

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Maria PRINI-GARCIA

1. My full name is Maria Victoria Prini-Garcia. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I have a degree in Humanities with specialisation in Psychology by the Complutense University in Madrid, Spain (1972 to 1977).
3. I worked initially at Complutense University, lecturing in "Personality" to the evening session. But, to secure an academic position and increase my ability for research, I was asked by Professor Pinillos (Head of Faculty) to improve my English.
4. I arrived in Edinburgh in June 1978 and my first "proper" job was as assistant in the Spanish department at Heriot Watt University, which was then in Chambers Street. I delivered original speeches in Spanish on Politics and Economics in the Spanish speaking world.
5. I was full time from 1983 to 1984 and thereafter I was part time till 1990. I combined this part time work with teaching Spanish at Hill Place as part of the University of Edinburgh extramural programme. I also taught at George Watson's College as an assistant from 1985 to 1990.

Employment with Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh

6. I was initially employed by Merchiston Castle School in 1986, on a part time basis, and I became full time from August 1990 until August 2016. I would add that all the dates I am providing are approximate.
7. Between 1986 and 1990 I was a part time sole Spanish teacher. I was initially teaching fourteen periods per week at Scottish Higher and A level, plus beginners Spanish to IV Form.
8. I was greatly supported by the then Head of Department, Mrs Yvonne Limb. I didn't apply for the job, but was approached by Mrs Limb, who had references from Heriot Watt and George Watson's staff. There was no formal training, neither existing pre-requisites, but there was excellent on-the-job support, with very close contact and there was a great team feel in the department
9. Between 1990 and 1999 I was a full time teacher of Spanish and Latin. For a time I was responsible for Spanish and Latin as the department grew considerably. I had extra-curricular responsibilities in Drama and Pastoral Care. I had no formal training but plenty of shadowing, initially, plus constant access to the Housemaster to discuss any issues arising during duty.
10. GTCS registration was not required when I first started and subsequently Merchiston discovered that my degree was not acceptable in Scotland, thus it was trying to get me registered via alternative qualifications.
11. My academic line manager was Mrs Yvonne Limb, and my Pastoral line managers changed over the years, as the Housemaster changed. They were Mr Selby, Mr Horrocks, Mr Davis and Mr Anderson.
12. Professional conversations were very frequent, easy and encouraged with all my line managers and colleagues. I was a full time teacher of Spanish and Latin, with

extracurricular commitments helping in the Drama department and as a House Tutor with the senior year, in Evans House.

13. Between 1999 and 2009 I initially shadowed the then Head of Careers, Mr Rickard, and received further training by ISCO. I was then promoted, rewarding my natural interest in helping our pupils to choose their best path, beyond school.
14. My line manager, as Head of Careers, was the Director of Studies, Mrs Muetzeldfelt. I was also granted a sabbatical period in which I visited universities all over England as I was only familiar with the Scottish ones. I attended Head of Department meetings and was particularly busy during result days in August.
15. I also attended Career Conventions and Conferences all over the United Kingdom with the School's full support. Every year I organised a Career Fair and on a couple of occasions U.S. universities day.
16. While Head of Careers, I was simultaneously, firstly the Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC) and then Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC). As the provision and policies regarding Child Protection increased, the position became better defined. I must confess that even though I was not the first holder of this responsibility, it was still fairly undefined and unclear, but for me it was obvious that each and every student needed a channel of communication separate from the School hierarchy, where to expose their concerns.
17. I am not certain but I think the first CPC was Mr Nigel Rickard. I do not believe there was any clear idea of the implications of this remit but it became clearer and better defined over time.
18. I was considered widely as a very approachable member of staff and that was essential to the role. This job entailed a lot of reading of Scottish policies with regards to Child Protection and frequent communications with colleagues. I also was responsible for training new staff on these policies and every year I would have a slot in inset training reminding all staff about our Duty of Care.

19. I also attended multiple training-sessions myself to keep up to date with this evolving landscape. My favourite trainer was Dr Sue Hamilton, who I also invited to chair training sessions with both all staff and Pastoral staff
20. Between 2008 and June 2011 I was the live-in Assistant Housemaster within the Senior Boarding House, now named Laidlaw. It was a newly built Sixth Form Boarding House (consisting of Laidlaw North and Laidlaw South) and expanded the school's provision for the final two school years. The additional two boarding Houses allowed greater residential presence among the students.
21. My Line Manager was Mr Anderson, Housemaster of Laidlaw South and contact with him was easy and constant. During this period I attended many training sessions organised by the Boarding School's Association, both in Scotland and in England. I also started my qualifications with SSSC
22. Between August 2011 and 2016 I was the Housemaster of Laidlaw South, for the first three years and Laidlaw North for the final two years. I was the first woman Housemaster in the history of Merchiston Castle all-boys boarding school.
23. I was Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) registered, completed my SSSC qualification and started to support and monitor other members of the School, who were preparing this same qualification. My Line Manager was Senior Deputy Head (SDH), Mr Hall, and then Mr Johnston. There were weekly meetings of all Housemasters which ensured open communication channels. There was also emergency procedures and contact with SDH available at all times.
24. I was responsible for my pastoral team (one Assistant Housemaster, one Resident Tutor and three non-resident Tutors) who helped with evening duties and special events. I was also responsible for the domestic team.
25. Of course, during all this time I remained a teacher of Spanish but during the last five years, as Housemaster, my teaching load was reduced to allow for increased pastoral responsibilities.

26. During these later years I often attended training conferences and seminars, and I helped in the training of our own staff, both at the start of the term, and in other sessions, when required by the SDH.
27. I maintained close liaison with parents at this stage, I was then the Housemaster in the same boarding house. A position was also created to help the international students to integrate and I was appointed International Students Coordinator.
28. As International Students Coordinator I brought together international students from all boarding Houses to highlight their value to our community and increase their awareness of our cultural differences. Each House would appoint two or three international students to represent them in our International Students Council, a forum in which to discuss all things affecting the international body of students, from racism to dislike for British food, to cultural misunderstandings.
29. Around 6th November, every year, we would organise an International Week where all areas of School would be involved. This included special ethnic meals, international fun-facts competitions, a mini international film festival and speeches in all assemblies, all starred by our international pupils. I would also help with training of cultural differences to our teaching staff, to help them read body language, so different from, say, a Chinese student to a local one
30. My Pastoral specific qualifications include a Professional Development Certificate in Boarding Education by Roehampton University (October 2012), an SVQ in Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7 (January 2013) and an LSQA Sports Injury First Aid (latest September 2013 valid till September 2016).

Policy

31. It's difficult to pinpoint when policies with regards to child care and protection were introduced or even if I had a specific role in these introductions. I feel the Pastoral team worked very well and the changes were introduced by the Senior Deputy Head,

but after suggestions and consultations with Housemasters, CPC and other Pastoral staff.

32. One specific example was when I felt uneasy about the way some resident staff felt able to host boys, aged around seventeen, in their private residences, and we all agreed that policy in this regard should be clarified further. The policy then became only doing so with at least one other member of staff, and with your doors open. The emphasis being to “keep it professional”. All offices with in departments had window panels inserted for the same reason.

Strategic planning

33. This section in a way overlaps the previous one, however, it is clear that the “potential for abuse” analysis and concerns, grew exponentially after the infamous national case, of Jimmy Saville. I’m sure the example mentioned above was motivated at least in part by that.
34. As far as I recall and was aware, Merchiston Castle School was determined to make our environment a safe and trusted environment, for the pupils, for all professional teams had this as the core of their strategic approach.

Other staff

35. I mentioned before, that as Housemaster, I was responsible for a team of pastoral staff, both resident and non-resident, as well as a team of non-resident domestic staff.
36. I held meetings with both teams regularly and the communication channels were open at all times. I have to add that although I was invited to give my opinion with regards to which member of staff worked in my team, the final allocation and appointment was made by the HM and SDH in accordance with whole-school planning.

37. In the final two years the meetings with the pastoral team were further formalised and records kept. My position as Housemaster was reviewed every year, the boys under my care were asked for feedback, as well as parents and members of the pastoral and domestic teams. This review concluded with a meeting with the SDH with whom the points of action, improvement, training or review would be agreed for the following session.
38. In turn, I had to review every tutor in my House and that review would be included in the overall review of that member of staff with their academic line managers. Of course, I also underwent academic reviews with Mr. Corbett and Madame Gray, my Heads of Department in those years.

Recruitment of staff

39. I was only indirectly involved in the appointment of new staff, in that I would meet them and interview some of them (when they were relevant to my areas of responsibility). However, the final decision was taken by the Headmaster (Mr Hunter) and the Senior Leadership Team. I was not aware of whether or not they spoke to referees. PVG registration was required of all new appointments. On occasion, I did express concern, on occasions where the candidate seemed "too good to be true"

Training of staff

40. I was involved in several levels of training. I did CPC with the whole School, which included training to potential Prefect students, in their final year. This CP training was done in Houses, where I would introduce my role to all pupils and in Whole School inset sessions as well as bringing in specialists, for example in Internet Safety.
41. I also did SSSC training and helped some of our colleagues to find their way around their, at times, hard to follow material, and guide them on how best to complete the required tasks.

42. I was also involved in liaison with International students, where I would try to highlight major cultural differences as well as guiding possible responses to students speaking in their own language in class, or in leisure time.

Supervision / staff appraisal / staff evaluation

43. The SMT and other Senior staff participated in a programme of class observations, where we were allocated a timetable of lessons that we would visit, and follow this with feedback to the Director of Studies.
44. These observations were sometimes within the departments but, the most interesting ones, at least for me, were the interdepartmental ones. Each member of staff would have two appraisals per session, one with his/her academic line-manager, and another with his/her pastoral line-manager.

Living arrangements

45. I lived for most of my working life, at my private home, with the exception of the final eight years when I lived in School accommodation, within Laidlaw House, when I was assistant Housemaster and later Housemaster.
46. My accommodation was that of all resident staff, a flat inside Laidlaw boarding house. The final five years I lived in the Housemaster's accommodation linked through an office to the boarding house. Laidlaw had two boarding sections, Laidlaw North and Laidlaw South, with about 60 boys in each. Each of them had three resident members of staff (the housemaster, assistant housemaster and resident tutor).
47. The boarding house has three floors and each responsible adult lives on one floor. As to who had access to the children's residential area, well supposedly the pastoral staff as any tutor when on evening duty. Nobody thought it was ok to go to a

boarding house unless you first spoke to the Housemaster or a member of his team and say why you were there? Sometimes it was important to get hold of a pupil, for example, but we would always go through the resident staff.

Culture within Merchiston Castle School

48. I may have been too naive but both me and [REDACTED] felt secure there. I felt that the whole team went way out of their way to ensure the care and protection of the boys.
49. Even before the advent of Child Protection, I remember the case of a boy from Northern Ireland who was a security risk (I don't remember the reason), he would never know this, but we got updated at CR meetings and all staff behaved with such tact around him.
50. The same happened if a boy had lost a grandparent or a beloved dog. The CR would be informed and this was done for two reasons, so that we wouldn't unwittingly upset him and to keep an eye on his mood and the interactions with his peers.
51. From the beginning of my career at Merchiston I was encouraged to feedback, if I ever noticed any unusual behaviours and that was easy considering the small class sizes.
52. As for "fagging" given that Merchiston is, unusually, a horizontal boarding system, this was pretty unknown even when I arrived in the eighties. The boarding houses were divided by year group/age, rather than mixing all ages together; this means the year groups developed very strong friendships, but there was no hierarchy among the boys, except perhaps a separation between the "sporty" and the "academic" types.

Discipline and punishment

53. My familiarity with the question of punishments is rather restricted. I was aware of the "blue papers" given to those who failed to do their prep but I was not very inclined to adopt this method.
54. There were also two different detentions, Thursdays (one or two hours homework under supervision) and Saturdays (two hours work under supervision and in full uniform). The later one had to be approved by the relevant Housemaster.
55. As a Sixth form Housemaster, the punishments were more serious but then so were the infractions. For example: thieving, returning too drunk to the school or having alcohol in your room, may end in a temporary suspension. Minor drunkenness may get you a gating, which is equivalent to grounding.
56. All these punishments had a very clear protocol. The fault was discussed with the pupil (if drunk, that would be the day after), then communicated to the Senior Deputy Head who would guide in the procedure to follow. The SDH would also inform parents. If it was a case of drug use then, to all those points would be added, a return to school after accepting a random drug test and the police and HMI were informed.
57. The School's Policy booklet was very detailed and extensive about this area and equally extensive were the records kept by everyone involved. Each pupil was given a copy of this School Policy booklet and one of the first tasks of the Housemaster was to confirm with them that they had read it and understood it.
58. The senior pupils may have had a say in this process but certainly I was never aware of this happening, either directly or through [REDACTED]. In my time as resident, this definitely did not happen. In my CPC training sessions with prefects, the emphasis was always "observe and report".

Day to day running of the school

59. My role as Housemaster made me responsible for the day to day running of the boarding house, particularly in the last five years. In practice, this meant that I had to plan ahead all the daily routine of activities, both sporting and cultural, liaise with parents and their requests and inform the CR of any problem or difficulty any of my boys could be facing (emotionally, academically or physically).
60. I had three roll-calls daily, that I would use to check on the boys (and the colour of their socks!) and to deliver messages and reminders as well as appointments etc. I was (and still am) confident that if any boy was being ill-treated, I would find out right away.
61. I was able to tell when anything was wrong with one of my boys, I had plenty of contact with them and they seemed to feel able to confide in me about their problems: from unhappy breakups to concerns about parental drinking, to stress about exam pressure, or "nobody likes me" worries.
62. That happened once, when there was a threatening altercation between two boys and I was informed right away, by both domestic staff and prefects, as well as other resident boys. I believe that I had a very frank and open relationship with the boys under my care and this belief was reinforced by inspectors' comments whenever they visited.
63. Looking back, if any child was being abused or ill-treated, I would say that the Housemasters should have known, but sadly maybe at times it was not in their interest to see. Life as Merchiston resident staff was extremely demanding on time and resilience. To combine with family expectations or social life was almost impossible. I think that it was at times very convenient to have "highly dedicated" colleagues to take some of the strain.

Concerns about the school

64. I was aware of the police investigation in regards to James Rainey-Brown and when he died I did ask [REDACTED] about their time with him in Pringle House (junior boarding house).
65. [REDACTED] said that Rainey-Brown was a bit weird, while [REDACTED] was quite upset at his death, and said "he is now a tree in one of his favourite forests". I believe that was because Mr Rainey-Brown was quite outdoorsy.
66. Certainly, in my senior boarding house I had to deal with a significant number of boys who were very upset, and disbelieving, about what was being said about him. I haven't received a clear explanation from [REDACTED] other than R-B seemed to be very outdoorsy.
67. The responsibility of informing parents rests with the Senior Deputy Head and the Headmaster. The School took the situation very seriously indeed and the response was discussed and taken in consultation with Governors, the Police and HMI.

Reporting of complaints / concerns

68. By the time I was directly involved in boarding there was a complaint policy clearly stated in the policies booklet, with a clear protocol to follow.
69. The CPC was the appointed liaison in these cases but boys were encouraged to talk to whoever they felt able to, the emphasis was on "speaking up". In my time as CPC I did receive a number of boys' complaints about their peers or teachers or parents. These were always recorded in the CPC files. The relevant Housemaster was informed so that he/she could keep an eye on the situation.
70. I would, at times, call a meeting of the boys involved, both the complaining one and the cause of the complaint. I continued to do this as a housemaster because I'm a

great believer in the importance of clear and honest dialogue. True malice was thankfully rarely present.

Trusted adult / confidante

71. Over time the need for the presence of an external “go to” person saw the appointment of a counsellor, Mrs. Blair, who lived with her family on campus but away from the boarding houses.
72. The boys used this facility well and as a Housemaster I certainly felt it to be very useful to support boys after bereavement, stressful exam times and personal relationship issues. Before Mrs Blair’s appointment, Merchiston joined forces with the charity Place2Be, to help the junior pupils.

Abuse

73. The definition of abuse definitely evolved during my years at Merchiston. It becomes a broader term to be applied, not only to physical abuse, but also to emotional and verbally abusive behaviour, clearly stated in the Child Protection section of the School’s policies booklet.
74. Name-calling, belittling, picking on, personal, sexist or racist comments, all of these were encapsulated in the concept of “abusive behaviour”. As CPC, it was a very important part of my role to ensure that the CR was fully aware of these elements. Even so, I have to say that it was difficult for a very small minority of the staff to change, with these changes.
75. It is important to note that the Policies Booklet was revised every year and each member of staff, responsible for a section, had to submit to the Senior Deputy Head, by an appointed deadline, an update according to the latest changes brought about by HMI or the Scottish executive. Therefore the evolution was constant.

Child Protection arrangements

76. I have mentioned this, given that during my years as CPC it was my responsibility to organise these. Important evolution was when the Governors started to attend their own CPC training, given that they are ultimately responsible for the School.
77. During my last two years as CPC one of the governors, Mrs. Kuenssberg, was appointed as Child Protection Liaison Governor, and we would hold termly meetings to keep this body informed of incidents or problems. All members of staff were aware of how to communicate concerns to the CPC and in the CR office there were forms where they could record their concern and pass it on.
78. The insertion of glass panels in all office doors was one arrangement designated to avoid opportunities for abuse. I believe that the CPC training and refreshment sessions brought these issues to the forefront of all staff behaviour towards the pupils.

External monitoring

79. As Housemaster and previously as teacher, visits from HMI Inspectorate were familiar to all of us. Personally, I really enjoyed these opportunities to show off and at the same time learn and improve on my performance.
80. While I was Housemaster, the HMI Inspectorate would shadow me, visit all areas of the boarding house, chat to the boys as they wished (individually or in groups), and without me and check my office for medical entries such as boys requesting paracetamol or provisions for boys with allergies, etc. The HMI would then feed back to the SLT, but their interactions with me were always full of positive comments.

Record-keeping

81. Record-keeping grew exponentially during my years at school. It seemed to grow particularly from around 2012. In the 1990's I can only remember having my marking book to keep scores of tests and class performance.
82. There was also a book where members of staff would enter detentions (Thursdays and Saturdays), Report Cards and the End of Term Reports to parents.
83. Subsequently we were to record incidents, unexplained mood changes, suspected Child Protection issues, bullying, etc. Teachers would report in writing to their heads of department and to the relevant housemaster or CPC if that was the case. Housemasters would hold meetings and keep records of each one of these.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

84. All the investigations led by me as CPC, dealt with boys making allegations against peers within Merchiston School. However, before I was appointed CPC, I had the unfortunate task of reporting on a colleague, whose behaviour was at least peculiar and at worst highly suspicious.
85. After my time as CPC, another major incident was brought to the School's attention through boys' disclosures to me. I feel that the School's response was vastly different and clearly reflected the evolution in policy.
86. The former was regarding Mr DXP (I don't remember the year), the latter RCQ in 2015. RCQ was fully investigated, the inspectorate fully informed, as well as the Teaching Council, the school's lawyers and the police. I gave a statement to the police in regards to RCQ I have not been asked to give evidence in any trial.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

87. I have never been involved in any historical abuse cases that I can recall.

Police investigations / criminal proceedings

88. It's difficult not to be aware of some police investigations given the tragic immediate consequences and the press interest. The School's response was twofold: to help Police Scotland as much as possible and to support the many pupils and parents distressed by James Rainey-Brown's suicide.
89. I felt a strong sense of a community coming together, just to offer comfort to these children who felt bereft and confused by the events.

Convicted abusers

90. I have not been aware of any convicted abuser working for the School. The outsourced summer camps run by Torquil Johnson-Ferguson were brought to our attention by comments made by boys on their return to school.
91. Climbing wearing just a harness and adults present in the showering areas is what I remember. I did speak with older boys who had attended this camp before, and they did not seem to see anything wrong with any of that.
92. I clearly remember a rather mature boy telling me off, by saying: "if you think that was dangerous I think it is far more dangerous that the boarding houses are not alarmed at night, and we can go to Tesco after everyone is asleep". All the boarding houses were alarmed shortly after that.
93. I do not remember if I was the CPC or the deputy CPC at that time. I remember a meeting in the school old library with Torquil Johnson-Ferguson, Mr Nigel Rickard, as Deputy Headmaster, and myself, in which he committed himself to ensure these

would not happen again and to write, to that effect, a letter to the school. Torquil had been a pupil at Merchiston. I had no further dealings with him, nor awareness of any other issues in regards to this. I do not know if any person who worked at the school was convicted of the abuse of a child, or children, at the school.

Specific alleged abusers

James Rainey-Brown

94. I recall James Rainey-Brown, he was a Housemaster and then assistant Housemaster in Pringle House (a Junior boarding house). He didn't like women in school and I think he was quite taken aback when I was appointed Housemaster but he did congratulate me. I thought him very old fashioned. I was not aware of any concerns about Mr Rainey-Brown's behaviour prior to 2013.

DXP [REDACTED]

95. I recall DXP [REDACTED]. I'm not sure of the dates but I was at Merchiston during his full employment. He would have been late middle age. He was school [REDACTED] and responsible for the [REDACTED]
96. He was not an inspiring [REDACTED], to be honest, but kindly enough. I could not believe my eyes when I saw him trying to peer inside young boys kilts while on a [REDACTED] to Northumberland. I reported him on our return.
97. It's difficult to recall but at the time I don't think we had Child Protection at Merchiston, I'm not sure. I was asked to accompany a [REDACTED] to Durham and Wrexham with overnight stay at Durham School. The [REDACTED] dress code requires the boys to wear the kilt. I noticed that the [REDACTED] seem to place himself in really awkward places until another colleague pointed out that from those angles he was able to "peek" up the boys legs.

98. At first I did not believe it, it seemed very odd to me but I did observe him and on every occasion he did this. On arrival back to School I spoke to Mr Rickard to disclose this. The truth is that I wished I had not done anything, the deputy head made me feel as though I was the one who had a "dirty imagination" for interpreting these actions thus. One positive result is that he was not invited to any further [REDACTED] tours.

QZL [REDACTED]

99. I recall QZL [REDACTED] and I was at Merchiston during his full employment. He was very young and was a resident tutor in Rogerson East House. He was a teacher of [REDACTED] and was the [REDACTED]

100. He was small and I thought clearly gay but he then announced his engagement to a female colleague, so I thought I had got it wrong.

FQY [REDACTED]

101. I do recall FQY [REDACTED], but I only knew him as my pupil, not as an employee of the School.

RCQ [REDACTED]

102. I recall RCQ [REDACTED] and I was at Merchiston during her full employment. She was in her early 30's and was a teacher of [REDACTED], a resident tutor with V Form and then assistant [REDACTED]. She was also involved in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
103. I always felt she was inappropriate, somehow, without being able to put my finger on it. Her manner, dress and comments were unprofessional. As CPC I spoke to her on a couple of occasions but tears were always present and as there were no complaints against her, from the boys, all I could do was encourage her to move to another job.

104. The occasions when I spoke to RCQ were about her having boys in her flat freely coming and going to borrow DVDs or to watch TV when they were supposed to be doing their prep. Also her dress sense, given her large proportions, was rather inappropriate and I also spoke to her about this.
105. I encouraged her to change jobs because I felt that maybe, if she was in a more female environment, she might feel happier. I understood her to be highly frustrated, lonely and emotionally leaning on the youth of our pupils.
106. Sadly, although her CV was impressive and she always got through to interviews, her lack of dress-sense let her down. On her last year I insisted to lend her an appropriate professional suit and she got the job. I thought it was totally inappropriate for her to be RCQ but it was decided by the Headmaster and it was her last year at Merchiston. I don't think I could have done anything about it.
107. A video did emerge after RCQ had left to teach in a mixed boarding school in England. A group of Old Boys were visiting the School and came to say hi. It was a Saturday. Laughingly they asked me what I thought about the video. They did not know the teacher in question, they had left before RCQ
108. I honestly thought it was all a very poor taste joke. One of the boys actually retrieved the video and showed it to me on his mobile. I was truly shocked. I passed the information to Mr Johnston, Deputy Head, together with the names of some of these Old Boys.
109. On the Monday, three, at the time sixth form students, came to see me to reinstate that the video was real and that they all knew about it. I left everything in the hands of the CPC. As I understand, Merchiston contacted RCQ new school to inform them, as well as the HMI and the Police. Had the genders of the people involved been different I'm sure the outcome would have been more resounding.

DRW

110. I recall DRW and I was at Merchiston during his full employment. He was very young and a resident tutor in Pringle House, as well as a teacher. He was very but delightful and full of enthusiasm.
111. believes that he was very important to his mental and physical health after he was diagnosed, at the age of eleven, with painful and limiting rheumatoid arthritis. DRW helped by teaching him to swim and imbuing him with self-belief.
112. I can say honestly that I had no concerns at all about Mr DRW staying at Merchiston. I did not agree with the way the School dealt with him. Whatever he did during his time as an assistant teacher should have had the benefit of the guidance of senior members of staff. He, clearly, did not have this.

QZA

113. I recall QZA, he was at Merchiston from middle age until his retirement. He was and then SNR.
114. He was extremely professional. He was very steady in his moods and not given to loss of temper.

Gordon Cruden and BKO

115. I don't recall Gordon Cruden or BKO
116. I'm sure you can see from my comments above, the ones I knew best, and the ones I didn't know so well.

117. None worked directly with me, in any capacity. I saw them all with children, of course, it was difficult not to be in the Merchiston environment, particularly as [REDACTED] as well.
118. I never witnessed any unprofessional behaviour in any of these colleagues except, as I mentioned, in the case of DXP [REDACTED].

Helping the Inquiry

119. I think Merchiston School learnt much from all the experiences, and the result is a body of teachers properly aware of what it means to be a professional, as a teacher and carer. It is difficult at times, in such a familiar environment as Merchiston is, to have a clear line between being "friendly" but not "their friend".
120. I personally learned that no balanced individual offers his time and work for nothing. If it appears too good to be true, then it is. In my experience when a person appears to be 100% dedicated to caring and living with young people, without any private life or separate interests of their own, always happy to volunteer without extra remuneration even if it is last minute on a Saturday, something is amiss. It's a gut feeling too, and very difficult to rationalise.
121. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....[REDACTED].....

Dated.....25 November 2020.....