



Serious Case Review

The Sexual Abuse of Pupils in a First School

Overview Report

25th January 2012

Introduction

1. This serious case review was commissioned by the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB) following the arrest in December 2010 of a teacher suspected of sexually abusing children in his care.
2. The serious case review has been conducted in accordance with the guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010¹. The purpose of any serious case review is to:
 - Establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - Identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted on and what is expected to change as a result; and
 - As a consequence, improve interagency working and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Consistent with statutory guidance from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, Tim Loughton MP, dated 10 June 2010, this serious case review overview report is being published and is available on the NSSCB website at <http://www.northsomersetlscb.org.uk/serious-case-reviews.htm>. The publication of any serious case review is a sensitive and complex matter with overview reports often containing personal information. In publishing the report we have tried to strike a balance between transparency and openness so that lessons can be learned, and the protection and welfare of individuals. This serious case review overview report has been anonymised. Any identifying details have been removed in order to protect the privacy and welfare of the vulnerable children, their families, and significant others involved in the circumstances which led up to this review, and to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Background

3. The sexual abuse of children took place in a first school over a number of years prior to disclosure by a child in December 2010. The alleged perpetrator of the abuse was a male classroom teacher who had taught at the school for 15 years. The abuse came to light when one child made a disclosure to her mother. Following this disclosure a number of photos and videos were found on the teacher's computer and other digital devices. The images appeared to have been taken at school and showed the teacher abusing other children. 5 children were identified in the photos and videos, but not all of these subsequently disclosed abuse when interviewed by the police. All of the children in the images were identified and became subject of the charges in Crown Court. During the investigation a further group of children were also identified. There was a total of 20 pupils who were witnesses to or possible victims of abuse by the teacher.
4. At a court hearing in May 2011 the teacher (Teacher A) pleaded guilty to 36 sexual offences, including 22 counts of sexually assaulting a child under 13 and eight counts of sexual assault by penetration of a child under 13. The teacher also admitted one count of attempted rape, one charge of voyeurism, one charge of causing or inciting a child under 14 to commit sexual activity and two charges of possessing indecent images of children. It was stated in court that when the police arrested him they discovered about 30,500 indecent photographs and 720 indecent movies in his possession. Most of these had been downloaded from the internet. It was noted that

the youngest victim was aged six. There is no evidence that photos taken at the school were uploaded to the internet. The teacher was summarily dismissed from his teaching post and following a further court appearance in June 2011 was given an indeterminate prison sentence for public protection, having pleaded guilty.

Methodology

5. A serious case review panel was convened in January 2011 to consider whether a serious case review should be conducted into the circumstances surrounding the alleged sexual abuse of children. The panel concluded that the criteria as set out in chapter 8 of Working Together to Safeguard Children¹ had been met, in that there were a number of children who have been harmed as a result of sexual abuse; that the abuse occurred in an institutional setting; that there is sufficient public interest to undertake a serious case review, and that some of the circumstances of the case may have national implications for systems or processes. The serious case review panel also believed that there may have been information to suggest that some concerns may not have been shared with others or not acted upon appropriately and that this required independent enquiry. The panel also considered that there were specific local policies, procedures or protocols that may require consideration, updating, and that awareness and understanding by staff of these may need to be raised.
6. The Panel identified the following questions to be addressed by the Serious Case Review:
 - How historical concerns about the teacher's behaviour, conduct, and performance were dealt with by the school and, if reported, by other agencies?
 - What lessons are there for how schools handle complaints/disciplinary/child protection matters that are brought to their attention by children/young people and parents; how they are managed and addressed in school, and how they are reported to governors and the local authority?
 - What are the lessons for employment practices in schools and the selection of prospective teachers onto teacher training courses?
 - What are the lessons for the use of technology in schools?
 - What are the lessons for training of school staff and governors in child protection matters
 - What lessons are there for the leadership of schools in creating a safe environment and culture for children and young people in school in which children's rights to safety and privacy are promoted and protected?

In addition the panel developed terms of reference for the review, which set out overall aims and identified specific aspects of practice for consideration. The detailed terms of reference are included at appendix 1.

The panel requested the following agencies to provide individual management reviews (IMRs):

- The first school, to include the work of:
 - Learning and Achievement Branch
 - Governor Services
 - Schools Human Resources
 - CYPS ICT
- North Somerset Children's Social Care, Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)
- North Somerset Education Support Services (CYPS):
 - Educational Psychology
 - Special Educational Needs
 - Education Welfare
- Weston Area Health NHS Trust
 - CAMHS
- NHS North Somerset
 - General Practitioners (GPs)
 - School Nursing Service
- Avon and Somerset Police
- A Health Overview IMR was produced by the Designated Doctor and Designated Nurse for NHS North Somerset

In addition Ofsted were asked to comment on their involvement in the school.

7. In carrying out the individual management reviews, agencies were asked to commence their enquiries from January 2000 identifying any significant referrals or reported concerns. In addition to examining practice in relation to the specific issues identified in the terms of reference, agencies were also asked to provide details of their involvement with the 20 children identified through the police enquiries. Agencies were asked to provide chronologies of their involvement with these children. These chronologies have been amalgamated into a single multiagency chronology which is included at appendix 3. The author of the overview has also received copies of statements given to the police by teachers and parents.
8. The serious case review panel was independently chaired by Tony Oliver who is also the chair of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB). Mike Craddock, an independent social care consultant, with extensive experience of management and inspection in children services, was commissioned to write the overview report.

Parallel Processes

9. The concerns raised by the events at the school have been fully investigated by the local authority and disciplinary actions have been undertaken where relevant. This process is ongoing at the time of writing.

The Involvement of Families in the Serious Case Review.

10. In the course of their investigation the police spoke to over 730 individuals, including parents of victims, teachers at the school and the family of the offender. In addition support was provided to the wider school and local communities at public meetings. In the early stages of the incident officers were posted directly into the school to support the community there and a dedicated team of victim contact officers was formed. This led to a consistently high service being offered and led to an improved trusting and working relationship between all concerned. This is an example of good practice.
11. Teachers and parents who were interviewed by the police were asked for their permission to release copies of their statements for the purpose of the serious case review. A number of statements have been provided by the police to the serious case review, in addition to the notes of discussions held with other individuals who did not provide statements.
12. The disciplinary enquiry also held meetings with staff from the school and took evidence from a number of individuals. This evidence has been made available to the serious case review.
13. North Somerset Educational Psychology Service participated in the multiagency discussions and group meetings with parents and staff as part of the serious case review. The service also provided support along with Children's Social Care colleagues to staff and parents following the initial allegations and as the case progressed. This support focused on helping the school community to make sense of what had happened and to manage their reactions to the abuse, and most importantly on how to support the children in the school. Staff and parents were supported in groups and as individuals as needed, both in the school and other local schools affected by the situation.
14. Children's Social Care has held feedback meetings with both parents and school staff in relation to the serious case review. Parents and staff have also been given the opportunity for one to one contact with a senior member of staff from CYPS. The meetings have enabled both staff and parents to contribute their ideas, which have been taken into account in producing this report.
15. It was decided that children themselves would not be interviewed as part of the serious case review due to the sensitivity of the disclosure made by a small number of children and the need to respect the requirements of the on-going criminal investigation. Some representations from children were available to the schools IMR author.

The School

16. The School is a small first school located on the outskirts of a large seaside town. The school takes male and female pupils from 4 to 8 years of age. There is a privately run pre-school attached which caters for younger children prior to them joining the main school. At the time of the last Ofsted inspection in January 2009

there were 128 pupils on the roll. The inspection report noted that the school shares a site with a privately managed preschool with which it has close links. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds but attainment on entry to the school was broadly in line with that expected. Most pupils were of white British heritage and very few did not speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was below the national average as was the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

17. The school comprises an early 20th century building containing the offices of the headteacher and school bursar, the staff room and a school hall, with ancillary toilets and a kitchen/storeroom. Accessed from the end of the hall is the classroom occupied by Teacher A and from there a further door leading through a computer and library area to a second class room. During the period under review most doors in the school, including those in the areas where Teacher A perpetrated abuse were of solid construction. These doors have since been fitted with windows to improve visibility throughout the school.
18. The school is locally managed by a board of governors and the head teacher. The school receives statutory and contracted regulatory and support services from North Somerset Council (NSC). These comprise:
 - Learning and Achievement Branch, which provides statutory risk assessment of maintained schools in relation to educational standards and outcomes.
 - Governor services, which is a traded service which offers support and advice to governing bodies.
 - Schools HR, which provides advice and guidance on employment issues such as recruitment and disciplinary processes.
 - Children and Young People's Services IT, which provides access to information, advice and guidance on a range of ICT matters.
19. In terms of the type, location, and catchment area of the school, and the religious, cultural and ethnic background of the pupils there is nothing to suggest that children attending the school would be at a greater risk of abuse than their peers in the general population, or that abuse was less likely to be detected. However the Education IMR points out that the intake to the school over the last 5 years shows that a significant number of parents do not choose the school as their first preference and that pupils joining the school come from a widespread area. A comparative exercise with another local school shows a different pattern of admissions. The result of this is that the usual close community surrounding a small local school is not as apparent at the school in question and could make it less likely that parents would share concerns about the school. This pattern of admissions also meant that pupils were registered with a higher number of different GPs than would be expected for a small school. Again this made it less likely that a cluster of concerns would be detected.

The Teacher

20. Teacher A joined the school in September 1995 as a mature newly qualified teacher on completion of his teaching qualification at the University of the West of England. Between leaving school and commencing the teaching qualification he had studied and been employed as a musician and teacher of music.

21. During the first three years of Teacher A's employment at the school he applied for a number of teaching positions at other primary schools. He was unsuccessful in these applications and the last recorded occasion on which he attempted to gain alternative employment was in May 1998.
22. Between January and August 1999 Teacher A was appointed as acting senior teacher at the school to cover a secondment absence. He also performed this role between January and August 2003. During his employment at the school, Teacher A was also at various times appointed as lead coordinator or in a support role to lead coordinator, for science, music, Personal and Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), numeracy and pupil assessment.
23. There is no evidence that at any other time in his life or in any activity outside work there was any suspicion that Teacher A might pose a risk to children.

Concerns Expressed about the Teacher

24. The IMR for the school notes that from as early as the 1996/7 school year and throughout his period at the school, teaching and support staff identified that Teacher A had favourite pupils within his class. These pupils were invariably girls and were variously described by staff members as pupils who were less academically able, emotionally needy or vulnerable and pretty. These pupils were given tasks within the class environment which were viewed as privileges as well as being given greater personal attention by Teacher A. They were allowed by Teacher A to be what many staff viewed as over familiar with him. Teacher A was also known to speak to and joke with his pupils in a manner which was inappropriate for his role. This situation was described by all of the staff interviewed to have been common knowledge amongst the school staff.
25. Staff appear to have been sufficiently concerned about Teacher A's behaviour to attempt to ensure that pupils identified as likely favourites of Teacher A were allocated to other classes on the basis that this might be emotionally harmful to them. Others were allocated elsewhere because they were viewed as needing additional attention for their educational needs which Teacher A's favouritism of other children would leave unaddressed.
26. The IMR for the school makes reference to at least 30 incidents of inappropriate or unprofessional conduct involving Teacher A, which should have been viewed as suspicious. These date from 1999 to 2010 and range from inappropriate lesson content, through over familiarity with children to indecent touching. The following are some examples of concerns raised by staff and parents:
 - In 2004/5 a parent approached the school regarding reports that Teacher A had been taking photographs of children using his mobile phone.
 - Between September 2003 and July 2004 a teacher found inappropriate images of a girl posing with Teacher A, on Teacher A's school camera.
 - In 2005 or 2006 a teacher walked through Teacher A's classroom to find him getting changed for PE in his class. The classroom was used as a thoroughfare by staff and pupils. He was wearing his underpants and a T-shirt.

- The same teacher, while observing a lesson taught by Teacher A, noticed that a child had her hand up Teacher A's trouser leg, stroking his leg. The teacher did not complain as she felt unable to do so. This was because she had been told that she should only observe and comment on the standard of teaching and not on pupil behaviour or classroom management. In addition another member of staff was also observing the same lesson.
- In April 2004 a parent spoke to the school about an inappropriate image being shown to her child.
- On one occasion a voluntary classroom assistant saw Teacher A sitting on some cushions in the library area with a child for approximately 20 minutes and observed that Teacher A had an erection.
- It is reported that in 2008/9 two children on at least one and reportedly on three occasions reported to the school that Teacher A was touching their legs and kissing one of them. On one occasion these actions resulted in one of the children being sick and this was reported. There appears to be no record of this.
- During 2004/2005 an IT technician who was performing checks on computers found a history of adult pornography being viewed on the school computers. The technician was unable to identify the user who had viewed the pornography, and reported this. It is not known what action was taken.

The above concerns are considered later in this report.

27. On a number of occasions in response to these and other incidents colleagues advised Teacher A of the inappropriateness of his behaviour and pointed to the risk that he could be accused of professional misconduct. It is significant however that only 11 of the 30 recorded incidents were reported to the school. In December 2010 a child disclosed to her mother that Teacher A had been indecently touching her in school on an almost daily basis since October. The mother reported this to the police and Teacher A was immediately arrested.
28. In addition to the concerns listed above several negative comments were made about Teacher A's performance as a teacher. It was suggested that he was frequently ill prepared for lessons, his teaching was uninspiring and he was not well organised. Several colleagues found him difficult to work with. Mixed views of his teaching ability were expressed by parents; some were very positive believing that he went out of his way to help a child, while others were critical of his teaching abilities. Some teachers commented on Teacher A's appearance, suggesting that at times he was unkempt or dishevelled.

The response to concerns

29. In May 2003 the government issued guidance for all staff working with children who might have concerns about the welfare of a child (*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* Department of Health 2003²). Copies of this guidance were widely circulated to all agencies with responsibilities for children. The guidance made it clear that practitioners who have a concern about child welfare should discuss the concerns with a manager or designated teacher. Specific guidance for staff working in education settings was issued in 2005 (*Guidance for safe working practice for the protection of children and staff in education settings*³). This document was produced in response to concerns expressed by staff in education settings about their

vulnerability and the need for clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It sought to ensure that the duty of care towards pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour. It also aimed to support employers giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and that where appropriate, legal or disciplinary action is likely to follow. The document established a number of underpinning principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
 - Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
 - Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
 - Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further action agreed, in accordance with the school policy for keeping and maintaining records.
 - Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
 - All staff should know the name of their designated person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.
 - Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.
30. It is known that both documents were circulated to schools within North Somerset, but it is not known what actions were taken to raise the awareness of staff in schools of the significant messages contained within the publications, or embed them in the school culture. In March 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families published guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings⁴. This guidance updated the 2005 DfES publication and contained a recommendation that schools should use the guidance to develop and promote safer working practice by ensuring that all employees and volunteers are made aware of its contents, have access to the document and understand the expectation that they will work to it.
31. The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB) agreed to adopt the 2009 document as practice guidance across all agencies in North Somerset. In November 2009 the chair of the NSSCB wrote to all partner agencies including all schools in the local authority area advising them of this and requiring that by 31st of January 2010:
- All agencies adopt the document as good practice guidance.
 - Managers provide copies of the document to all staff and volunteers with a requirement that those adults ensure that their practice meets the standards outlined.

- All staff and volunteers amend their practice to meet the standards and actively seek advice and direction if unsure how to respond to the expectations
 - The above requirements to be extended to other providers using agency facilities
 - Human resources departments adopt the document as a benchmark when conducting investigations into staff behaviour.
32. This initiative by the NSSCB was good practice, however the IMR for the school has established that the guidance was not disseminated within the school and staff there remained unaware of it and their responsibility to adopt the practice standards advocated. In spite of this many of the staff in the school demonstrated that they were aware of the requirements for good practice and acceptable standards of behaviour, and made efforts to challenge both the behaviour and performance of Teacher A. In order to understand why these challenges were unsuccessful it is helpful to look in more detail at some of the concerns raised and the responses received.
33. As noted above the majority of concerns were not reported within the school. None of the concerns, other than the referral to the police resulting in the arrest of Teacher A, was reported outside the school. The school IMR identifies the following responses to concerns raised by school staff as reported in their interviews for the IMR:
- A teacher (Teacher B), who found inappropriate photographs on a school camera of a girl in Teacher A's class posing with Teacher A, alleged that when she reported this she was told that she should not insinuate things. The teacher was not asked to show the photographs and there is no indication that this incident was recorded or that any other action was taken.
 - A lunchtime supervisor was informed by a colleague that an image of a naked adult had been shown to children in Teacher A's class through a projector and that the children had been told not to tell their parents. The lunchtime supervisor states that she reported this and also reported that she had seen Teacher A allowing children to sit on his knee or climb on him. As a consequence the report was recorded and shared. It is unclear whether this became a formal warning within disciplinary procedures and there is no record of the basis of the warning.
 - The mother of a child in Teacher A's class states she reported that Teacher A had taken a photo of her daughter and another girl on his mobile phone. The mother was questioned on how her daughter could be sure it was a mobile phone and not a camera. The mother felt that she was being dismissed. The mother was later contacted by phone and was apologised to for not taking the situation seriously enough. She was informed her that Teacher A had been spoken with. The mother was asked to come to the school the following morning. When she did the mother was subsequently informed that Teacher A had denied taking the photo on his phone. The school accepted his explanation. The mother then spoke with Teacher A who repeated his denial. The mother believed that Teacher A was lying but felt there was nothing more she could do. No record of this incident was made by the school.
 - A teacher (Teacher B) who walked through Teacher A's classroom at lunchtime and found him in his underwear stated she reported this but was advised that Teacher A was only getting changed and that she should not accuse him of things.

- A newly qualified teacher (Teacher C), who witnessed Teacher A cuddling and inappropriately lifting up children in the playground, stated she reported this. There is no record of this report and no action appears to have been taken as a consequence.
 - A learning support assistant (LSA 1) stated that she expressed concerns about the amount of physical contact that Teacher A was having with a child having witnessed him sitting the child on his lap, cuddling and tickling her. There is no record that any action was taken in response to the concerns raised.
34. These concerns were reported by two other teachers (Teachers D and E) who said that they reported Teacher A's inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour. This resulted in Teacher A being given a verbal warning. No further action was taken in respect of the matters reported.
 35. It was reported that later that year, two children reported to the school that Teacher A was touching their legs and kissing one of them. There is no indication that these events were recorded or that any action was taken in respect of the matters disclosed.
 36. In the same school year a teacher (Teacher F) said that she twice reported her concerns about the quality of Teacher A's teaching and inappropriate work being given to children in his class. The teacher also included these issues in an end of year report to the school governors. There is no record of any action being taken.
 37. Between January 2007 and April 2009 a learning support assistant (LSA 2) said that she complained about Teacher A being inappropriate towards the children, specifically in his relationship with one child. LSA 2 did not feel able to report this. A child protection training day was arranged but LSA 2 claimed that nothing changed. In April 2009 LSA 2 decided to leave her job due to on-going problems with Teacher A, particularly his overt favouritism shown to some female pupils. She had planned to explain her reasons directly but she stated she had lost faith in the likelihood of her concerns being act on.
 38. An analysis of these responses demonstrates a significant failure to comply with the principles of any of the guidance designed to promote safer working practice within schools. Combined with the failure to formally report the majority of concerns it must be presumed that staff were both unaware of the guidance and inhibited from following their normal professional instincts, and there was a failure to create an environment in which the needs of the child were paramount and good practice was promoted. As the school IMR points out there was good continuity in the school management team. However there was no indication that this led to later incidents being considered in the cumulative context of previous concerns having been raised. All were apparently dealt with in isolation. This undoubtedly undermined the robustness of the responses received.
 39. In considering the concerns raised by staff, parents and children, the overwhelming impression is that Teacher A's behaviour was characterised by a general lax approach to teaching and classroom discipline with significant displays of favouritism towards a small number of children in his class. These aspects of his behaviour were both well-known and generally accepted by managers and staff in the School. Many of the staff interviewed have said that they did not view Teacher A's behaviour as likely to cause harm to children. The failure to address the favouritism towards certain pupils is indicative of poor performance management and should have been

of particular concern as it was recognised that the favouritism was shown only to girls and was accompanied by an over familiarity between Teacher A and pupils with whom he was frequently observed to be in inappropriately close physical contact. This behaviour is characteristic of grooming for sexual abuse and it is a further failure that it wasn't recognised as such.

40. While it could be argued that the school failed to take action because they didn't recognise the danger inherent in Teacher A's behaviour, it is also concerning that no member of staff in the school apparently attempted to talk to any of the children about their experiences. The concerns about Teacher A may have been generalised, relating to poor professional practice and over involvement with some children, which in the view of managers did not warrant specific action being taken against Teacher A, but in a more open environment such concerns should have led to attempts to talk to children about their experience in the school. It must be acknowledged that Teacher A attempted to constrain opportunities for children to communicate with staff by ensuring that he was present at some activities that did not require his attendance, however there is no evidence that any member of staff attempted to communicate directly with any of the children about whom there were concerns. The failure to formally address the concerns, and the failure of staff to talk to the children is indicative both of a closed culture in the school and the possible lack of impact of safeguarding training.
41. It is important not to underestimate the difficulty for both staff and managers in confronting what appear to be poor professional standards or unacceptable conduct by a colleague in an environment, which of necessity is dependent on close working relationships. It must also be recognised that it is very rare for a teacher to commit offences in the manner of Teacher A. However some of the allegations were of such a serious nature, particularly those from children themselves that they constituted matters that should have been investigated under the child protection procedures.
42. All schools have access to specialist advice to deal with situations of this nature. Originally this was through the Senior Education Welfare Officer and more recently through the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). All schools also have a Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DTCP), who should be accessible to any member of staff. The Governing Body has responsibility for standards in the school and also should have been accessible to staff and managers in the school. Thus in dealing with what was potentially a very difficult situation there were a number of sources of advice and support. The fact that none of these sources was accessed appears also to indicate that low standards were too readily tolerated and that the culture of the school lacked openness. It is significant that the school did not consider the possibility of accessing independent external advice. The school IMR comments that the position adopted by the school demonstrated a disregard for their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The involvement of agencies with the school

43. North Somerset Council provides a number of services that were involved with the school. **Education Support Services** covering educational psychology, special educational needs and education welfare, regularly visit schools as a result of referrals received from schools or through termly Consultation Planning Meetings where a number of professionals come together with school representatives to problem solve school issues, identify interventions for individual cases and identify potential training or further support needs. The school involved external professionals in this way, but there is no record that any of the children identified in this review

were the subject of any discussions. There is also no record that any concerns were raised during these meetings about the teacher in question.

44. Other services provided by NSC include the **Learning and Achievement Branch**, which provides a statutory role to risk assess maintained schools in relation to educational standards and outcomes, and is provided primarily through **School Improvement Partner** visits; **Governor Services**, give support and advice to governing bodies; **Schools Human Resources** (HR) providing advice and guidance on employment issues such as recruitment and disciplinary processes; **ICT** providing access to information, advice and guidance on a range of ICT matters.
45. The School IMR from North Somerset CYPS comments that in recent years external monitoring has by and large tended to focus more on attainment, achievement and pupil progress. Despite the national developments and emphasis on safeguarding the amount of time required to get under the skin of a new school and know what is really happening would be an issue at this school. National policy has directed local authorities (LA's) to adopt and work to the principle that they should only intervene in schools in direct proportion to success. Therefore the first school would have been judged as not requiring additional intervention and not have been subject to close scrutiny by the LA. The amount of time external professionals would have in school was limited and more importantly it would focus on a standards agenda which would not have allowed sufficient time to gather evidence and assess potential risks around the safety and welfare of children.
46. Observations of Teacher A's teaching were carried out by the School Improvement Partner and LA advisers as well as by governors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher to ensure the care and the safe practice within the school. The IMR notes that school leaders held pupil conferences which included talking to the children about their work and their feelings about class and whether they were happy with the teacher. School-based evidence showed that the quality assurance activities conducted over time did not find any concerns in Teacher A's classroom. In fact responses from the children were described as positive. In terms of overall performance, judgement of the quality of teaching found Teacher A to be in most part satisfactory. It was noted that Teacher A was not as well prepared as other colleagues with a weakness in planning. The IMR acknowledges that given what is known about the quality of Teacher A's performance and contact issues more robust performance management would have represented good practice.
47. The IMR for CYPS considers the role of the governors in monitoring and supporting the work of the school. The IMR does not provide evidence of the level of support provided to the governing body by Governor Services. The IMR notes that in terms of accountability the expectation on governors of a locally managed school is to ensure the care and safe practice within the school. The IMR refers to the disciplinary investigation which found that there were three key incidents which it could have been expected that should have been notified to colleagues in the LA and the chair of governors. This apparently did not happen. The IMR also notes that there were a number of communication failures due to personality traits within the school. The chair of governors felt that the relationship between governors and school was generally good but they found some difficulty when they challenged the school or requested further information.
48. Overall it appears as if the governors felt that they could work with the school and were not kept at bay, however governors would only be aware of what they were told. The IMR author comments that there is a need to develop governor knowledge through more visits and experience of other schools deemed to have excellent

practice in school governance. The IMR contains a statement that over the last few years the staff and governors were content in the knowledge that all was well, the school was making progress and overall they worked in an improving school. This statement raises the question of how staff and governors can be enabled to comment on standards and effectiveness in a school if they are unable to base their judgement on any comparative experience or knowledge of other schools.

49. **NHS North Somerset - Community Services** is responsible for the provision of school health nursing service to all schools within North Somerset. The service aims to review health at key stages and support the development of children's personal health. The IMR for NHS North Somerset Community Services notes that in common with other schools in North Somerset the School Nursing Service had limited capacity. The involvement consisted of attendance at school parents' evenings, routine surveillance of all children in reception and year six, support given to the school with specific issues and advice and support to teaching staff and parents as requested. School nurses did not identify any concerns about possible abuse of children during any of their contacts with the school.
50. During the review period Ofsted inspected the school in March 2000, June 2006, and January 2009. At each of these inspections the school was graded good. The most recent inspection in 2009 noted the outstanding leadership of the school and that levels of care were outstanding and underpinned by the school's very supportive ethos. The following extracts from the inspection report are considered pertinent:
- *This is a good school where everyone is valued and encouraged to make the most of their talents and abilities. Pupils' personal development and curricular provision are outstanding*
 - *The school has, with the support of the Deputy Head Teacher and Governors, forged an effective team who are now well poised to improve the school further.*
 - *Pupils achieve well by the time that they leave the school and attain above average standards overall*
 - *Levels of care are outstanding and underpinned by the school's very supportive ethos. Not surprisingly, the school is held in very high regard by parents*
 - *The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding elements and monitoring by the Head Teacher and subject leaders ensures that the consistency is maintained*
 - *Pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure because they know that staff have their well-being at heart and are always prepared to listen, help and take action.*
 - *Leadership and management are effective and the new teachers have formed an effective team with a good capacity to improve further.*
 - *All staff and governors work well as a team and excellent pastoral arrangements contribute very well to the safety and care of the pupils*
 - *The Head Teacher has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and an unrelenting focus on raising standards as well as meeting pupils' social and emotional needs*

- *Governors are well informed and hold the school to account well*
 - *Governors have shown that they are committed to improvement and bring a good range of skills to support the work of the school*
 - *Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.*
51. The letter to the pupils from the inspector explaining the findings of the inspection noted that ‘the staff work well together to take excellent care of you and keep you safe and healthy’.
52. The previous inspection in June 2006 noted that the care that pupils receive is outstanding and is a significant factor in helping pupils to feel safe and happy and to achieve well. Pupils were said to be exceedingly happy and have good relationships with adults and each other and appreciate the school's care which keeps them safe. The school was judged outstanding in its care, guidance and support. Procedures for ensuring child protection and pupils health and safety were said to be well established and effective (although the serious case review interviews revealed that staff were not aware of key policies e.g. ICT usage, allegations management and safer working practice guidance). Pupils were said to feel very safe and know adults will always sort out their problems. The leadership and management in the school was judged to be good and it was noted that Governors make a strong contribution to the school's success because they have a detailed understanding of its strengths and are sufficiently well-informed to hold to account for any areas of weakness.
53. In a letter to the chair of the NSSCB Ofsted have stated that they are unable to provide the evidence on which the judgements were based because their records are not retained for more than six months. The letter notes that with regard to safeguarding, inspectors give a high priority to evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in ensuring the safety of children. Comprehensive guidance on inspecting safeguarding is issued to inspectors. Inspectors will always talk to children themselves and collect views from other stakeholders, including parents in order to gather as full a picture as possible about the school's safeguarding arrangements. The letter states that Ofsted does not keep records of the names of children spoken to during inspections. Ofsted expects schools to be fully able to demonstrate that they meet all regulations and duties for the purposes of the safeguarding judgement.
54. It is clear that, on the basis of the evidence gathered in the inspections, Ofsted failed to identify any indications of the abuse that was being perpetrated by Teacher A, and provided an unduly positive picture of the leadership of the school and the arrangements to keep children safe. While it may be difficult to identify in an inspection the risks posed by an individual member of staff, and to garner evidence of the underlying culture of a school, there is a danger that the reliance by parents on conclusions drawn by Ofsted may make them less likely to raise underlying concerns or act on negative perceptions. Ofsted have stated in a letter to the chair of the NSSCB that its inspection processes and procedures are publicly available on its website and that the parameters of the inspection are clear and that the basis on which judgements are made are carefully described. In spite of this information available on the website, it would be beneficial if Ofsted were to clearly state, within an inspection report, the limitations of any judgement on safeguarding within a school inspection and stress the need for parents and staff to remain vigilant and report any concerns.

The involvement of external agencies with the children

55. None of the external agencies that were involved with children from the school has been able to detect an unusual or unexpected number of children that had come to the attention of the agency. Some agencies acknowledged that they do not have data management systems that would have enabled them to detect any significant variations during the review period. Both children's social care and education support services have conducted comparative studies with similar schools and have concluded that there have been no unexpected referral rates from the school under review.
56. All agencies were asked to examine their records in relation to the 20 children who were thought by the police to be witnesses to or possible victims of abuse by the teacher. Although several of these children have been referred to outside agencies, there is nothing in the referrals to suggest that the children may have been victims of abuse in a school setting.
57. None of the agencies believes that it is possible to learn any lessons from the referrals about the possibility of abuse occurring within an institutional setting. The lack of any pattern of referrals meant that there was no action that could have been taken by any external agency. The IMR from NHS North Somerset Community Services notes that bedwetting can be a differential symptom of sexual abuse, but the school health nurse service no longer has responsibility for the enuresis service to schools, since this was transferred to the adult led bladder and bowel service. This is said to have effectively removed the contextual element from the enuresis service for children. The health overview IMR notes that while a fully staffed school nursing service would be an ideal, in this case it made no difference to the outcome of the index children as only one of the children was seen by that service.
58. The 20 children identified by the police as possible witnesses to or victims of abuse are now aged between seven and 19 years old. Nine of these children had at some time received services from Weston Area Health NHS Trust, but in none of these cases was there any possible indication of sexual abuse. GP records show contact with eleven of the 20 children, but again there is no indication of possible sexual abuse. Six of the children were known to children's social care before the allegation was made in December 2010 and others were subsequently referred as a result of the allegation. Of those known previously to children's social care there was nothing to link any difficulties to any abuse that might have been experienced at school. NHS North Somerset Community Services have recorded contact with only one of the 20 children. This contact was not thought to indicate possible sexual abuse.

Conclusions and lessons learned

59. This section of the report considers the specific questions raised in the terms of reference in the light of the facts that have emerged from the IMR's and research findings about the nature of abuse in institutional settings. Within this section the terms of reference are reproduced in boxed italics.

Historical Concerns

There were a number of concerns about the behaviour, teaching practice, relationships of the teacher responsible for the abuse that were reported to the leadership of the school by parents, children, and staff. A number of children were apparently manifesting some behavioural or other psychological difficulties. In the light of this:

Were there any patterns in the concerns about the teacher or the behaviour of children reported in the school or to other agencies which might have lessons for schools and agencies that might help prevent institutional abuse of this nature occurring in the future?

60. There were a substantial number of concerns about the behaviour, teaching practice, and relationships of the teacher responsible for the abuse that were reported to the leadership of the school and parents, children and staff. Details of these are contained in the sections above on concerns and responses to concerns. Although it has been identified in the IMRs from the GPs and the school nursing service that some of the children were manifesting behavioural or other psychological difficulties, no evidence has been found to link these difficulties to any possible abuse suffered at school. The school IMR notes that one child was reported by her mother to have been reluctant to wear dresses to school and have become distressed when told that she should do so. On some occasions she was reluctant to attend school and complained of illness, apparently in order to avoid attending. The mother discussed this reluctance to attend school with Teacher A on one occasion in the context of the child stating that she was being bullied. Shortly after this the child informed her mother that the bullying stopped. There is no evidence that this report or any action taken by Teacher A was recorded or reported to the school's management.
61. There is a substantial body of evidence that points to the fact that the concerns about the behaviour, teaching practice and relationships of Teacher A were not appropriately dealt with. It was well known in the school that Teacher A had favourite pupils that he gave special attention to and with whom he developed close and inappropriate relationships. It is now known that Teacher A told children that they must keep things secret, which made disclosure to parents less likely. This behaviour is symptomatic of grooming techniques used by sexual abusers. Marcus Erooga⁵ defines grooming as 'A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child'. Two studies have shown (Conte, Wolfe and Smith, 1989⁶ and Elliott, Browne and Kilcoyne, 1995⁷) that sexual offenders were most likely to target vulnerable children, those who seemed to lack confidence or had low self-esteem, and exploited their authority to develop a special relationship with a child. Such relationships may often have similarities with legitimate professional relationships that are then used by the abuser to exploit the child. An enquiry into sexual abuse by a student on placement in a nursery (Hunt 1995⁸) found that a number of the children even in disclosing abuse by the student reported a liking for him. A research study by Robbins 1998⁹ has shown how abuse can exploit specific aspects of an educational setting. In such a setting an abuser can select a student give them attention and rewards, provide support and understanding, while slowly increasing the amount of touch or sexual behaviour.
62. Much of Teacher A's behaviour conformed to this pattern of grooming, although no one in the school identified it as such. The failure to identify the behaviour as grooming is perhaps understandable in the context of a school which appears to

have been either unresponsive to, or to, react negatively to criticisms; more junior members of staff felt that they lacked the status necessary to have their comments taken seriously; and concerns that were raised were not recorded, making it difficult to review any suspected pattern of behaviour. The key message here both for the school and others is that any concerns raised about any member of staff, whether by teaching or ancillary staff, parents or pupils, must be given serious consideration, with an appropriate record made of the concern and the response. Any further concerns raised about the same member of staff must then be viewed in a historical context. While it is very important that any allegations against members of staff are handled with the utmost sensitivity, it is equally important that all concerns about members of staff are treated with the notion of 'respectful uncertainty' that has been found through other serious case reviews to be an essential aspect in the assessment of risks to children. It is significant that the school failed to make use of the LADO, who is available to give advice and ensure appropriate action is taken in any case of an allegation against or concern about a teacher.

63. It is also very important to avoid the exaggeration of hierarchy identified by Reder, P., Duncan, S. and Gray⁹, M. (1993) *Beyond Blame: Child Abuse Tragedies Revisited* in which the perceived low status of an informant can lead to their information being discounted. Of equal importance is the need to create an environment in which children can speak out, are listened to and their concerns are taken seriously. This issue is dealt with in more detail below.

The key lessons that emerge in relation to the historical concerns are:

- It is essential for schools to keep accurate records of all incidents and concerns arising in connection with members of staff in order that historical patterns can be detected.
- While it is important to protect staff against malicious allegations, all concerns and complaints need to be treated in an open minded way, and all evidence carefully recorded.
- Teacher A's behaviour conformed to typical grooming for sexual abuse. This was not recognised by staff. Child protection training for school staff should aim to help the recognition of such behaviour, and ensure that external advice is sought in any case causing concern.

Handling of Complaints, disciplinary, child protection matters

In the light of the historical concerns reported to the leadership of the school by parents, children, and staff about the behaviour, teaching practice, and the relationships of the teacher responsible for the abuse, how these concerns were acted upon in this particular case and what lessons arise from this in respect of:

- *How children's complaints are listened to, supported by, and acted on by schools.*
- *How parent's complaints are listened to, supported by, and acted on by schools.*
- *The policies, handling, recording of child protection concerns, disciplinary matters, and complaints or concerns about a teacher's conduct, behaviour, or practice by schools, and the application, review and monitoring of disciplinary and child protection policies and procedures within schools*
- *The reporting by schools of child protection concerns, disciplinary matters, and complaints or concerns about a teacher's conduct, behaviour, or practice to:*
 - *the Board of Governors*
 - *Relevant parts of the local authority (children's social care, schools HR, school improvement)*
 - *The knowledge and use by school staff of the whistle blowing procedures.*
 - *School procedures for:*
 - *contact between teachers and with children or parents outside of the school context and setting*
 - *teacher access to personal information about children when they have left school*
 - *the use of personal modes of transport by teachers with children.*
 - *teachers giving gifts and presents to children*
 - *the wearing of non-school uniform in class.*

64. From the consideration above it is clear that staff were unaware of procedures. When complaints were made they were not appropriately handled and disciplinary procedures were not followed. There was no involvement of the DTCP and none of the complaints about Teacher A was referred for consultation or advice from colleagues in child protection services outside the school. This is a significant failing.
65. The IMR from CYPS considers the importance of school leaders both being aware of what is going on in the school and taking necessary action to address identified issues. It notes evidence indicates that actually dealing with unacceptable conduct and performance of the teacher at the centre of the child abuse allegations was a critical issue in this case. It refers to evidence that several staff felt uneasy and uncomfortable over some time about the behaviour of the teacher, although there did not appear to be a clear mechanism or culture to ensure an adequate flow of information between staff which would have alerted them to wider concerns and ensure closer scrutiny. Reference is made to two incidents which were reported in April 2004 and May 2008 in which it was judged that there was a failure to seek external advice, as the evidence would indicate that a formal investigation and child protection procedures should have been invoked at the time. It is clear that a culture

developed in the school which failed to put the safety and wellbeing of children first, which discouraged open communication and in which concerns and comments were seen to be unwelcome.

66. The failure to seek external advice by the school is clearly significant, but has to be seen in the context of a school that was not viewed by external agencies to be, to any significant degree, in need of advice and support. The IMR from CYPS notes that the most recent reports from Ofsted in 2009, Investors in People (IIP) and the School Improvement Partner in 2010 would support the school's own self-evaluation that overall the school was judged to be good with some outstanding features. The assessor for Investors in People was aware of communication difficulties within the school, but chose not to report these openly, restricting his comments to an addendum report. This was done to avoid exacerbating difficulties, but casts doubt on the validity of the IIP award. This raises important questions about the judgements made by these external agencies. Unduly positive judgements run the risk of creating a false sense of security in parents and other professionals, who might otherwise be inclined to observe more closely and question the performance of the school. This does not diminish the failure by school management to seek advice from the LADO or formerly the Senior Education Welfare Officer. Such an approach is likely to have resulted in the initiation of child protection procedures, with abusive behaviour being identified and confronted at an earlier stage.
67. As discussed in paragraph 56 above it is now clear that some of the judgements made by Ofsted, while based on the evidence gathered in the inspection, cannot be supported by the evidence now available. The last inspection of the school was conducted before the publication of Lord Laming's report (*The protection of children in England: a progress report*¹¹) in which he made a recommendation that 'Ofsted should revise the inspection and improvement regime to schools giving greater prominence to how well schools are fulfilling their responsibilities for child protection.' A recent report by Ofsted (*Safeguarding in schools: Best practice, September 2011*¹²) notes that:
68. Staff at schools with effective child protection procedures have a good understanding of the possible causes of abuse, neglect or harm. They know what to look for, who the designated staff are and the routes that a referral would go through in the school, including the roles of the different external agencies that may need to become involved during the process.
69. They typically have successfully established a culture of openness and transparency which encourages vigilance and a sense of shared responsibility for the protection of children and young people. They have secure referral systems in place and pupils, staff, parents and other adults know how to report their concerns. Pupils and adults feel confident that they can express their views and that these will be listened to and treated seriously. Essentially, child protection arrangements are clear to everyone; pupils and their families know who they can talk to if they are worried. They know that child protection issues will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence.
70. It is clear that these practices were not prevalent in the school, but ensuring that these practices are well established in all schools is an important lesson for the future. The same Ofsted publication identifies key features of outstanding safeguarding practice, which include:
 - *high-quality leadership and management that makes safeguarding a priority across all aspects of a school's work*

- *stringent vetting procedures in place for staff and other adults*
- *rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures in place, written in plain English, compliant with statutory requirements and updated regularly; in particular, clear and coherent child protection policies*
- *child protection arrangements that are accessible to everyone, so that pupils and families, as well as adults in the school, know who they can talk to if they are worried*
- *excellent communication systems with up-to-date information that can be accessed and shared by those who need it*
- *a high priority given to training in safeguarding, generally going beyond basic requirements, extending expertise widely and building internal capacity*
- *robust arrangements for site security, understood and applied by staff and pupils*
- *a curriculum that is flexible, relevant and engages pupils' interest; that is used to protect themselves from harm and how to take responsibility for their own and others' safety*
- *courteous and responsible behaviour by the pupils, enabling everyone to feel secure and well-protected*
- *well thought out and workable day-to-day arrangements to protect and promote pupils' health and safety*
- *rigorous monitoring of absence, with timely and appropriate follow-up, to ensure that pupils attend regularly*
- *risk assessment taken seriously and used to good effect in promoting safety.*

71. The school was rated as good by Ofsted and inspectors praised the school leadership. In line with Ofsted's retention of records policy, records of the inspection were destroyed after six months and it is therefore not possible to evaluate the evidence on which the judgements about safeguarding were based. It is clear that some of the features of outstanding safeguarding practice were almost completely absent in the school. Changes to criteria for inspecting safeguarding and leadership and management were made in September 2009. In the absence of the evidence gathered in the inspections it is not possible to judge whether the new criteria would have resulted in different judgements.

72. The school was accredited with the Investors in People scheme in 2001 and the approval was renewed in 2004. Accreditation lapsed in 2007 but a further assessment was made in 2008. The evaluation report based on this assessment stated that the school fully met the requirements of the Investors in People standards, which were:

- Development of effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people
- Taking effective action to improve the performance of the organisation through its people

- Demonstration of the impact of its investment in people on the performance of the organisation.
73. However during the evaluation process a number of staff shared views with the IIP assessor that suggested that the standards were not fully met. These views included:
- Decision making and response to requests for information was said to be reactive and slow by staff across the school causing frustration and “fire fighting”
 - There was some evidence of poor relationships in the school which may have had an adverse effect on the overall management of the school
 - Not all staff were treated equally or given the same level of support; this may account for Teacher A not being fully engaged
 - Not all staff were unhappy.
74. The School IMR notes that school staff expressed concern that including their adverse feedback in the assessment report would compromise already strained working relationships. The Assessor took the view that overall the standards of the accreditation were met and that reflecting the staff views in the assessment report would have serious consequences for staff morale across the school. On this basis they were excluded from the report.
75. They were however shared verbally and outlined in a confidential addendum to the accreditation report (as detailed in paragraph 74 above).
76. The award of IIP accreditation in 2008 is likely to have contributed to a positive external view of the school that may have influenced the Ofsted evaluation the following year. The confidential addendum reflected some significant negative aspects of the culture in the school that by virtue of the confidentiality could not readily be addressed. The addendum was not shared with the whole of the governing body and no action was taken. The school IMR comments that this was a serious dereliction of their responsibility to ensure the effective operation of the school.
77. Further opportunities for external scrutiny of the school were provided by the School Improvement visits, which were delivered through the North Somerset Learning and Achievement Branch. The school IMR notes that the School Improvement visits did not pick up issues relating to the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements or the underlying school culture and management regime. This is attributed largely to the nature of the information provided to the Learning and Achievement Branch and the control exercised in planning arrangements for the School Improvement moderation visits. The Learning and Achievement Branch does not have a remit to undertake intrusive inspection activity as part of School Improvement Partner visits.
78. Overall, given the application for IIP accreditation, the school was subject to a higher than normal level of external scrutiny. In spite of this no external body identified:
- the poor leadership,
 - the unhealthy aspects of the school culture,
 - the non-existence or lack of adherence to policies and procedures

- the inadequate safeguarding arrangements, which included the failure to act on complaints about the teacher and the failure to engage with child protection procedures.
79. There is clearly a danger that external bodies, in taking account of the judgements of other external bodies, will be prejudiced in their analysis and fail to adopt a rigorously independent stance. Given the failure of external scrutiny to identify the problems, it is easy to understand how the poor handling of complaints about the teacher was not challenged and widely held concerns amongst the staff were not acted upon.
80. A further opportunity to address the concerns was available through the LADO arrangements. The DTCP should have referred any concerns about a member of staff to the LADO for advice and possible further action. No contact was made with the LADO at any point during the period under review. This indicates that the school leadership awareness of the LADO arrangements and the responsibilities of the DTCP was inadequate and could call into question the effectiveness of the training in relation to these responsibilities.
81. In terms of the learning to be derived from how complaints were handled, the following issues emerge clearly:
- The quality of leadership of the school is of fundamental importance and there needs to be a process to assess and develop school leaders.
 - Judgements about the quality of leadership are dependent on effective external scrutiny, which was lacking in this case and may have led to a false sense of security in parents and external agencies. Agencies providing external scrutiny must make explicit the limitations of that scrutiny and stress the importance of parents and others acting on concerns that they may have.
 - The failure by staff to instigate or pursue complaints, while understandable in terms of management responses to earlier complaints, indicates poor awareness of and training in child protection.
 - As a consequence of this, staff were unaware of how complaints could be pursued externally. Staff and parents must be made aware of channels for pursuing complaints when they are unsatisfied by any internal resolution of a complaint.
 - The failure to facilitate expressions of concerns by children may have been significant in this case. All schools should have access to and be encouraged to use skilled external facilitators who, in the event of serious complaints, can help children express their views.

Employment practice in schools and the selection of prospective teachers

The teacher responsible for the sexual abuse of children in school joined the teaching profession as a mature student aged 35. In the light of the circumstances surrounding the appointment of this teacher to this school: What lessons are there for:

- *How prospective teachers are selected for teacher training courses and how checks in relation to employment history, vetting practices are undertaken (NATIONAL ISSUE).*
- *The robustness of current selection processes for teachers taking into account previous employment (especially outside of education), vetting practices (the take up and follow through of references, gaps in employment history, CRB checks, etc), interview and selection processes*

82. The IMR for CYPS considers the appointment of Teacher A to the school, and notes that only one reference is held on file with no evidence available to confirm that a second reference was sought, even though two references would have been required at the time of his appointment. The IMR notes that there are aspects of the reference provided that might have prompted further clarification; however there is no evidence to demonstrate that this was sought or obtained. The subsequent police investigation has shown that the references were satisfactory. Examination of the teacher's written application to the school reveals a considerable gap in his employment history, but again there is no evidence to confirm that this was investigated as part of the recruitment process.
83. The IMR notes that at the time of Teacher A's appointment the concept of safer recruitment was not well developed and the lack of information/record-keeping makes it impossible to undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of the recruitment process followed. The IMR goes on to suggest that current practice within schools regarding safer recruitment has developed significantly with the emergence of good practice guidance issued by central government in 2007 and the requirement for at least one member of a selection panel to have undergone approved training in safer recruitment best practice. The IMR notes that safe recruitment practice is supported by statutory vetting requirements which for new permanent staff at the school have been consistently applied. A review commissioned at the beginning of 2011 did however identify deficiencies in the Single Central Record of staff maintained by the school, including missing vetting checks for permanent staff who had been temporarily out of the workforce and for regularly employed supply teachers. These deficiencies have been rectified and the IMR concludes that overall, the foundations of safe recruitment practice are now in place at the school.
84. In terms of the lessons to be learned from the inadequacy of the recruitment and selection processes for Teacher A it could be argued that the current improved arrangements are adequate to avoid the recruitment and retention of an individual prone to the same abusive behaviour as Teacher A. However it should be recognised that Teacher A was good at concealing his abusive behaviour. He had not been convicted of an offence and, had the break in his employment history been explored and a second reference obtained it is still possible that his propensity to sexually abuse children would not have come to light. The report of the Bichard Inquiry (2004¹³) recommended that applicants for jobs involving contact with children

should be asked specific questions at interview to examine attitudes towards children and also that staff attitudes and behaviours be monitored on a continuous basis post appointment.

85. Parents consulted for this review have suggested that the school should adopt a value based approach to interviewing to ensure that people recruited to work in the school held values that would promote the safety of children. Value Based Interviewing (VBI) is an approach that is recommended by the NSPCC in their publication 'Towards Safer Organisations by Marcus Erooga⁵. Erooga states that 'The value-based interview itself is a structured process, with examples of work behaviours described by candidates in response to interview questions explored through detailed probing' and notes that 'The VBI attempts to provide in-depth information about candidates' attitudes, character and behaviour at work. It potentially benefits organisations and ultimately children by giving candidates a clear message about the values and behaviours of the organisation and enables the selection of candidates who are more aligned with organisational values, and therefore likely to be more committed and motivated in role. A key element is selecting candidates who have positive safeguarding attitudes and values and who are, therefore, more likely to be effective in identifying and addressing safeguarding issues at work, creating a safer environment for children.
86. The use of value based interviewing would provide further safeguards in recruitment and also serve to emphasise a culture of safeguarding within a school. While it may be more time consuming than conventional recruitment practices the benefits of avoiding an unsafe appointment are incalculable.

The use of technology in schools

The teacher responsible for the sexual abuse of children in school used a number of digital devices to record and transfer images of children from school to his home computer. In the light of this:*

- *What are the lessons for the wider school community in respect of policies for the use of digital devices in schools (both school and personal) and the consequences for school staff who breach these policies.*

**digital devices include mobile phones, video equipment, cameras, memory sticks and other storage devices.*

87. Teacher A was shown in court to have had large numbers of indecent images on his home computer. It is also known that he used a digital camera in school that was provided by the school for educational use. Some inappropriate images were found on this camera by another teacher. The school IMR notes that the school had internet access provided by the South West Grid for Learning (SWGL). The SWGL also provides access to a comprehensive and regularly updated e-safety policy which is available for schools to use as a model and to provide relevant training. The IMR comments that this provision was not however translated into an environment at the school which effectively safeguarded children.

88. In the view of the IMR author the policies on the use of computers, mobile phones and cameras, had developed by the school were neither adequate nor appropriately disseminated to staff. Several staff interviewed were unaware of the policies.
89. While it is clearly important to have policies that establish standards and expectations of behaviour in relation to the use of computers, cameras and mobile phones, the existence of these policies will not necessarily deter a member of staff, so inclined, from making inappropriate use of these resources. However the contribution that policies that are clearly established and well understood can make to enhancing a culture of safeguarding, should not be underestimated. It is the absence of this culture that was a major issue in the school
90. It is known that an IT technician identified that a school computer had been used for accessing adult pornography on the internet, but it was not possible to identify which member of staff had been responsible for this. Strict control of passwords and compliance with a password policy would diminish the likelihood of a recurrence. The IMR notes that the use of passwords in the school was lax with sharing of passwords and a failure to change passwords. It appears that this has yet to be addressed and the IMR makes an urgent recommendation in relation to this.
91. The use of technology has become an increasingly important aspect of the school curriculum. While it is important to have clearly understood policies in relation to the use of this technology, given the rate of technological change, it is unlikely that policies will keep abreast of innovations. The guidance on safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people⁴ notes that e.safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. The key lesson in respect of the use of technology is that there can be no substitute for a strongly established culture of safeguarding within schools, which gives primacy to ensuring the safety of children. Such a culture will be reinforced if the school complies with the whistle blowing advice contained within the guidance *ibid*.

Child protection training for school staff and governors

In the light of the findings from the individual management review which focused on training arrangements within the school, and in the light of the particular circumstances surrounding the abuse that took place in the school, what lessons are there for the training in child protection matters for:

- *all teachers*
- *the designated child protection lead*
- *headteachers and deputies*
- *school governors*

92. The school IMR shows that managers had been appropriately trained for the child protection role, but there are no records of the child protection training received before 2009. Staff were up to date with their training by 2010, but in spite of this, the school failed to follow procedures, which were made explicit in the training.
93. The school IMR sets out the areas of responsibility for school staff undertaking the DTCP role which include:

- Referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise within the educational establishment when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Recognising how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral.
- Keeping detailed accurate secure written records of referrals and/or concerns.

The school failed to exercise these responsibilities.

94. Although actual abuse occurring in a school is likely to be very infrequent, the likelihood of a school child experiencing abuse outside school, but presenting symptoms within school is relatively high and is an important aspect of the DTCP's role. There would be benefit in monitoring the work of the DTCPs in all schools to identify exceptions to what might be a normal rate of referral.
95. No records of accreditation for the schools safeguarding basic awareness training have been identified although staff are reported to have completed it. This type of training is usually provided internally within schools. There is therefore no indication of the quality of this training, although staff have stated that they did not feel it equipped them to respond to the concerns they identified about Teacher A.
96. The IMR notes that, with the exception of two newly appointed governors, all the governing body have been trained in child protection. The IMR does not comment on the effectiveness of this training.
97. For training to be effective in changing behaviour, the quality of the training needs to be monitored, attendance needs to be recorded, regular refresher training should be provided and monitoring information collected.

Creating a safe environment and culture for children and young people in school

The teacher responsible for the sexual abuse of children in school “groomed” children, parents, colleagues, and the leadership team within the school. Consequently, suspicious or inappropriate behaviour, action, or teaching appeared to be either normalised or so plausibly explained that such behaviour was either unrecognised, ignored, or minimised. In the light of this what can be learned about:

- *The culture and leadership of the school that enabled a teacher to systematically sexually abused young children over many years that could help other school leadership teams prevent such abuse occurring in the future?*
- *approaches to helping children to keep themselves safe, maintain appropriate privacy, touch, language, and relationships with other children and adults so they are safe in school and outside.*
- *leadership behaviour, visibility, and relationships with staff, parents and children.*

98. It is clear that the cultural focus of the school was on learning and attainment. This focus on learning and attainment was not matched by a culture of safeguarding. The school IMR notes that the school was ambitious to provide an effective learning experience for pupils. This ambition was shared by both staff and governors during the period under review. The school's development plans reflect this ambition and an impetus towards continual improvement. Objective data on pupil attainment and evaluation of development plans indicates that in terms of learning the ambition was being achieved. This is in spite of the failure to address Teacher A's poor performance. At face value the envisaged school culture and visibility of the school management was also apparent, leading to the school being reportedly highly regarded by parents and the community. External scrutiny of the school recognised the focus on attainment and appeared to have paid too little attention to assessing whether the culture of the school ensured that children were safeguarded.
99. The process of reporting and acting on concerns was positively hindered by a culture that discouraged comment, challenge and open communication. The school IMR provides a number of examples of this, including inapproachability, strained relationships, a lack of value attributed to non-teaching staff, resentment at not addressing Teacher A's performance, brief and superficial contact with children.
100. The report of the Huston Inquiry¹⁴ recommended that agencies providing services to children or vulnerable adults should ensure that a culture of openness and trust is fostered within the organisation, in which staff can share any concerns about the conduct of colleagues and be assured that these will be received in a sensitive manner. Staff should also be encouraged, through formal and informal channels of communication, to question, express concerns or pass on significant information to management regarding the protection of children or vulnerable adults.
101. The clear lesson emerging from this review is that it is not sufficient for a school to have a culture that focuses only on attainment. A school culture needs to recognise that if children are to achieve their potential they must first be assured of a safe environment, in which any risks that they may face will be given full and open consideration by staff at all levels in the organisation. The school has already demonstrated good practice by ensuring that all doors now have visibility panels, which enable the school environment to be more open.

Recommendations

102. The majority of issues arising from this serious case review are addressed in the recommendations contained within the IMRs which are reproduced below. In addition to these the overview report makes the following recommendations:
1. The NSSCB should ensure that this review is distributed to all schools and early years settings together with the Ofsted publication 'Safeguarding in Schools: Best Practice'.
 2. The NSSCB should develop an audit based on this Ofsted publication and ask all schools to complete this audit and report to the Board.
 3. The NSSCB should review the competencies and role description for the DTCP and take steps to ensure that headteachers, their deputies and school governors are familiar with the role and responsibilities of the post.
 4. The NSSCB should seek a review of child protection training for schools and ensure that it addresses the recognition of grooming behaviour, the

responsibilities of the DTCP and awareness of external avenues for notifying concerns. The review should include the development of a process for monitoring the engagement of schools in child protection processes.

5. North Somerset Schools Human Resources should recommend the use of Value Based Interviewing (VBI) for recruitment in schools and other childcare settings, and offer training and support for schools wishing to implement VBI.
6. The NSSCB should write to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) at Ofsted to:
 - Ensure that HMCI is aware of the inappropriateness of the safeguarding judgements contained in the inspection reports of the school.
 - Ask that Ofsted should review the methodology by which such judgements are reached, and the policy on retention of records to support these judgements.
 - Suggest that Ofsted should take steps to encourage parents to remain alert and responsive to possible risks to their children in settings in which children are judged by Ofsted to be safe.
 - Recommend that inspectors check staff and school managers' understanding of key procedures to include ICT usage, LADO arrangements and safe practice guidance.

The following recommendations are reproduced from the IMRs:

The School

7. NSSCB should, as part of the dissemination of learning from this review, draw the attention of all school governing bodies to the desirability of all areas where staff and pupils may come into contact being open to casual observation by other school staff and visitors. They should be urged to review their school premises in this regard and address any shortfalls.
8. NSSCB should reissue and reiterate the requirements contained in the Chair's letter of November 2009 to partner agencies. Its implementation and impact on practice should be subject of audit activity commissioned by the NSSCB.
9. NSC should, in conjunction with the NSSCB, ensure that awareness of the standards outlined in national guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with children and young people is incorporated into school PSHE curricula locally. The Chair of the NSSCB should write to the Secretary of State for Education to promote adoption of this practice nationally.
10. The head teacher and governors of the school should ensure that appropriate e-safety policies are in place, a comprehensive e-safety education programme for everyone in the school is implemented and that these arrangements are subject of regular, initially every six months, review by the Governing Body.
11. NSC should include within the School Improvement service provided a rolling programme for the review of individual school e-safety policies and their

implementation. Any deficiencies in these arrangements should be reported to both the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors of the school.

12. NSC should make available to school managers and Governing Bodies a model of arrangements for robust and auditable appraisal and review of staff performance. The arrangements should include facilities for explicit recording of evidence supporting the appraisal, including any concerns regarding the performance of a staff member. These arrangements should extend to the appraisal and review of head teacher performance by the governing body. Consideration should be given to including a 360 degree feedback element in annual performance reviews. The effectiveness of performance management arrangements should be included in school self evaluation frameworks and moderated through the School Improvement system.
13. NSC should ensure that training provided for the DTCP position emphasises the personal responsibility of those holding the role to take ownership of concerns for the safety of a child and to liaise with other relevant agencies, and the LADO. Candidates completing the training should be required to make a positive commitment in this respect before being accredited to undertake the role.
14. NSC should review the curriculum for the delivery of safeguarding training in schools and ensure that it addresses safe professional practice and individual staff responsibilities to ensure that concerns for the safety of a child are effectively addressed, including appropriate communication with children and the use of escalation and whistle-blowing procedures; together with record keeping requirements. Contracted arrangements for delivery of the training within schools should be offered to school Governing Bodies by NSC.
15. NSC should review the content of the training provided on safe recruitment and satisfy themselves that it properly equips both professional staff and school governors to effectively and confidently discharge their responsibilities within the recruitment process. It would be advisable to engage school governors in this review process.
16. NSC should review their provision of induction training for new school governors and ensure that it properly equips them to undertake the role and includes opportunities for benchmarking against practice in other schools/Governing Bodies. Arrangements for governors to observe meetings of other Governing Bodies and share experience across schools as part of their continued development should be encouraged.
17. NSC Learning and Achievement Branch should put in place robust systems to check whether areas of concern raised with schools have been addressed within agreed timescales.
18. NSSCB should, as part of the dissemination of learning from this review, draw the attention of all school Governing Bodies to the need for them to rigorously and intrusively ensure that school policies and practice to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are effective. Guidance on ways in which this may be achieved, including ensuring that escalation procedures for parents and children are well publicised, should be provided.
19. NSC should review the training provided to governors and Chairs of Governing Bodies to ensure that it highlights the potential difficulties which

may be associated with the head teacher's role, particularly in smaller schools, as the central link between the Governing Body and the school and equips them to recognise and address circumstances where this may be an issue.

Education Support Services

20. Physical Environment
 - Classrooms should have non covered internal windows.
 - Designated changing areas for members of staff separate from areas where children are allowed.
21. Management Role
 - Unplanned visits to classrooms during school day on regular basis including at break times.
 - Head/deputy head teachers to be linked with a critical friend from another school to discuss decision making.
 - New managers to be mentored for the first 2 years.
22. Governors
 - Compulsory governor training re safeguarding and child protection
 - Annual separate governor meeting with school adviser.
23. Reporting allegations about members of staff
 - Compulsory reporting system for designated teacher into central LADO indicating nature of allegation and action taken.
24. Safe places to talk
 - All schools have a named safe person for children to talk to about any concerns (not their teacher or head teacher)
25. ICT
 - Policy for safe use of ICT by staff and pupils in each school, eg images processed in school, times when videoing appropriate and legitimate, ways of monitoring individual use of ICT.

General Practitioners

26. Ongoing updates per Laming report, 3 yearly to ensure up-to-date knowledge of all Practitioners.

Health Overview

27. Referrals

- There is no doubt that a single set of health records per patient from birth to death would facilitate information sharing (recommendation from the Laming report 2003). However this is an NHS National issue and one that cannot be resolved locally. Therefore we would recommend that in the absence of this all agencies including school nurses always copy referrals to GPs who hold the responsibility as 'gatekeepers' for collating information about all of their patients.

28. Training

- Significant patterns of presentations to Health Professionals were not a feature in these cases however it is possible in cases of institutional abuse that this might happen therefore teaching materials need to reflect this issue in addition to individual presentations. Also that individual practitioners may hold seemingly small and irrelevant pieces of information whose significance is only appreciated when information is shared.
- As the Continence Service is now managed by Adult Services it is vital that the staff engaged with children are trained correctly to Level 3 and that managers appreciate the importance of this.

29. Equality and Diversity

- Ethnicity and Disability information pre 2008 needs to be updated in all GP records.

NHS Community Services

30. Systems and processes for referrals made/received by school health nurse service should be reviewed to identify and implement strategies that would strengthen methods of collation, retrieval and audit. This could then be used to identify any emerging patterns and allow comparison of referral trends across matched year groups. This would should be undertaken by the lead for School Health Nursing/Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children.
31. Communication pathways between the Enuresis Services (provided by the Bladder and Bowel Service) and the School Health Service should be reviewed and strengthened to ensure that all practitioners are aware of all relevant information relating to children that are referred and reviewed by the Bladder and Bowel Service. This should be undertaken by School Health Nurse Lead / Bladder and Bowel Service Manager.
32. Practitioners/Team Leads and Child Protection staff should receive multi-agency training regarding sexual abuse with respect to its perpetration in institutional settings. This should aim to raise awareness and provide the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence for staff to recognise the pertinent signs and symptoms of such abuse and the actions to take to address this.

This training should be delivered in a multi-agency setting via the NSSCB.

Weston Area Health Trust

33. The issue of providing training about institutional abuse should be raised at the NSSCB training sub group. This should be raised by the Trust Safeguarding Lead at the next sub group meeting.
34. The importance of including ethnicity and disability status in children's notes should be discussed at single agency training. This should be addressed by the Trust Safeguarding Lead and be added to training immediately. The practical implementation for each department at Weston Area Health Trust will be discussed at the next Trust Child Protection Committee meeting.
35. Learning from serious case review to be added to single agency training by Safeguarding Lead when results published.

Serious Case Review Terms of Reference

Background

A Serious Case Review (SCR) panel was convened on 6th January 2011 to consider whether a SCR should be convened into the circumstances surrounding the sexual abuse of a number of school children aged 7-10. The sexual abuse took place in a first school classroom over an approximate 10 year period prior to disclosure by a child in December 2010. The alleged perpetrator of the abuse was a male classroom teacher who had taught at the school for 15 years.

The SCR panel concluded that the grounds for a SCR as set out in Chapter 8 of the 2010 Government guidance “A Guide to Interagency Working to Safeguarding and Promote the Welfare of Children” had been met in this case.

The SCR panel meeting considered that there were a number of children who had been harmed as a result of sexual abuse, and that the abuse occurred in an institutional setting (a school for primary age children), that there is sufficient public interest to undertake a SCR, and that some of the circumstances of the case may have national implications for systems or processes.

Moreover, the SCR panel believed that there may have been information to suggest that some concerns may not have been shared with others or not acted on appropriately and that this required independent enquiry. The panel also considered that there were specific local policies, procedures or protocols for schools that may require consideration, updating, or stronger promulgation than is currently the case.

The main question the review will need to address is: could action have been taken at an earlier stage that would have prevented abuse, and if so what could or should have been done; in addition, what lessons are there, if any, for agencies (including schools) with regard to the identification and aggregation of concerns about teachers behaviour and complaints by individual children that may indicate wider concerns about abuse in institutional settings.

To address this question, the main areas of enquiry for the serious case review are:

- How historical concerns about the teachers’ behaviour, conduct, and performance were dealt with by the school and, if reported, by other agencies?
- What lessons are there for how schools handle complaints/disciplinary/child protection matters that are brought to their attention by children/young people and parents; how they are managed and addressed in school, and how they are reported to governors and the locality authority?
- What are the lessons for employment practices in schools and the selection of prospective teachers onto teacher training courses?
- What are the lessons for the use of technology in schools?
- What are the lessons for training of school staff and governors in child protection matters?

- What lessons are there for the leadership of schools in *creating a safe environment and culture for children and young people in school in which children's rights to safety and privacy are promoted and protected?*

Historical Concerns

There were a number of concerns about the behaviour, teaching practice, relationships of the teacher responsible for the abuse that were reported to the leadership of the school by parents, children and staff. A number of children were apparently manifesting some behavioural or other psychological difficulties. In the light of this:

- Were there any patterns in the concerns about the teacher or the behaviour of children reported in the school or to other agencies which might have lessons for schools and agencies that might help prevent institutional abuse of this nature occurring in the future?

Handling of complaints, disciplinary, child protection matters

In the light of the historical concerns reported to the leadership of the school by parents, children, and staff about the behaviour, teaching practice, and the relationships of the teacher responsible for the abuse, how these concerns were acted upon this in this particular case and what lessons arise from this in respect of:

- How children's complaints are listened to, supported by, and acted on by schools.
- How parent's complaints are listened to, supported by, and acted on by schools.
- The policies, handling, recording of child protection concerns, disciplinary matters and complaints or concerns about a teacher's conduct, behaviour, or practice by schools, and the application, review and monitoring of disciplinary and child protection policies and procedures within schools.
- The reporting by schools of child protection concerns, disciplinary matters, and complaints or concerns about a teacher's conduct, behaviour, or practice to:
 - The Board of Governors.
 - Relevant parts of the Local Authority (Children's Social Care, Schools HR, School Improvement)
 - The knowledge and use by school staff of the whistle blowing procedures.
- School procedures for:
 - Contact between teachers and with children or parents outside of the school context and setting.
 - Teacher access to personal information about children when they have left school.
 - The use of personal modes of transport by teachers with children.
 - Teachers giving gifts and presents to children.

- The wearing of non school uniform in class.

Employment practices in schools and the selection of prospective teachers

The teacher responsible for the sexual abuse of children in school joined the teaching profession as a mature student aged 35. In the light of the circumstances surrounding the appointment of this teacher to this school:

- What lessons are there for:
 - How prospective teachers are selected for teacher training courses and how checks in relation to employment history, vetting practices are undertaken (NATIONAL ISSUE).
 - The robustness of current selection processes for teachers, taking into account previous employment (especially outside of education), vetting practices (the take up and follow through of references, gaps in employment history, CRB checks, etc), interview and selection processes.

The use of technology in schools

The teacher responsible for the sexual abuse of children in school used a number of digital devices* to record and transfer images of children from school to his home computer. In light of this:

- What are the lessons for the wider school community in respect of policies for the use of digital devices in schools (both school and personal) and the consequences for school staff who breach these policies.

*digital devices include mobile phones, video equipment, cameras, memory sticks and other storage devices.

Child protection training for school staff and governors

In the light of the findings from the individual management review which focused on training arrangements within the school, and in the light of the particular circumstances surrounding the abuse that took place in the school, what lessons are there for the training in child protection matters for:

- All teachers
- The designated child protection lead
- Head teachers and deputies
- School governors

Creating a safe environment and culture for children and young people in school

The teacher responsible for the sexual abuse of children in school “groomed” children, parents, colleagues, and the leadership team within the school. Consequently, suspicious or inappropriate behaviour, action, or teaching appeared to be either normalised or so plausibly explained that such behaviour was either unrecognised, ignored, or minimised. In the light of this what can be learned about:

- The culture and leadership of the school that enabled a teacher to systematically sexually abuse young children over many years that could help other school leadership teams prevent such abuse occurring in the future?
- Approaches to helping children to keep themselves safe, maintain appropriate privacy, touch, language, and relationships with other children and adults so they are safe in school and outside.
- Leadership behaviour, visibility, and relationships with staff, parents and children.

Individual Management Review Terms of Reference – School

Historical concerns and the handling of complaints

There were a number of concerns about the behaviour, teaching practice, relationships of the teacher responsible for the abuse that were reported to the leadership of the school by parents, children, and staff. A number of children were apparently manifesting behavioural or other psychological difficulties.

In the light of these concerns, were:

- they dealt with appropriately under recognised procedures (disciplinary, competence, child protection)?
- child protection thresholds met and were they reported to the appropriate authorities, including Governors?
- the behaviours of conduct such that they constituted a breach of discipline. If so, were the school disciplinary policies and procedures followed and were matters appropriately recorded and reported to the Governors.
- parental concerns appropriately reported to the head when drawn to the attention of staff, and did the headteacher take these concerns serious and respond to them accordingly?
- children who reported their concerns directly to school staff listened to, taken seriously, and was appropriate action taken in the light of any enquiries by the leadership of the school?
- staff aware of and able to access whistle blowing policies.

Overall, if these concerns had been dealt with differently or earlier is there a possibility that the abuse may have been identified before December 2002?

The identification of, and response to, the needs of vulnerable children within the school

Were arrangements for the identification, handling and reporting of additional needs (behavioural difficulties, special educational needs, and emotional problems) dealt with in an open and transparent way with the full knowledge and engagement of the leadership of the school?

Were there an unusual number of children with additional needs and if so might this have suggested there was a pattern and a school based problem?

Employment Practice

How robust was the appointment and vetting process for this teacher (including consideration of employment history as a teacher and prior to teaching, gaps in employment, statutory checks, and the use of references) within the context of employment policies and practices at the time of the appointment?

Use of technology

What policies and practices existed within the school with regard to the use of school and personal computer and digital devices (eg mobile phones, video recording equipment, camera's, memory sticks and other data storage means) and how were these policies applied and enforced in practice?

Training and Development

What child protection training has been undertaken by the Chair of Governors, Head Teacher, Deputy Head, and other school staff over the last five years?

To what extent did the teacher who sexually abused children at the school access child protection training and material in relation to sex education and was this used as part of a grooming process. What implications arise from this for access to training and materials by staff in schools?

How effective was the appraisal/professional development system in the school and how were historical concerns about the responsible teacher's performance and behaviour considered, recorded, and acted upon within the appraisal/professional development process?

Culture of the school

In the light of the findings from all of the elements of the individual management review of the school details above, what lessons can be learnt about the culture and leadership of the school that allowed a teacher to establish himself and sexually abuse a significant number of children in the school classroom for over 10 years, and in particular what:

- were arrangements for observing teacher lessons, head teacher supervision, and governor visits?
- was the leadership teams visibility within the school and how did it challenge, model and develop an ethos about relationships with children and appropriate conduct?

Individual Management Review Terms of Reference – All Agencies

The identification of, and response to, the needs of vulnerable children emanating from the school

Has there been an unusual/unexpected number of children referred from the school to your agency?

Were referrals received in respect of certain named children from the school, particularly in relation to emotional, behavioural or psychological concerns? A list will be provided.

If so, were they responded to appropriately in individual cases and were child protection concerns, in particular, any concerns about potential sexual abuse ever identified?

Were there possible patterns arising from the referrals received that may have suggested a school based problem? If so, was this overlooked?

What lessons, if any, can be learned about the potential identification of institutional abuse within your agency as a result of the referrals received?

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