

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Mary DUNCAN

1. My name is Mary Alison Duncan. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1942. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I obtained my Diploma in Art and Design after studying at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. My post Graduate studies were at Glasgow School of Art.
3. From 1965 until 1970 I was employed as a lecturer at Glasgow School of Art, after which I had a few years away from teaching. In 1975 I was working as a part time teacher at Larchfield Prep School in Helensburgh. I stayed there for a year before joining Lomond School, Helensburgh where I was employed on a part time basis from 1976 until 1985. From 1980 until 2000 I worked as an art teacher at Keil School. I taught in both Lomond School and Keil School between 1975 and 1985. Both were part time (Keil, 3 mornings a week and Lomond the equivalent in the afternoons). This situation which suited me well as both schools were close to where I lived, so I was able to spend necessary time with my then young children.
4. This was initially on a part time basis but as the school role increased my hours of employment also increased. I always held sole charge of the Art Dept. as head of department. From 2000 for a year I was a supply teacher at Kelvinside Academy and the High School of Glasgow. From 2002 I taught night classes run by Glasgow University (DACE – Department of Adult Continuing Education) and thereafter taught adult classes run by Helensburgh Art Club and voluntary Art project work with Primary Schools until 2017. Separate from those employments from 2000 until 2005 I was an SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) marker of Higher Art written scripts.

Employment with Keil School

5. In 1980 I was invited to join the staff at Keil to cover the absence of the then teacher of Art. He failed to return to the school as he was terminally ill, and I automatically continued in the role. I was the only person running the Art department.
6. Keil was a very small school and I am not aware of any line managers. As I had sufficient experience and common sense to know how to cope with the job, I was therefore, confident that I was given all the guidance and monitoring from senior management necessary within the school.
7. Like all schools we were subject to regular HMC Inspection. Running a department single-handed had its challenges especially with so many changes to the curriculum over the years. The school was very supportive and all the staff in the school had the necessary support and access to SQA staff training sessions.

Policy

8. I was a tutor (guidance teacher to the junior day girls) and the job entailed taking registration in the mornings, giving out the necessary notices/information, checking their individual school progress, homework demands, problems they may have etc. The title 'Guidance' was used to explain the title tutor. When on weekend duty, I, like all staff members, shared this duty so we didn't have to do it very often. I had responsibility of boarding pupils during the day. We were responsible adults in charge of the children in our care. Any help that we may have needed was always accessible through senior management. There was no training given and our role was principally that of an adult presence. I was not involved in policy making decisions.

Strategic planning

9. We had regular staff meetings during which we discussed mainly educational matters. Child safety obviously came into this but child abuse was not considered other than normal teasing experienced from other children. This is a natural part of children's development usually brought about by jealousy, feelings of insecurity etc.

10. I was, and still am, happy to believe that we as staff did our best for the children in our care, giving them as much support as and when it was needed.

Staff

11. I was not responsible for any other member of staff. I ran the Art department on my own.
12. I was not responsible for the recruitment of any staff in the school.
13. I had no involvement in the training of staff. I had no staff to supervise and therefore did not have any appraisals or evaluations to complete. Routine supervision of my work was carried out by senior staff. I was also checked during HMI Inspections, SQA Results, parent/teacher meetings etc.

Living arrangements

14. Along with the other day members of staff I stayed off site. Boarding staff lived on site.
15. We all had access to residential areas when necessary, through occasional evening or weekend duties, but it was restricted to public areas such as common rooms.

Culture within Keil School

16. Initially in the early days the school was obviously male orientated, being a boys school run by male staff and senior pupils. The first girl pupil [REDACTED] John Widdowson when he took over running the school. The Art Department was located outside the main building. The reason I cannot comment is that I was only in the building for a short time. I did not have time to mix during coffee or other times.
17. I was not in the building for any relevant period and therefore I have no idea whether fagging existed or not.

Discipline and punishment

18. Within the school day, discipline of the pupils was handled firstly by staff members. Most offences were easily resolved, albeit by detention or being put forward for N.H. (Natural History) which involved outside maintenance work including picking up litter. If the offence was in any way serious the matter was reported to House Staff, Department Head, then the Headmaster. It was a system which appeared to work reassuringly well. As N.H. was a punishment it meant there was little enthusiasm from those taking part, which was quite natural.
19. If I remember correctly there were records kept for detention and N.H and both were filled in by the member of staff involved on the day. Senior management would keep the records.
20. The chiefs/senior prefects were given senior positions in the school and were supervised by House Staff and senior management

Day to day running of the school

21. As a responsible and conscientious member of staff it was my duty to keep an eye on pupils and their well-being and any problems if and when they appeared. The only case I was aware of was that of William Bain, which was not reported until after the school closed in 2000. He admitted his crime and was sentenced to five years imprisonment.
22. If any child was being abused or ill-treated, it should have come to light, but unfortunately it did not. A huge regret was as staff, we have felt that when this most recent crime came to light, is the fact that none of us were aware of it.
23. Why didn't the children come to any of their trusted staff members for help? I think it was they were obviously too scared. Such is the power of the paedophile. If I or other responsible members of staff were aware of this we would have done something about it.

Concerns about the school

24. To my knowledge the school was never the subject of any concern, within the school or to any external agency or body.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

25. Any of the children could have come to us as staff members or to home staff and finally senior management where they matter could have been dealt with at the time it came to light.

Trusted adult/confidante

26. As I have said above the children had full access to any required support and understanding from any staff members, senior pupils and senior management. We had a good system for the children to follow. Chiefs, House Tutors, members of staff and finally the Head of school who dealt with matters promptly and competently. None of this was unknown to pupils.
27. Obviously over a twenty year period there were massive changes in the school. When I joined in 1980 it was purely a boys boarding school. Eventually, as girls and day pupils joined the role, the school improved dramatically and I became much more involved and knowledgeable about the day to day running of the school. (Initially I was in the school building for such a short time, the Art Department was housed outwith the main building)
28. I am not aware if any concerns were ever raised by any of the children.

Abuse

29. Such was my, and I presume the majority of the staff's naivety, we wouldn't have considered discussion of child abuse necessary, an idea that had never entered my head as having been possible. Like me I assume the rest of the staff had no idea what Mr Bain was up to. I even wrote him a favourable, positive character reference. We

cared for the pupils in our care and were given access to any problems they may or may not have had. These problems were noted and discussed if and when it was necessary. Any problems with the boarding houses were discussed with the boarding staff.

Child protection arrangements

30. Child Protection is a big part of being a teaching member of staff. It comes naturally to me and I assume to all or most of my colleagues. I didn't find any need for training, we had been given an informative talk by the police as to what to look out for with illegal drugs and we found it very useful.

External monitoring

31. There was external monitoring but I can't remember the date, but it was around the time of standard grade. I do recall an HMI Inspection and the Inspector involved with assessing me sat in on about two days of my classes. He reported on my teaching methods, content of courses and rapport with the children.
32. During the time of him monitoring he would have spoken to the children as part of his report. Other than me there would have been no other member of staff present during the assessment. Part of his assessment would require him to speak with me and at the end of his assessment he would have provided some feedback.

Record-keeping

33. Record keeping has to, and was kept for all aspects of the school. I did not have full access to all those records. Understandably there was no need for every member of staff to gain access to every piece of information in the school.
34. Prior to my time at the school I don't know what kind of records were kept or who had access to them.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement, reports of abuse and civil claims, Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

35. It was not until well after Keil closed, approximately five or six years ago, I was interviewed by the police about the conduct of a former colleague, William Bain, who had allegedly been accused of abusing some of the pupils in his care. The content of my statement that I provided was formed in favour of the accused, to my shame. I had always found him a diligent, hard-working, intelligent member of staff. Never before did I have any negative thoughts about him. I was to be proved wrong. The accused pled guilty and was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

Convicted abusers

36. I did work with William Bain during my time at Keil. Other than staff interaction I had no other dealings with him and while I worked beside him I had no concerns.
37. I don't know anything about his being recruited to the school, his qualifications, his child care qualifications before or during his time at Keil, any supervision or monitoring or any previous allegations of abuse which the school or staff had been made aware of.

Specific alleged abusers

CFJ

38. I vaguely remember ^{CFJ} being a member of staff at the school when I was there. I don't know when he was employed at the school so cannot say what years our paths crossed. I don't know how old he was or his role at the school, other than being staff. There is nothing that I can remember about him. I did not know him well at all and do not know what he was like. I don't know what interaction he had with any of the children.

CDK

- 39.** I did not know CDK and therefore cannot tell you anything about him or his time at the school.
- 40.** 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.....

22 October 2020

Dated.....