

### **Correspondence with the Department for Children Schools and Families ('DCSF')**

63. Dissatisfied with the lack of apparent action from the ISI, I wrote on 31 March 2010 to Jeanette Pugh, Director of Safeguarding at DCSF<sup>36</sup>. I summarised what I knew of the situation at the school, referencing recent news articles, and the independent review. Towards the end of the letter I asked a number of questions.
64. Ms. Pugh replied on 9 April with a short email saying that she had looked into the matters I raised within the department. She said that ISI had withdrawn the report from its website "whilst enquiries are made to ensure that the report is accurate in relation to the various safeguarding reviews that have taken place and the school's subsequent actions". She answered few if any of my questions.
65. Ms Pugh wrote on 16 April asking me to provide any further information on allegations to Ms M Pattinson of the Independent Schools Team within DCSF. I replied on 19 April listing all the comments that had appeared on the blog which made specific allegations concerning abuse at the school, asking her to forward them to Ms Pattinson. I had already supplied these direct to Durell Barnes at ISI.
66. Ms Pugh replied on 26 April saying "DCSF officials have passed the information to the Independent Schools Inspectorate in connection with any future inspections that might take place, although we note that some of the information is historical and may not necessarily relate to the current situation at the school."
67. It seemed to me that neither she nor anybody else was in a position to assess the relevance of any specific piece of information, unless it is investigated to see whether a weakness in the school's safeguarding arrangements had been exploited and whether that weakness had since been addressed. I wrote to Ms Pugh to this effect on 29 April 2010 and requested a meeting.
68. Ms Pugh replied on 29 April, stating
- "Whilst it is possible for past incidents to be considered as part of school inspection, this is only in the context of assessing how well the school is currently meeting requirements. The regulatory regime has changed significantly in recent years and the statutory responsibilities which schools and local authorities have in relation to child protection have changed considerably. Inspectorates have to focus on the current arrangements within the school and assess, amongst other matters, whether those arrangements meet current requirements for ensuring the welfare of children at the school."
69. In respect of reporting suspicions of child abuse there has in fact been no change in "the statutory responsibilities which schools and local authorities have" in many years. There have been lots of changes in who inspects schools, in their statutory responsibilities with regard to such things as the National Curriculum, but there has been no change in the legal position concerning the (lack of) any statutory duty to report abuse.

### **Articles in the Times**

70. On 10 April 2010 and over the subsequent few days, the Times published a series of articles about Ealing Abbey and St Benedict's School. These articles were based on information provided by me to Sean O'Neill and David Brown, supplemented by their subsequent researches. On [redacted DPA] there was investigatory reporting by Sean O'Neill and David

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<sup>36</sup> JW 0030 Correspondence with DfE Pugh.docx

Brown<sup>37</sup>, a piece by Julia Bradshaw on the effect of Pearce's abuses on "C"<sup>38</sup> and a comment piece by Ruth Gledhill<sup>39</sup>. This was followed up on 12 April with a further article by Sean O'Neill and David Brown<sup>40</sup> and a comment piece by Libby Purves<sup>41</sup>, with a further article on 13 April<sup>42</sup> describing a 2005 letter from Peter Turner (diocesan safeguarding advisor) to Shipperlee. About the letter, the article stated:

He wrote that "Father David has been the subject of four separate allegations over a period of about four years". He added that Pearce should be in restricted ministry "in order to protect children and young persons and to protect Father David from any unfounded allegations".

71. It would appear that these allegations are those referred to subsequently by Mr. Justice Field in his judgement of the civil case by "C" against the abbey<sup>43</sup>. I blogged on 10 April mentioning the initial Times articles.
72. The Catholic Church's first public reaction to the Times' articles appeared in the Catholic Herald on 15 April, an article in which it was stated that Archbishop Vincent Nichols was considering legal action against the Times.<sup>44</sup> However by 23 April Vincent Nichols and the other Catholic bishops had obviously decided this approach was unsustainable, and instead issued an apology for abuses that had occurred. I blogged about the apology pointing out that the extent to which the Bishops were avoiding responsibility even as they apologised, and pointing out that actions were still needed.<sup>45</sup>
73. Abbot Martin Shipperlee's response to the Times articles was to write a letter to all parents<sup>46</sup> stating that "a number of statements in the newspaper articles were incorrect" without saying which. In the letter he referred to the most recent ISI inspection report "which judged Child Protection to be good and overall pastoral care to be outstanding". He made no mention of the fact that the inspection report he referred to had by that time already been withdrawn from the ISI website.

#### **BBC Radio 4 "Sunday" programme**

74. The Sunday after the Times stories, Abbot Martin Shipperlee and Eileen Shearer were both interviewed by BBC journalist Ed Stourton (a former Ampleforth pupil) on the BBC Radio 4 programme "Sunday"<sup>47</sup>. It was announced on air that Shipperlee had demanded that he be told the questions in advance and that this had been agreed. In the interview, Shipperlee stated about Pearce that "This first formally came to my notice in 2001, and at that stage he wasn't teaching, had no pastoral work anywhere outside the monastery, and so on the information we had there, at that time, further action didn't seem to be required, and there's no evidence of any offending at that time."

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article2472691.ece>

<sup>38</sup> JW 0031 [redacted] DPA

<sup>39</sup> JW 0032 [redacted] DPA

<sup>40</sup> JW 0033 Times Archbishop of Westminster 'dodged apology over sexual abuse'.docx

<sup>41</sup> JW 0034 Times Arrest the Pope I rather think we should.docx

<sup>42</sup> JW 0035 Times Paedophile priest 'needed protection from unfounded claims'.docx

<sup>43</sup> JW 0003 Transcript of Civil Case Judgement, particularly para 44-82, the evidence of 'X', 'Y' and 'Z'.

<sup>44</sup> JW 0036 Catholic Herald Archbishop Nichols Takes Legal Advice over Newspaper's Allegation.docx

<sup>45</sup> JW 0002 Blog article 21 "The Bishops' apology"

<sup>46</sup> JW 0029 Letter from the Abbot April 2010

<sup>47</sup> JW 0010 Sunday Programme