged to arrange proper instruction of the Monitors and Prefects in their part in the management of the school. It was suggested that Prefects who did not warrant the trust placed in them should cease to be Prefects. (It appeared that even particularly poor Prefects were allowed to retain their status.)

Conclusions:

The school seemed to be functioning well and I saw no change in the good behaviour and morale of the boys. Staff morale is not good and there was a feeling that the HMI Report was a 'blow below the belt'.

Date of inspection/report: spring term 1994⁸⁸³

The passing of corporal punishment a few years ago was clearly regretted by some teachers and it was recognised that more time is now needed to deal with disciplinary problems. It is my observations that the appointment of Mrs Hainey as Assistant Headteacher concerned with pastoral and other special needs has been a major benefit to the boys and to the school.

Date of inspection/report: 20 November 1995⁸⁸⁴**Visiting Commissioner's report – Major General MacDonald**

He said that they [pupils] had almost unanimously supported the re-introduction of corporal punishment, though as they were involved in stamping out any bullying in the School, that corporal punishment should be administered by teachers.

883 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 18 July 1994, at MOD-000000601, p.74.

884 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 20 November 1995, at MOD-000000601, p.62. See also QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 12 February 1996, at MOD-000000601, pp.50-1.

Date of inspection/report: autumn term 1997⁸⁸⁵

Discussion of bullying – The eight [S3] boys and girls I saw told me that bullying of younger pupils by older ones used to happen in QVS, especially extortion of food or pocket money, but that it hardly exists now and that they certainly would have nothing to do with it! They spoke with openness and confidence and assured me that they would feel able to go to a member of staff, probably their Housemaster in the first instance, if they felt threatened ... they seemed sensitive to the needs of each pupil for both privacy and support. The fact that they are encouraged to discuss these issues in class is undoubtedly helpful.

Consideration should be given to bringing in more outside speakers ... It is often easier to ask embarrassing questions of a stranger than of a teacher with whom one is in daily contact.

Date of inspection/report: 17 March 2003 and 30 April 2003⁸⁸⁶

Commissioners should take formal legal advice on their corporate rights and duties in relation to child protection.

The legal position on the rights of medical staff/consultants to withhold critical medical information from QVS authorities in their role in loco parentis should be established.

Documentation and forms of agreement between QVS, parents, and pupils should be examined and compared with other boarding schools to ensure best practice and robustness.

Consideration should be given to rewriting the contract for the Hospital Sister to ensure that there was no risk of HMC/Headmaster being compromised by a serious incident involving a pupil's health or medical condition.

Date of inspection/report: 26 January 2004⁸⁸⁷

A visit was designed to look particularly at procedures relating to pastoral care and the management of facilities. General Parker's overall impression echoed those of the previous visits; there was a happy and businesslike air to the school. He emphasised that the challenges facing pastoral care should not be underestimated and he was pleased to note that the current levels of supervision were being revised in light of National Care Standards. Although he judged that the school facilities were adequate he opined that they were beginning to appear dated and that the implementation of the Estates Department Plan (EDP) was the key to the future of the school.

This was an interesting and enjoyable visit. My overall impression was of a thriving and well-run community. I do however feel that the status of the EDP should be teased out, it is so important to the future of the school, not to deliver it would represent a major risk that will demand very careful management.

885 QVS, Report by Visiting Commissioner, 19 November 1997, at MOD-000000601, pp.22-3.

886 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 16 June 2003, at MOD-000000571, p.51.

887 QVS, Minutes of a meeting of HM Commissioners, 9 February 2004, at MOD-000000571, p.39.

Date of inspection/report: June 2005⁸⁸⁸

Radical improvements in boarding facilities and the pastoral care of pupils which have taken place during the present Headmaster's tenure.

I visited all the Houses. Generally the boarding facilities are adequate but there is much room for improvement particularly with regard to the spaciousness of accommodation and décor.

Impression that guidance and pastoral care rest primarily with House Masters/Mistresses and other House staff and this work is embedded across the range of their responsibilities.

I was not given any information with regard to management and evaluation of guidance/pastoral care and whether feedback is ever sought from pupils themselves and their parents, which might be helpful.

Date of inspection/report: September 2021⁸⁸⁹

The school is committed to the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people. Senior leaders promote a supportive culture and are accessible and visible to both staff and pupils.

Systems have been developed to monitor and improve the school's approach to safeguarding pupils and staff.

888 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, June 2005, at SGV-000012100.

889 DCS, Safeguarding visit to Queen Victoria School, September 2021, at MOD-000000653.

Table 7: Scottish Education Department and War Office inspections, Queen Victoria School, 1932-66

<p>Date of inspection/report: 26 October 1932⁸⁹⁰</p> <p>Art is of a satisfactory standard. Bench work instruction is good. Senior pupils are preparing for army examinations.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 26 and 27 June 1940⁸⁹¹</p> <p>Staff changes due to being called up for World War Two. History being taught without a map. Science and technology are hindered by a lack of apparatus. Seventy-six Duke of York Royal Military School boys were being accommodated and thus the living arrangements were cramped.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 13 and 14 March 1941⁸⁹²</p> <p>Teaching throughout the school is of good quality. The previous shortages of science and woodwork equipment have been rectified by grants from the War Office. Duke of York Royal Military School boys were still being accommodated and thus the living arrangements were cramped.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 22 to 24 September 1943⁸⁹³</p> <p>For English, there is too much focus on the written word to the detriment of the spoken. The science books are out of date. Due to the war, physical education does not have a full time instructor.</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 14 and 15 September 1944⁸⁹⁴</p> <p>The quality of teaching, demeanour and vitality of the boys, keenness of the staff and the smooth running of the school were impressive.</p>

890 NRS ED48/1380, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 26 October 1932, at SGV-000007280, pp.2-3.

891 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 26 and 27 June 1940, at SGV-000064487, pp.24-8.

892 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 13 and 14 March 1941, at SGV-000064487, pp.31-2.

893 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 22 to 24 September 1943, at SGV-000064487, pp.36-7.

894 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 14 and 15 September 1944, at SGV-000064487, pp.42-3.

Date of inspection: 16, 19, 20, and 21 November 1945⁸⁹⁵

There is a general atmosphere of happiness and wellbeing. The boys look healthy and cheerful, they take pride in their appearance and relations between them and the teaching and administrative staff are obviously good. Courtesy and obedience were noticeable as was a strong sense of esprit de corps.

My own impression was that much of the work was definitely poor ... One major problem is that the staff (a) has been transient and is (b) mostly not highly qualified, (c) mostly not efficient in the art of teaching, and (d) probably not always diligent enough ... One thing the school does not really give the boys – a chance of entering a profession with a moderately high entrance test: teaching, divinity, and anything needing a degree. How many of recent years have passed into the University or a Technical College? The outlook is, I think, too much towards the Forces. At one time boys used to go to McLaren High School, Callander – not now. Could there be school on Saturday forenoon?

Date of inspection/report: 30 and 31 May 1946⁸⁹⁶

General atmosphere of happiness and wellbeing. The accommodation of the Duke of York boys means that the living arrangements are full to capacity. Redecoration is required, but dormitories are clean. The classrooms are rather small. During 1946 it was difficult to find staff due to the war. The curriculum is designed for boys entering the services, and differs from other secondary schools.

Date of inspection/report: 15 and 16 July 1947⁸⁹⁷

Staff have degrees but are inexperienced. The accommodation has been redecorated. Sports and a healthy diet contribute to the lack of illness amongst the boys.

Date of inspection/report: 9 and 10 June 1948⁸⁹⁸

Boys are separated into two streams based on academic ability. The continuity of staff has been disrupted due to the war, and this could be lessened by the employment of civilians. In a staff of 11, only two have degrees. For the upper forms better qualified men are necessary. Baths have been replaced by showers. English, mathematics, French, art and handiwork are lacking.

895 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 21 July 1946, at MOD-000000562, pp.4-28.

896 NRS ED48/1381, Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 30 and 31 May 1946, at SGV-000064487, pp.63-6.

897 NRS ED48/1381, Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 15 and 16 July 1947, at SGV-000064487, p.83.

898 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 9 and 10 June 1948, at SGV-000064487, pp.99-104.

Date of inspection/report: 30 June and 1 July 1949⁸⁹⁹

The boys are sorted into two streams and the curriculum sorted accordingly according to aptitude. Classes are making satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching is suffering from the lack of continuity of staff. The health of the boys is due to good food and a focus on maintaining a good physique.

Date of inspection/report: 5 and 6 July 1950⁹⁰⁰

The difference in intelligence of the boys is causing problems for class organisation. The shortcomings of the academic staff has been highlighted in three previous inspections and has not improved.

Date of inspection/report: 10 and 11 July 1951⁹⁰¹

Select boys are attending McLaren High School in Callander which has deprived the school of valuable leaders. The decision has been made by the headmaster than in the autumn term the senior boys will cease to attend McLaren. There has been an improvement in teaching since the last inspection and greater stability. There is a grave shortage of accommodation huts.

Date of inspection/report: 3 and 4 March 1952⁹⁰²

Senior boys have ceased attending McLaren High School. There has been an increase in military personnel. In French, some of the lost ground due to the lack of continuity, is being reclaimed. The art department is in good hands. Woodwork is unsatisfactory. Mathematics and science are adequate. English, geography and history are improving. The accommodation of huts is unsatisfactory.

Date of inspection/report: 11 and 12 June 1953⁹⁰³

The quality of education is improving with specialised staff. Accommodation for classrooms is inadequate. Books and equipment are satisfactory, but are showing signs of wear. We were impressed with the happy, healthy appearance of the boys and with their bearing both inside and outside the classroom. Good relations with teachers.

899 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 30 June and 1 July 1949, at SGV-000064487, pp.138-9.

900 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 5 and 6 July 1950, at SGV-000064487, pp.153-4.

901 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 10 and 11 July 1951, at SGV-000064487, pp.163-4. See also Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 1951-2, at SGV-000067153, p.29.

902 NRS ED48/1381 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 3 and 4 March 1952, at SGV-000064487, pp.178-81.

903 Scottish Education Department and War Office, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 11 and 12 June 1953, at MOD-000000029 pp.183-4.

Date of inspection/report: November 1966⁹⁰⁴

Inspection carried out in collaboration with the Chief Inspector of the Directorate of Army Education.

Boys are secure and happy. Staffing is generous. More space is required in classrooms.

Much credit must go to the headmaster who has done much to enhance the reputation of the school and induce a happy atmosphere of purposeful behaviour.

The school is organised into one junior and three senior houses. Living accommodation is attractive and well-maintained. The junior school is achieving good results and the senior school offer alternative courses. French is unsatisfactory and gives cause for concern.

Geography is missing from the curriculum due to a lack of qualified staff. Modern languages is unsatisfactory. Physics is missing equipment. Music needs a qualified teacher.

904 Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, November 1966, at SGV-000067150, pp.14-15.

Table 8: HMle inspections, Queen Victoria School, 1958-2023

Date of inspection/report: 13 to 15 October 1958⁹⁰⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation is unsatisfactory. • The school is adequately staffed and this has improved the education provided. • The range of ability in the secondary and primary classes is wide. The tone in the classrooms is good and shows a good relationship between the masters and the boys. • In English, the schemes of work are well suited. History and geography are taught with vigour but could benefit from visual aids. For French, the difficulties in staffing have hampered progress, especially in oral work. Mathematics teaching is well-organised. Science requires more equipment. In technical subjects, a higher standard should be striven for. Art is of a high standard. Music is missing a qualified teacher. Physical recreation is well-catered for.
Date of inspection/report: session 1975-6⁹⁰⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school continues to serve an important purpose in ensuring continuity of education for the sons of Scottish Service personnel. • The courses offered provide a sound general education appropriate to the pupils' abilities. • Career opportunities are gradually being extended. • Since 1973 the school had only had civilian staff. In addition to the headmaster there were four full time staff in the primary department, and sixteen in the secondary. • The school has excellent facilities for physical recreation. The older sections of the school are in good condition. • The primary teaching is well-organised and pupils are making satisfactory progress. The secondary department has earnest and conscientious teaching.

⁹⁰⁵ NRS ED48/1381, Scottish Education Department, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 13 to 15 October 1958, at SGV-000064487, pp.192-5.

⁹⁰⁶ HM Inspectors of Schools, Queen Victoria School: Report by HM Inspector Session 1975-6, at MOD-000000071, p.592.

Date of inspection/report: 23 September and 9 October 1985⁹⁰⁷

- The dormitories dated from the time when the school was built and were adequate in terms of size for the numbers of pupils. The dormitories were noted as being airy, clean, and well maintained. However, the accommodation was outdated and not appropriate in a modern boarding school (1980s); the residential facilities had not kept pace with the times and did not provide the kind of amenities and living conditions that would be considered appropriate in a modern boarding school.
- The classrooms were small by present day (1980s) standards. But they were adequate for the numbers of pupils using them. They had in recent years been refurnished and re-equipped.
- Books used in the primary classes were outdated in content and style and old-fashioned course materials were still in use for primary mathematics. With the exception of geography, the teaching of all secondary subjects was supported by a good range of up-to-date textbooks and teaching materials.
- The teaching staff was 22 full-time and 2 part-time teachers, including the Headmaster. This resulted in a pupil-teacher ratio of just under 11.4 to 1. In boarding schools in the independent sector, this is usually under 10 to 1. The balance of staffing was such that the school was unable to give sufficient time to the examination courses offered in science.

Conclusion:

Given the Ministry of Defence has decided that the school will continue, the Commissioners require to formulate a long term plan for its future development.

Date of inspection/report: January 1992⁹⁰⁸

The inspection took place in January 1992 in response to allegations of widespread, systematic bullying which had received publicity in December 1991. The aims of the inspection were to evaluate the pastoral care and supervision of pupils in the school, and management arrangements. Given the emphasis of the inspection was on pastoral care, no evaluation was attempted of the quality of the teaching or pupils' attainment.

- On the whole, the boys' behaviour was satisfactory. Staff at all levels in the school worked hard and were committed to the pupils' welfare.
- There was no evidence of systematic bullying, but some incidents had occurred and a few boys did present repeated problems for staff. Most staff felt that the school's discipline policy could be improved.
- There was no clear school policy on pastoral care and pupil supervision. There were inconsistencies in practice, lack of clarity regarding the expectations of senior promoted staff, and an insufficient basis for monitoring and evaluating the situation in the school.

907 HM Inspectors of Schools, Queen Victoria School: Report of an inspection in September and October 1985, at MOD-000000088, pp.4-12.

908 HM Inspectors of Schools, Queen Victoria School: Report of an inspection in January 1992, MOD-000000104, pp.1-3.

Date of inspection/report: January 1992

- Senior school prefects and monitors had too much of a supervisory and disciplinary role with regard to younger boys.
- Lack of supervision of boys at times of pressure. There were occasions, such as prep, when supervision rates were too low.
- There was a division in the minds of staff between care and discipline in the context of House and in the context of subject teaching in the school. The role of form teacher was not significant enough for them to act effectively as boys' tutors who could liaise with House staff on matters of care, discipline, and general progress.
- There were many informal channels of communication but not enough provision for systematic one-to-one contact between boys and their teachers and House staff. The current informal approaches relied on staff reacting to boys' problems or on boys taking the initiative, giving rise to fears in younger boys that they might be 'sneaking'.
- Discipline was perceived in a very negative manner with a tendency amongst some staff to regard corporal punishment with nostalgia or have an unrealistic expectation that swift and summary sanctions would solve the persistent problems caused by a small minority of boys.
- There was not enough emphasis on rewarding achievement and creating privileges and freedoms which could be withdrawn as sanctions.
- There was insufficient provision in the secondary school for programmes of personal and social development encompassing social, health, and vocational education.

Date of inspection/report: 3 and 4 February 1993⁹⁰⁹

Follow-up inspection to evaluate the responses made by QVS to the 1992 inspection.

- Very considerable effort has gone into the formulation and production of policy documents.
- Senior boys no longer impose sanctions on younger boys.
- Supervision ratios have been improved.
- Steps taken by Housemasters to improve the quality of recreational facilities for particular houses are commendable.
- Tutors are attached to a House and form part of an extended House team.
- Staff and pupil reaction to the innovation has been generally positive.
- Increased efforts are required to explain to parents the nature of recent changes in pastoral care and discipline and parents' roles within that structure.

909 Scottish Education Department, Follow-up Inspection of Queen Victoria School, April 1993, at MOD-000000056, pp.3-6.

Date of inspection/report: January 1998⁹¹⁰

The inspection took place as part of a national sample of provision made by boarding schools for residential pupils.

- Accommodation improvements have begun but are incomplete.
- The atmosphere in the boarding house was welcoming and, in particular, Wavell House achieved the school's aim of creating a homely atmosphere.
- Relationships among pupils were generally good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils were generally caring.
- Pupils were given a good 'Guide to life in the school community' which described pupils' rights and responsibilities in the boarding context.
- Childline posters should be displayed in all telephone areas.
- A good start had been made to introducing a programme of personal and social education and providing pupils with good opportunities to review their progress.
- Senior pupils played an important role in the school and were encouraged to lead by example. Senior pupils should not be permitted to recommend specific punishments for other people.
- Staffing levels were increased in boarding houses.

Date of inspection/report: February 2000⁹¹¹

Follow-up of the January 1998 inspection.

- The headteacher and the school, well supported by the Board of Commissioners, have made good progress towards meeting almost all of the main points for action in the report.
- The Adjutant General has provided funds for the building of a new boarding house in response to the accommodation issues raised, but accommodation improvements are not yet complete.
- A significant contribution has been made by the Board of Commissioners to supporting good progress on care and welfare matters at a time when the school was undergoing a major review of its Agency status.⁹¹²

910 HM Inspectors of Schools, Queen Victoria School: Report of an inspection in January 1998, at MOD-000000117, pp.2-6.

911 Scottish Education Department, Follow-up Inspection of Queen Victoria School, February 2000, at MOD-000000056, pp.8-11.

912 Letter from Scottish Education Department to Queen Victoria School, Follow-up inspection in February 2000, 25 April 2000, at SGV-000007305, p.1.

Key strengths:

- Very good attainment in S3 to S6.
- Strong partnerships with the Board of HM Commissioners, parents, and the community.
- Strong ethos of achievement in the school's ceremonial traditions of Highland bagpiping, pipe band drumming, and Highland dancing, and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities which enabled pupils to broaden their experiences and increase their self-esteem.
- Highly committed staff.
- Pupils' confidence, motivation, and pride in the school.
- Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school's provision.
- Pupils felt safe and secure and enjoyed being at school.
- A significant number felt they were not treated fairly and that pupils should have more of a say in deciding how to improve the school.
- A significant minority of teaching staff expressed concerns about leadership.
- All teachers had a pastoral role as tutors and had responsibility for small groups of pupils.
- The school had a suitable range of policies relating to the care and welfare of its pupils, including child protection. However, there was a lack of consistency in how procedures outlined in the policy were applied.
- The teaching of PSE was unsatisfactory.
- The headmaster and HM Commissioners had worked hard to produce designs for a new teaching block, additional boarding accommodation, and a new music auditorium to coincide with the school's centenary in 2008. Funding had yet to be secured to allow the project to go ahead.
- Poor relationships amongst members of the senior management team and impending changes to tutors' working conditions were having an adverse effect on morale.
- The school, the Board of HM Commissioners and the Adjutant General should take appropriate action to:
 - address the weaknesses in relationships amongst members of the senior management team
 - revise the job remits of all senior promoted staff, to give more emphasis to their role in directing and leading key educational priorities for improvement and in the quality assurance of educational provision

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913 HMle, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, October 2004, at MOD-000000056, pp.12-16. See also HMle, Queen Victoria School, 15 February 2005, at SGV-000008332, p.3 and p.12; HMle, Inspection of the care and welfare of residential pupils, Queen Victoria School, 27 October 2004, at MOD-000000056, p.45.

Date of inspection/report: September and October 2004

- strengthen approaches to monitoring, evaluating, and improving the school's educational provision
- ensure better continuity and progression in pupils' learning from P7 to S2, with a view to improving attainment at these stages; and improve the teaching of personal and social education.

Health and safety concerns:

- School security systems need to be reviewed – almost all aspects of the school and boarding accommodation could be accessed by intruders.
- There is a need for a room in which parents can meet their children in private.
- The quality of the toilets and bathrooms varied.
- Lighting
- Windows to be fitted with security devices.
- Doors were not secure (Wavell).
- Fire door was not working (Haig).

Date of inspection/report: May 2006⁹¹⁴

Part of a programme of integrated inspections of mainstream school care accommodation services by the Care Commission and HMle.

Key strengths:

- The care and commitment shown by the headmaster and his staff to meeting pupils' needs.
- Very good relationships among staff and pupils, and pupils who were open, courteous, and very well behaved.
- Strong partnership with parents.
- The wide ranging activities to develop pupils' personal and social skills and confidence, including a very good programme of personal and social education (PSE).
- Parents and carers, pupils, and staff were positive about almost all aspects of provision.
- The overall standard of boarding house accommodation was good.
- A planned programme of refurbishment was in place for the boarding accommodation.
- Staff paid careful attention to the safety and security of the pupils. A civilian officer (CSO) was on duty at all times. The security of the boarding houses was very good and the campus was closely monitored by closed circuit television cameras.

⁹¹⁴ HMle and Care Commission, Inspection of the care and welfare of residential pupils, Queen Victoria School, 31 October 2006, at MOD-000000108, pp.4-6.

Date of inspection/report: May 2006

- Staff provided good pastoral care for pupils. Ample numbers of care staff were available to pupils at all times.
- Each house had in residence a housemaster or housemistress, a deputy housemaster or housemistress, and a matron. Additional support was provided by visiting house tutors, house assistants, the housekeeper and domestic staff, who were on duty throughout the week.
- All staff in the houses knew the pupils well. They were sensitive and responsive to pupils' social and emotional needs.
- Staff were familiar with and implemented the school's appropriate care and welfare policies including child protection and anti-bullying.
- Provision for pupils' personal and social development was very good. A very well structured teaching programme for PSE was in place.
- Pupils were successfully developing leadership qualities and teamwork through the prefect system and as house captains. Senior students supported younger pupils sensitively.
- Despite instability in the staffing of the management of the school and its boarding houses, the leadership of the boarding was good.

Main points for action:

- Develop and implement consistent approaches to recording incidents and accidents clearly and promptly.
- Record keeping policies must be improved re incidents.
- Speed restrictions on grounds must be observed.
- Promote healthy eating.
- Develop rigorous approaches to self-evaluation.

Date of inspection/report: 2 September 2008⁹¹⁵

To assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action on which there remained a need for further progress.

- The headteacher had worked closely with senior managers, staff and HM Commissioners to improve the school.
- Staffing was much more stable than at the time of the original inspection.
- The school's culture of self-evaluation and its approaches to monitoring the quality of its provision had continued to develop.
- The capacity of the school for continuous improvement had increased.

915 HMIe, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 2 September 2008, at MOD-000000109, p.3.

Date of inspection/report: 1 May 2012⁹¹⁶**QUIPE (Quality Improvement and Professional Engagement) visit**

- Overall, the school provides a broad curriculum at most stages which incorporates sporting, ceremonial, and combined cadet force (CCF) elements, in line with the ethos of the school.
- To accommodate the wide range of prior experiences of pupils before starting in QVS, the school has developed P7 procedures to support young people.
- There is a very wide range of activities for young people to access.

Date of inspection/report: 9 May 2023⁹¹⁷**Leadership assessed as very good:**

- Staff work tirelessly to provide a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive ethos. This helps children to settle in quickly, become part of the school community, and progress from being a rookie to a Victorian.
- Headmaster provides strong and astute leadership and direction for the school community. He is supported ably by a skilled and experienced leadership team who are respected by the children and wider school community.
- Her Majesty's Commissioners provide valuable, well-informed guidance and governance for many aspects of school life.
- Leadership at all levels is a strong feature of the school's work.

Learning, teaching, and assessment assessed as very good:

- Children achieve very well in the highly supportive learning environment and genuine family nature of the school community.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion assessed as very good:

- The school should continue to ensure that restorative approaches to behaviour are taken forward in a fair and consistent way across boarding houses and the life of the school.

Raising attainment and achievement assessed as very good:

- All young people move on to a positive destination on leaving QVS. Most go on to higher education, employment, or training with a minority going on to the armed forces.

Other comments:

- Children feel that the quality of food is not good enough; some aspects of the boarding house facilities need to be improved; and some feel communication, rules, and protocols across the boarding houses should be more consistent.

916 HMIE, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 1 May 2012, at MOD-000000113, pp.1-4.

917 Education Scotland, Inspection of Queen Victoria School, 9 May 2023, at SGV-000103014.

Table 9: Care Commission inspections, Queen Victoria School, 2006–10

Date of inspection/report: May 2006⁹¹⁸

Joint inspection with HMle

The care and welfare of residential pupils had previously been inspected in October 2004 by HMI and a report published in February 2005.⁹¹⁹ The school had very successfully addressed almost all of the main points for action contained in that report:

- Staff and pupils had developed a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the boarding houses.
- The morale of pupils and staff was high and relationships among them were very good. Pupils were open, courteous, and very well behaved.
- The overall standard of boarding was 'good'.

Date of inspection/report: 26 January 2007⁹²⁰

Unannounced visit

Pupils' views:

- They thought the quality and selection of food had improved. There were still some issues regarding baths and showers. Most pupils were aware of the school's anti-bullying policy. They confirmed they were aware of who they should speak to.
- QVS had a robust child protection policy in place and Stirling Area Inter-Agency Guidelines for Child Protection were also available. The child protection officer for the School had led a whole-school overview of child protection issues.
- The school had begun a programme of training fifth-year pupils for peer group support.

Following requirements/recommendations from the previous inspection:

- All four boarding houses have a generic reporting system in place for recording accidents, incidents, medication, telephone calls, and complaints.
- Funding had been secured for 'sleeping policemen' to be installed on the drive and had reallocated parking areas to reduce the risk to pupils. Letters had been sent to all 'lets', the term used for community use of facilities, warning of excessive speed on school grounds.
- The catering manager continues to monitor healthy eating options during meal times.

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⁹¹⁸ HMle and Care Commission, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School, 31 October 2006, at SGV-000007853, pp.3–4.

⁹¹⁹ HMle, Inspection report, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, 15 February 2005, at SGV-000008332.

⁹²⁰ Care Commission, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 26 January 2007, at CIS-000000289, pp.4–7.

Date of inspection/report: 26 January 2007

- The school had launched a revised quality assurance programme which involved self-evaluation against National Care Standards and HMle quality indicators.
- The school had undertaken a phased operation of replacing all mattresses. Bedrooms and dormitories had lockable lockers and pupils were encouraged to lock valuables away.

Boarding house staff were encouraged to alert parents immediately by phone or email if they had any concerns about their children.

Date of inspection/report: 26 March 2008⁹²¹**Unannounced visit**

QVS was inspected after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA resulted in this service receiving a low score and so only a low-intensity inspection was required.

- Inspection fell during a school holiday, thus there were no pupils and limited staff present. What staff were there were enthusiastic and good humoured.
- There was a child protection policy in place and staff were familiar with the procedure.
- The Guide for Life (for pupils) was devised to ensure that pupils understood child protection procedures and 'to encourage them to come forward if they had concerns or were experiencing bullying'.

Requirements:

- The service must review its child protection procedures to alert the necessary authorities when a concern is raised and to maintain full and accurate records.
- The training programme must provide access to training to staff to allow them to meet training qualifications required to meet the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration criteria.
- The service must adhere to its Condition of Registration relating to numbers at all times.

⁹²¹ Care Commission, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Services, 26 March 2008, at CIS-000000291, pp.5-10.

Date of inspection/report: 12 June 2008⁹²²

Announced visit

Actions had been taken on the three requirements from the last inspection:

1. The service had comprehensive child protection records and maintained appropriate referrals to the necessary authorities. Requirement fully met.
2. The provider had been in contact with the SSSC who have not yet confirmed the appropriate training route for all boarding staff. The provider is committed to providing an appropriate training route for all boarding staff to meet the registration criteria. This requirement had been fully met.
3. The service had not previously exceeded its role and was compliant with the numbers within the current year. This requirement had been fully met.

Four recommendations had been made following the last inspection:

1. The children's charter was advertised throughout the school and service had access to the area child protection guidelines. Recommendation is fully met.
2. Management should ensure that procedures are in place for pastoral staff to register with the SSSC in 2009. This has been commented on in the body of the report and was fully met.
3. A risk assessment of the boarding houses should be undertaken to reduce the danger within certain shower areas. Risk assessment for the boarding houses were examined. This recommendation was fully met.
4. A programme of upgrading bedroom furniture in Cunningham House should be introduced. The school has a timetabled upgrading for the whole boarding campus. This recommendation had been fully met.

Date of inspection/report: 27 March 2009⁹²³

Unannounced visit

Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Very Good

The school identified the need to ensure all parents received its information pack and newsletter.

The school stated it was being assessed as a 'Health Promoting School' by Forth Valley Health Group and that it was well on the way to meeting all the requirements.

Quality Theme 2 - Quality of Environment: Good

The CCTV system had been reviewed and upgraded to cover more areas around the school campus.

922 Care Commission, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 12 June 2008, at CIS-000000298, pp.5-6 and p.19.

923 Care Commission, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 27 March 2009, at CIS-000000300, pp.6-9.

Date of inspection/report: 23 September 2010⁹²⁴

Announced visit

Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Very Good

The service provides excellent levels of pupil support. Pupils told us they felt supported.

In relation to the evaluation process the school should develop methods to clearly feed back collated information and action points to parents and pupils.

Quality Theme 3 - Quality of Staffing: Very Good

During feedback the headmaster discussed methods that could be used to further involve parents and pupils in the selection process. These included asking pupils to assist in creating job descriptions or developing questions that potential candidates could be asked at interview.

⁹²⁴ Care Commission, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 23 September 2010, at CIS-000000303, pp.15-19.

Table 10: Care Inspectorate inspections, Queen Victoria School, 2011-18

<p>Date of inspection/report: 20 December 2011</p> <p>Unannounced visit</p> <p>Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Good</p> <p>Quality Theme 4 - Quality of Management and Leadership: Very Good</p> <p>The service supports pupils to achieve their potential, and pupils are encouraged to become responsible, mature young people and to try new experiences. Most pupils told us they felt safe and protected, supported by an approachable and child-centred staff team. The service works hard to consult with pupils and involve parents, despite the challenge of many families being posted abroad.</p> <p>Two main areas for development were identified. We became aware that the fire alarm did not cover all areas and we made enquiries of the MOD to ensure that the current measures were fit for purpose. The service to ensure that they collate the responses from pupils and parents when a survey has been completed by them.⁹²⁵</p>
<p>Date of inspection/report: 11 February 2013</p> <p>Unannounced visit</p> <p>Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Excellent</p> <p>Quality Theme 2 - Quality of Environment: Very Good</p> <p>Quality Theme 3 - Quality of Staffing: Very Good</p> <p>Quality Theme 4 - Quality of Management and Leadership: Very Good</p> <p>The ethos of respect, tolerance and harmony was evident in the relationships between the staff members, children and pupils. Together the pupils and staff team had succeeded in creating a nurturing environment where children and young people were encouraged and supported to develop to their potential. The opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle were excellent and the majority of young people were engaged in hobbies and interests.</p> <p>The school should continue to improve the communal living areas. The nursing, teaching and care staff should continue to reach agreed protocols regarding how to manage minor ailments and illnesses of the children and young people.⁹²⁶</p>

⁹²⁵ Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 20 December 2011, at CIS-000000306 and SGV-000011517, p.3.

⁹²⁶ Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 11 February 2013, at CIS-000000311, p.3.

Date of inspection/report: 29 January 2016⁹²⁷

Unannounced visit

Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Very Good

Quality Theme 2 - Quality of Environment: Good

Quality Theme 3 - Quality of Staffing: Very Good

Quality Theme 4 - Quality of Management and Leadership: Very Good

The service consulted well with pupils and parents. They had developed a range of ways to keep parents informed. In the main, pupils were happy and enjoyed many successes and achievements. The school should continue to work towards developing new boarding accommodation.

Date of inspection/report: 30 June 2017⁹²⁸

Unannounced visit

Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Very Good

Most staff were aware of the pupils' individual personal care needs and sensitively prompted those who needed support. We saw a variety of different styles of approaches from individual members of staff. It was evident that some pupils benefited from very good relationships with individual staff members. However where relationships had not yet formed this was also evident.

The school should review the medication policy to allow boarding staff to administer homely medicines. In addition risk assessments should identify when pupils are able to self-medicate whenever possible.

Quality Theme 2 - Quality of Environment: Good

The atmosphere in the school was welcoming and calm and the school were successful in creating a supportive community culture for both staff and pupils.

The provider should ensure that areas for pupils to prepare their own snacks are monitored by staff, with pupils being helped to develop an understanding of good food hygiene practices.

927 Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 29 January 2016, at MOD-000000122, p.3.

928 Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 30 June 2017, at INQ-0000000887, p.3.

Quality Theme 1 - Quality of Care and Support: Good

Most pupils experienced secure, trusting relationships and enjoyed caring interactions and engagement. Most pupils felt safe and comfortable and were generally relaxed in their interaction with staff that they knew. We saw evidence of very good recording in relation to child protection and evidence that systems were followed in line with the child protection policy.

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils, the provider must carry out a review of medical systems and practice to ensure they meet best practice guidance.

Quality Theme 2 - Quality of Environment: Adequate

Significant environmental issues impacted on the care experience for pupils. In particular, we heard that some houses were cold because the heating systems were broken. We heard of situations where pupils had to take cold showers or make trips to other places to wash. Some were unable to use electrical appliances such as hair dryers or charge mobile devices or were running extension cables in order to do this. Pupils had begun to accept this as normal practice. Cleanliness standards were variable across the campus and this had to be further supplemented by house staff taking time away from pupils. Whilst the school had identified hazards it was not clear where progress had been made.

The provider must carry out a review of the environment. They must identify areas for improvement and present an action plan of how this will be improved both in the short and long-term. Particular attention must be paid to safety issues.

Quality Theme 3 - Quality of Staffing: Very Good

Most staff were committed to a compassionate and respectful approach with pupils. They spoke positively about the pupils and were ambitious for them. All of the pupils we spoke with said they had someone they could talk to if they were sad or needed support.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁹ Care Inspectorate, Inspection Report, Queen Victoria School: School Care Accommodation Service, 26 September 2018, at INQ-0000000888, p.3.

Appendix D - Breakdown of numbers of children at Queen Victoria School

Table 11: Pupil roll: number of admissions, 1930-2014

Year	Number of pupils	Year	Number of pupils	Year	Number of pupils
1930	76	1959	45	1988	42
1931	58	1960	48	1989	46
1932	1	1961	53	1990	46
1933	31	1962	55	1991	54
1934	56	1963	50	1992	54
1935	58	1964	55	1993	46
1936	68	1965	45	1994	50
1937	56	1966	46	1995	34
1938	47	1967	41	1996	56
1939	55	1968	55	1997	51
1940	49	1969	38	1998	54
1941	49	1970	41	1999	54
1942	43	1971	55	2000	54
1943	54	1972	46	2001	57
1944	50	1973	38	2002	57
1945	53	1974	39	2003	40
1946	56	1975	51	2004	50
1947	52	1976	43	2005	53
1948	49	1977	47	2006	49
1949	59	1978	38	2007	45
1950	44	1979	42	2008	45
1951	53	1980	45	2009	54
1952	58	1981	40	2010	56
1953	47	1982	44	2011	52
1954	29	1983	44	2012	44
1955	39	1984	45	2013	47
1956	47	1985	44	2014	52
1957	44	1986	44		
1958	53	1987	46		

Appendix E - Number of complaints, civil actions, police investigations, criminal proceedings, and applicants to SCAI

Table 12: Breakdown of numbers

Number of complaints made to QVS relating to abuse or alleged abuse as of October 2021	
a) against staff	a) 5
b) against pupils	b) 5
Number of civil actions raised against QVS relating to abuse or alleged abuse at the school	2
Number of police investigations relating to abuse or alleged abuse at QVS of which the school was aware as of October 2021	
a) against staff	a) 4
b) against pupils	b) 5
Number of criminal proceedings resulting in conviction relating to abuse at QVS of which the school was aware as of November 2021	1
Number of SCAI applicants relating to QVS	19

Appendix F - Convictions

James Clark

James Clark, born 1965, was the drumming instructor at Queen Victoria School between 2012 and 2019. He had previously taught drumming at Loretto School and George Watson's College, after a career in the British Army.

He appeared at Falkirk Sheriff Court on 16 September 2021 on an indictment (PF ref: ST19000389) containing nine charges. After a trial lasting eight days, he was found guilty on 27 September 2021 in relation to seven charges as follows:

(1) on various occasions between 1 August 2011 and 31 July 2016 both dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, at an address in Basel, Switzerland, and elsewhere you James Clark, a UK national being a person who had attained the age of 18 years and who was in a position of trust towards AAA, born xx XX 1998 whilst said AAA, born xx XX 1998 was a pupil at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane and you did look after said AAA, born xx XX 1998 at said Queen Victoria School, Dunblane and you did engage in a sexual activity with or directed towards said AAA, born xx XX 1998 a person who was under 18 years in that you did repeatedly touch her buttocks, strike her on the buttocks with drum sticks, touch her on the body, cuddle her; contrary to Section 42 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009;

(2) on various occasions between 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2016 dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane you James Clark did intentionally and for the

purpose of obtaining sexual gratification or of humiliating, distressing or alarming BBB, born xx XX 1999 direct sexual verbal communications towards her in that you did make sexual remarks to her all without her consent; contrary to Section 7(1) of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009;

(3) on various occasions between 1 August 2016 and 18 February 2019 both dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane you James Clark did assault CCC, born xx XX 2002 in that you did repeatedly touch her buttocks, repeatedly strike her on the buttocks with drum sticks; contrary to Section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009;

(4) on various occasions between 1 August 2016 and 18 February 2019 both dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane you James Clark did assault DDD, born xx XX 2002 in that you did repeatedly strike her on the bottom with drum sticks, touch her buttocks, seize her by the body and cuddle her; contrary to Section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009;

(5) on various occasions between 1 August 2016 and 18 February 2019 both dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane you James Clark did assault EEE, born xx XX 2002 in that you did repeatedly touch her buttocks, cuddle her; contrary to Section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009;

(6) on various occasions between 1 August 2017 and 18 February 2019 both dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane you James Clark, being a person who had attained the age of 18 years and who was in

a position of trust towards FFF, born xx XX 2001 whilst said FFF, born xx XX 2001 was a pupil at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane and you did look after said FFF, born xx XX 2001, and you did engage in a sexual activity with or directed towards said FFF, born xx XX 2001, a person who was under 18 years in that you did repeatedly seize her by the body, touch her buttocks, kiss and cuddle her; contrary to Section 42 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009;

(7) on various occasions between 3 December 2017 and 30 January 2019 both dates inclusive at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane and within a motor vehicle in the course of journeys from Dunblane to Edinburgh and between the said Queen Victoria School, Dunblane and Dunblane High School, Dunblane you James Clark, being a person who had attained the age of 18 years and who was in a position of trust towards GGG, born xx XX 2001 whilst said GGG, born xx XX 2001 was a pupil at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane and you did look after said GGG, born xx XX 2001, and you did engage in sexual activity with or

directed towards said GGG, born xx XX 2001, a person who was under 18 years in that you did repeatedly touch her buttocks, kiss her; cuddle her; place your hand inside her clothing and touch her breasts and vagina, seize her by the body, touch her on the body, bite her mouth and neck, remove her clothing and lick her vagina, compel her to touch and masturbate your penis and make sexual remarks to her; contrary to Section 42 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009.

As regards charges 3, 4, and 5, the jury convicted him of having committed common law assaults rather than the statutory offences.

On 15 November 2021 Mr Clark was sentenced to one year nine months' imprisonment. He was also placed on the sex offenders' register for ten years.

The Sheriff observed: 'Sexual activity by a man in relation to a girl under 18 in relation to whom he is in a position of trust is absolutely prohibited. There are no exceptions. It is always a crime.'

Appendix G - Notice of draft findings

Some individuals received notice of relevant findings in draft form and were afforded a reasonable time to respond, if they wished to do so. I carefully considered the responses received and took them into account before finalising these findings.

Appendix H - Letters to parents from Glenn Harrison and from the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners

The following pages contain redacted copies of the letter sent to parents by Glenn Harrison⁹³⁰ and the letter sent by the chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners in response.⁹³¹

930 QVS, Letter from Glenn Harrison to parents, 17 December 1991, at MOD-000000569, pp.9-12. See [Glenn Harrison](#) chapter.

931 QVS, Letter to parents from chairman of the Board of HM Commissioners, at MOD-000000569, p.5.



CUNNINGHAM HOUSE
QUEEN VICTORIA SCHOOL
DUNSLANE FK15 0JY
TEL. 0786 - 822288

G. HARRISON
HOUSEMASTER

DATE 17 / 12 / 91

Dear parent,

As you well know I have resigned as Cunningham house master and will leave QVS on the 17/12/91. I thought you have a right to know the real reason why I resigned and what is going on at QVS. You have a right to know how your sons are being treated here, and the state of the school. I have taught for 7½ years in boarding schools and I have never seen anything quite like this. Education takes a very low priority and the pastoral supervision is seriously short staffed.

I am appalled at the bullying and abuse of boys by other boys; Many reports from staff are just brushed under the carpet, and nothing is done about it, bullying is ASSAULT, a criminal offence and these boys should be expelled. This is my last chance to do something for the boys. As a caring teacher and housemaster, I have done my utmost to ensure the emotional and psychological welfare of your son. It could be a good school if the management got their act together, but it seems they are a law unto themselves.

As a parent myself, I believe you have a right to know and demand an explanation.

In the last week I have investigated yet more reported incidents of bullying of younger boys by Haig boys. The three first years interviewed together, were petrified that I would reveal their names to you and others in the school for fear of reprisals. I shall call them X, Y and Z.

The boys named eight Haig boys; they said there were others but they did not know their names. The boy X, began to relate: "well sir, it works like this; as we walk by the Haig study area at the bottom of the staircase, a Haig boy would shout, 'Eh, come here you', those who went in were treated in various ways that varied from day to day, sometimes a DA, (painful thump in the arm), other times WWF moves, (wrestling backbreaker, where boys are thrown against the wall, quite violently, sir); winders, where a Haig boy will place his hand across a first year's mouth and hold him as shown in fig. 1, then another boy would punch him in the stomach to wind him. Arm benders or more like arm breakers, are also a favourite, they really hurt you sir! The boy Y said that this had gone on since the beginning of term and he dare not tell. He said he had learned not to answer them when they called but ran as fast as he could, afraid to look behind. All boys agreed that first years were punched and kicked around, ridiculed for crying and threatened with more for telling. All three verified that some boys had had shampoo squirted down their throats, while their noses were held, and some boys were prevented, deliberately from breathing."



fig. 1

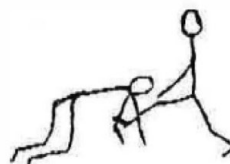


fig. 2

One boy was named by all three as having a specialism: drumstick; in which he is very skilled. In prep he would rap their knuckles very hard. This is a serious assault! If a teacher did this he could be



dismissed and convicted! Boy X said the drumstick expert once hit him on the head with a drum stick so hard that his head was really sore for about two weeks.

The boys X and Y said boy Z was hit everyday in chapel because he was big. Incidentally all three boys are very good responsible boys; the kind of boy you would want at QV.

Other boys tell me that a lot of bullying takes place at the CCF, where older boys play sergeants and officers; a kick between the legs is common. To complain betrays the tough guy image, and the complaints are often ignored, the boys tell me. Haig boys were praised as protectors: [redacted] and [redacted].

It is not just first years, but second and third years are subjected to this. I related the case of [redacted], recently; he was called in because he missed his 'day', and told to get down on all fours, (fig 2); as he did this, a Haig boy kicked him so hard in the ribs, [redacted] said he passed out for about 15 seconds. He then felt he must go to hospital and told sister he had fallen. I wonder how many 'falls', are really accidental falls? I usually leave the boys to wash and shower in private, but on seeing the many bruises, I often wondered if they were, as they said, just sports injuries.

It is so difficult to get the truth out of boys, what is going on that is unreported!?

These Haig boys regularly put boys on 'days' and they are not prefects. They bully first years because they are small and cannot hit back! The classical BULLY. Is this one of those proverbial 'Haig Privileges', chiselled on tablets of stone? Its been going on for a long time.

When the boys were telling me this I thought of the BBC 2, '40 minute programme', on QV school, and that IN REALITY the school is more of echoes of 'Tom Brown's School Days'. Last year when I was in the process of sorting out a serious case of bullying, a third year boy in the house

said: "Sir, you do not understand; there is a special way at QVS of dealing with boys; we sort them out among ourselves; we have our methods. This is a long tradition and its been going on for years; bullying is good and keeps the boys in order, because staff can't use the strap anymore". A third year, alleged to 'beat the grub' out of boys, (hitting them so hard that they relinquish their tuck), said: but sir, this is the way things are done here; I got it in Vavell and now its my turn. Weaklings go under and the tough stay on top".

There is something very wrong about this attitude, which seems to be the root cause of so much bullying. I am ashamed. I have not spoken up earlier: like the management I feel I was blinded by the pomp, vanity and pride, the swaying hilt and sound of the pipes, the 75% shop front which is so misleading to the newcomer.

So, from this, it appears that the boys consider bullying as a norm: this is why parents are not told when the boys go home because the boys live with it all the time and know no other way!



These Haig boys should be expelled! IT IS WRONG TO KEEP BOYS AT THE SCHOOL JUST TO KEEP THE NUMBERS UP, TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE THAT BOYS WILL BE BOYS AND REALLY ALL IS WELL: ALL IS FAR FROM WELL.

(Theiving in the school is endemic and in my view, out of control, so many boys are getting away with^{it} and supervision is so thin on the ground the boys are able to choose their moment. Locks are frequently broken open, so providing lockers is not the answer, the answer is to expell the boys, and certainly NOT allow them to return just to keep the school numbers up.)

I suspect that someone on the management team or a commissioner, with a boarding school background, have this ridiculous 19th century notion that bullying and being bullied, is character building! Because it seems to me that a lot of these reports are just swept under the carpet. I heard a Haig boy say the other day, that they are taking the boys in hand to improve the discipline in the school.

(I would like to say a word on behalf of the commissioners who come frequently to see the school, and sit patiently and kindly listening to the staff; but sadly they do not see the school as it really is. They are victims of shopfronty!)

All this is not new; the management know it is going on; several members of staff have reported similar incidents too; especially the housemasters in the school and the particularly the deputy headmaster.

Ask your son to open up without fear, and tell you himself. In our society, abuse should not be classified information anymore; it is wrong that your son should have to endure these conditions. Maybe he is one of the lucky ones and has got away with it up until now. Needless to say your son is not a member of the British armed forces. ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, THIS AGE OLD QV TRADITION HAS GOT^{to} STOP! Your son has a right to be happy and enjoy the best years of his life, as Prince Andrew said on Grand day.

If he is being bullied and is afraid of reprisal, and does not get help from the school he should tell YOU, or if he finds it difficult to talk to anyone about it, he can phone:

C H I L D L I N E ON FREEPHONE 008 1111.

Most schools have this on the school notice board. This number is available to every boy on the Cunningham house notice board, as from this month. The police inform me that bullying is a criminal offence and that if a child reported being bullied, they would be only too happy to come up to QVS and investigate. One of the worst forms of bullying is NAME-CALLING, this mental torment and common in the school.

There will be those that will say I am writing this letter out of malice and bitterness; they could not be more wrong. I have a genuine concern for these boys; I write this letter with a clean conscience and an honest heart.



Between 1939 and 1945, 55 million people gave their lives so we can be free and happy, our children and our children's children. Many more have died since, including those recently in the Gulf war, ridding the world of the international bully, Saddam Hussein. The sons of Scottish Servicemen deserve the best treatment and education in this war memorial school.

I have striven to be a loyal and caring member of staff at QVS; what I have said reflects my true thoughts and underlying main reason for my resignation.

Yours faithfully,

G. Harrison

Cunningham housemaster

From: Lieutenant General Sir Peter Graham, KCB, CBE
Chairman of Her Majesty's Commissioners
Queen Victoria School, Dunblane



ARMY HEADQUARTERS SCOTLAND
EDINBURGH EH1 2YX

TELEPHONE: 031-336 1761 ext

13⁵ December 1991

Dear Parent,

As some of you may know Mr Harrison, very lately Housemaster of Cunningham, has written some parents making allegations of bullying and thieving at Queen Victoria School. I am not sure how many parents have received letters hence my writing to you all, but Mr Harrison's letter was sent without the knowledge or approval of the Headmaster or any of Her Majesty's Commissioners.

You should also know that earlier this year, Mr Harrison asked to be relieved of his Housemaster appointment and submitted his resignation from the School on the grounds that he had been under pressure of work.

Having been shown Mr Harrison's letter and without prejudging anything, it seemed to me to be wise to initiate an independent enquiry. Should that reveal any matter of substance appropriate action will be taken.

To date we have been unable to ask Mr Harrison what he himself did to stop the alleged bullying. There are, of course, other observations I have.

The letter also raises several questions. One is that as far as I am aware Mr Harrison did not ask to see this term's Visiting Commissioner about his concerns. These could have been reported, in confidence if need be, to the Visiting Commissioner or even myself as Chairman of the Board at any time. Both I and the Commissioners have been to the School this term and some more than once.

I am sorry to have to write you but I know you would prefer to know what is being done as a result of the letter that Mr Harrison wrote to some of you and I hope you will be reassured by my actions.

Yours sincerely,

Photo credits

p.10 Canmore. All other photos Queen Victoria School.

