

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Adrienne SMITH

1. My name is Adrienne Jean Smith. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I studied for my MA in French and German at Glasgow University and thereafter attended Jordanhill College for my Post Graduate Diploma in Education. In 1969 I began teaching French and German at Duncanrig Secondary School, East Kilbride and remained there until 1973. In 1973 I transferred to Broxburn Academy where I taught the same subjects. I was at Broxburn Academy for one year. I then had a break in teaching bringing up my family, before I started with Keil School.

Employment with the school - Keil

3. My employment with Keil School began in 1989 where I taught German and French. This initially was on a part time basis and gradually over the years it became full time. In 1995 I was still a teacher but also had the role as House Mother in Islay Kerr Boarding House. In 1998 my role changed where I was still teaching but was now the Assistant Housemistress in Islay Kerr. The following year, 1999 I was teaching and joint Housemistress in Islay Kerr. I remained in those roles until the school closed in 2000.
4. My husband, Thomas Smith, began working with the school as Deputy Head of the school and as House Master. We lived in at the school and when we arrived there was a vacancy for a part time French teacher which I was asked to take on. For this role I was interviewed by the Principal Teacher of French and the Headmaster. I was also

asked for and provided my degree certificate, Post Graduate Diploma in Education and my General Teaching Council registration. I cannot recall if references were asked for or contacted.

5. The teaching job was initially for only one period in the day. The following year I was asked to introduce German and my timetable increased over the next few years until I was only teaching German but on a full time basis.
6. My line manager for my language teaching was the Principal Teacher for the department. For my role in the boarding house my line manager was the Housemaster. The liaison was close.
7. There were only two language teachers and we shared two classrooms, as one of the rooms contained a language lab. We therefore spoke to each other all day and there were weekly department meetings.
8. As the school was small, the Head Teacher and/or the Depute Head often came into the classrooms during lessons. They were then able to monitor the teaching in an informal way. There were more formal appraisals, which involved the Head Teacher sitting in on lessons and then a subsequent interview with him. The Head or his Deputy would call into the class on a regular basis throughout the week. This could be for many reasons, not just appraisals, but if they needed a question answered, needed to speak with a pupil or showing visitors around.
9. I initially became involved in boarding when the school admitted younger boarders who lived with much older pupils. The school therefore appointed me, and another housemasters wife, [REDACTED] as House Mothers. We were to give extra care and support to mainly the young boarders in our respective Houses. Liaison with the housemasters was therefore close as they were our husbands. The extra care would be just to make sure we could assist when changing beds, making sure they cleaned themselves properly, sent in laundry as required and to give comfort to new starts who may be feeling homesick. There would be general chat with the younger boys checking to see how they had done at school that day, just as a mother would do. There was

no training at that time, but we were both mothers [REDACTED] and I was already a qualified teacher.

10. When I first went to the school, I had not taught for fifteen years while I brought up our two sons. The initial job was only 1st year French and very part time. I therefore had lots of time to bring myself up to date and the school also paid for me to attend the Goethe Institut in Glasgow for a refresher course before introducing it into the school.
11. Before taking up my House Mother post, I had been living in Islay Kerr House for six years as the House Master's wife and was well acquainted with how the house functioned. I was also well acquainted with the boys in the house, either through House activities, teaching or extra-curricular activities.

Policy

12. While I had no direct responsibility for policy, the school was small and held regular staff meetings. At those meetings the staff could freely offer opinions and suggestions on procedures.
13. I believe that during my term boarding improved markedly with better facilities and a much more homely atmosphere. There was excellent liaison between staff regarding individual pupils, because the school was so small. Child Protection Policy was introduced circa 1995 and we had staff meetings to discuss this topic. There was no formal policy but the school's attitude was always care and protection of the child first.
14. Staff relations were good and I believe we felt very comfortable discussing any issues with the Management.
15. I had no involvement with Strategic Planning and I was not involved in the recruitment of any staff.

Training of staff

16. I was not involved in the training or development of any staff. Staff were encouraged to attend in-service training and there were also separate in-service training sessions held in the school.
17. I was not involved in staff supervision or any staff appraisals.

Living arrangements

18. I lived with my husband and two sons in a house adjoining Islay Kerr Boarding House. There was an upstairs door leading into the boarding house. There were a number of staff who lived on site, in houses adjoining boarding houses or in separate bungalows or flats.
19. In theory all staff had access to residential areas, but in practice staff would contact house staff for access. All buildings in the school were secured by coded entry and so it was difficult to remember the different codes for each building anyway. Of course, the cleaning staff had access to residential areas. Pupils were welcome to visit friends in boarding houses in communal areas.

Culture within – Keil

20. Because of the size of the school, every member of staff knew almost every child, whether from classroom, boarding or extra-curricular activities. Relationships between staff and the majority of pupils were easy and comfortable, within a disciplined framework.
21. Our prospectus claimed we had a family atmosphere and one Inspectorate Report endorsed that. It was a good environment, which produced confident capable school leavers. I had never been so closely involved with pupils in previous schools. On many occasions I was proud of our pupils, who would for example, applaud the person who

came last in the race at sports day, just for finishing the race or applaud a boy who played the trumpet really badly at Assembly.

22. In my time the atmosphere in the boarding house became much more relaxed and comfortable with better furnishings, more leisure activities at the weekends, private space for telephone etc. and allowing prep time to take place in house rather than the school building.
23. Many activities within the school spanned the age ranges and so relationships among pupils were generally good too. At mealtimes, pupils were organised into "squads", which were supervised by a Chief (Prefect) and also comprised all age groups, again helping cooperation and friendship. At school dances, primary age children were seen to be dancing with seniors and many would be keen to dance with staff too. One visiting ceilidh band commented that this was the only school where they did not have to encourage the kids on to the dance floor.
24. Participation in drama, music, sports etc. was high even when it was optional. Pupils took great pleasure in house competitions. There were many "fun" events such as a 24 hour sports marathon for charity, or celebration of the schools 80th anniversary with an 80-some reel. Staff readily gave their free time to such ventures, some giving a great deal.
25. At the end of term we had barbecues for our boarders or took them to the cinema or skating rinks. Day pupils were often eager to participate in weekend activities as well as boarders. Indeed some opted to have sleepovers with their boarding friends in their own homes as well as in the boarding house.
26. Good academic results were of course important, and our monthly "gradings" meetings ensured that each child's progress was monitored.
27. Fagging did not exist during my time at the school.

Discipline and punishment

28. For minor infringements of house rules e.g. not doing the allocated chores, the house chief (Prefect) would issue "copies" i.e. lines. This was all monitored by house staff. Although no formal records of punishments issued by chiefs were kept, we were speaking to the chiefs or their deputies on a daily basis and were aware of the punishments being issued.
29. Discipline issues were dealt with by classroom teachers, or if necessary, referred to heads of department or depute head.
30. Repeated breaches of discipline were punished by a spell of NH (Natural History) at the weekends. This involved gardening work, tidying, leaf work, litter picking etc. Classwork completed badly or repeatedly not done was punished by detention on a Saturday afternoon. Both NH and detention were supervised by a chief and duty teacher. Staff cover at the weekend was on a rota basis. The duty teacher had responsibility for the pupils from after breakfast and until after evening meal, when the boarding staff took over.
31. Pupils, staff and parents were issued handbooks to explain school procedures. House staff were informed of pupils punishments.
32. Chiefs (Senior Pupils) were given a lot of responsibility in helping to run the school. They supervised waking up and going to bed, mealtimes and chores etc. They were allowed to give "Copies" (lines) for breaches and this was reported to house staff.

Day to day running of the school

33. I had no involvement in the making of the rules or framework of a school day, but I had to teach a whole timetable and from 1995 also had tasks in the boarding house.
34. Although it was the responsibility of house chiefs to supervise pupils getting up, going to bed on time, and prep time, it was all double-checked by staff and I thought

supervision was good. As house mother, I also spent specific time with the small boys, helping them on laundry day, checking welfare and offering comfort if they were homesick etc. Every day one of the house staff was on duty, although in practice we were often all around.

35. As house staff I was around the house a lot and it causes me real distress to think that pupils did not come to me if they had problems. Since my husband was housemaster, our adjoining door to the boarding house was almost always open. Boys were free to ring the bell and talk to either of us at any time in private and they were in and out of our study a lot. A lot of the reasons for the boys coming in would centre around what could be expected from a normal family environment, ie asking to go out, go away for a weekend. There were other occasions it may involve discussing their gradings. On some occasions it could be my husband wanting to speak with a boy who had been in trouble and discuss this in a more private environment. Occasionally we had parents phone our line and the children would come into to speak with them. During the term time the bell was almost constantly being rung as there were many boys and they would all have something to ask at some point.

36. As it is clear that abuse did occur, I can only think that for some reason they thought they could not complain about one teacher to another. They did not tell parents, matron, chaplain or doctor. [REDACTED]

Concerns about the school

37. During my time at Keil I had no concerns about the school

Reporting of complaints/concerns

38. The school was so small that pupils with a complaint could have talked to any member of staff, matron, chaplain or doctor. Any complaint would then have been reported to the House staff and/or then to the Head Teacher.
39. I am not aware of complaints other than minor bullying, which were dealt with and resolved.
40. I don't recall formal recording; any complaints were simply dealt with.

Trusted adult/confidante

41. I think that most members of staff would have been approachable. Also matron lived on site, the doctor had surgeries in the school twice a week, and the chaplain was around the school a lot. Boarders often had a weekend pass (Saturday lunchtime until Sunday evening) to visit their own home, or to that of a relative or friend. They also had free access to a telephone.
42. As with any children living together there were occasional complaints about minor bullying or, for example, someone borrowing another person's property, as there would be in any family. Complaints were usually to house staff, who dealt with it.

Abuse

43. It is difficult to remember details after such a long time but abuse was of course totally unacceptable and was grounds for dismissal as stated in my teacher's contract. I don't remember any definition in this or any other school I had worked in.
44. In the mid 1990's child protection became an issue everywhere and I was involved with that in my church too. At that time, the school produced a child protection policy.

Child protection arrangements

45. I believe the child protection policy was discussed at a staff in-service. Staff were instructed to listen to complaints and refer them to Depute Head or Head. I believe serious complaints were always to be referred to management.

46. The school was small; there were always staff around as many lived on site. There was a system which allowed us to know where pupils were at all times; boarders had to sign in and out of the house with details of their destination within the school. I thought the environment was safe within the campus. All buildings were secured by coded entry and, perhaps naively, I assumed that threats to safety were likely from outside and not within the school. Pupils were occasionally subject to aggression from locals and these incidents were reported to the police with whom the school had a good relationship.

47. As abuse came to light long after the school closed, I would have to say that the child protection arrangements clearly didn't work. The problem may be, and certainly in my case, that I assumed that those of us who go into teaching do so because we like children and have their best interests at heart. It is particularly odious that a trusted teacher should be an abuser. I am horrified that I worked alongside this person, William Bain, and suspected nothing.

External monitoring

48. I remember a full inspection in 1992 and a residential inspection in 1998. It is hard to remember but I think they spoke to groups and individuals. Staff were not present while the Inspectors spoke with the pupils. When the inspection was completed we were spoken to by the Inspectors. At the end of the inspection a report was compiled and we had access to it.

Record-keeping

49. We had school reports at the end of each of the three terms compiled by subject teachers and house staff and they included pastoral reports as well as academic reports. These were sent to parents and copies kept by the school. I cannot comment on the records kept by the school management.
50. I have no knowledge of how record keeping was done prior to my employment at Keil.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

51. I knew nothing about abuse until long after the school closed.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

52. I was not involved in any claims or handled any reports made against the school by former pupils concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

53. The police spoke with me and my husband in 2015 when an accusation had been made against William Bain. I helped where I could with names and addresses. I understand the accusation led to conviction and a prison sentence.
54. I provided a signed statement when the police visited about what I knew about William Bain.
55. I never gave evidence at the trial of William Bain or any other person concerning alleged abuse of children at the school.

Convicted abusers

- 56. Only long after the school closed, I found out that KPC [redacted] had been convicted of abuse at another school [redacted] and the aforementioned William Bain.
- 57. Both were colleagues while I was at the school and I had no concerns. I found them to be hard working and popular teachers.
- 58. I have no knowledge of how they were recruited to the school, their qualifications, training, supervision or whether they had been the subject of any previous allegations of abuse.

Helping the Inquiry

- 59. I think children today, and adults too, are much more aware of abuse, because it is unfortunately frequently in the news. Teaching children in very specific terms what they should not allow would be necessary as well as education about the grooming process such as we are now seeing in TV adverts. In my naiveté I did not even teach those things to my sons, who now have children of their own but know that my grandchildren are much better informed, as are all children these days.
- 60. 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..... 30 September 2020