

From: Johnstone L (Lesley)
Sent: 16 January 2017 16:28
To: Hoey M (Mary); [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Ombudsman

Mary and [REDACTED]

Using the text from the complaints procedure forwarded by [REDACTED] as a basis, I have drafted the beginning of response below for [REDACTED] (their questions are at the very end of the email). See below. Happy to discuss. I have added a sentence in yellow to personalise the response a bit, and have added questions in red to get your views on how personalised we make the response. Please see what you think. Not sure how much detail to go in to re what happens next with HMI involvement.

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[REDACTED]

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Kind regards

Lesley

Thank you for your message of 10 January, with regard to our concerns about George Watson's College.

We note your position that your remit "does not extend to the investigation of individual complaints". However, we would seek clarity as to what this means. The "investigation of individual complaints" appears to us to have two quite distinct interpretations, namely that:

1. HM Inspectors do not get involved in the nitty gritty of complaints, e.g. in our case to conduct internal questioning or examine primary internal records to establish the truth of our allegations that our child was assaulted and institutionally abused while in GWC's care which the school then covered up via the Principal lying to us, etc.
2. HM Inspectors would never under any circumstances investigate first hand testimony alleging endemic institutional child abuse etc. at specific schools.

Please confirm whether both of these are really your official position. If not, please specify exactly what your position on each is.

If so, please inform us who is responsible for establishing the remit you mention.

Please also specify exactly in what ways, if any, your approach to the investigation of independent schools differs from those in the state sector.

Also, if we should interpret your denial of any duty to investigate "individual complaints" as meaning complaints "from the public", but that you might individually investigate complaints lodged by individuals in other formal positions, please specify exactly who would have the power to trigger such an investigation by you. If this is more than one person (e.g. the Minister) please list all such bodies.

We have to say that both as parents and as taxpayers, we are somewhat astonished to discover this about HM Inspectors. It would be our firm expectation that to be fit for purpose at least (2) above would be a primary function for which the department receives public funding. We would be keen to pursue the appropriateness of this remit in the course of our discussions at a political level if so.

Finally, with regard to point (1) above, we would ask you formally to give us your position on: if not you, then who? We have found George Watson's and its parent body the Merchant Company, to be obdurately obstructive at every level in refusing ever to recognise a single internal failure of any kind. And we have shown that its executives and governors have behaved corruptly in refusing properly to investigate our concerns, so we have now exhausted all opportunities for responsible internal enquiry. Without recommending private legal action which will be beyond the means of most parents, please advise us who, in your view, should be responsible in these circumstances for investigating our serious and well-evidenced concerns and complaints.

We look forward to receiving your response to the questions above at your very earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



