



St James & St Vedast Schools Independent Inquiry Report

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Follow Up Actions & Response From The Governing Body to the Townend Inquiry Findings.

The Governing Body has studied the Townend Report and has also taken note of comments from interested parties.

Despite attacks from an anonymous action group, and a number of actions by that group to damage the present St James schools, the Governors remain intent on pursuing the course of facilitating reconciliation between past pupils and teachers. A process to assist in this has been offered. ([Click here](#))

The Governors have also decided to publish on this web site responses to genuine questions and to provide guidance on why various actions are being taken or not, as the case may be.

1. The Governing Body will not react or respond to anonymous threats or demands. It is clear that the process of reconciliation needs to begin with clear and unambiguous admission of mistakes or wrong doing. Acceptance by the Governors of the Townend Report is just this. A full apology has been given. It is completely sincere, and to doubt this is not to understand how determined the Governing Body is to bring about reconciliation.
2. Four teachers from the present staff of over 100 teachers were investigated by Mr Townend for incidents alleged to have happened 25 to 30 years ago. One teacher was found to have no case to answer at all. One teacher admitted a single complaint that on one occasion he threw a blackboard rubber at an unruly pupil. Two other teachers are accused of incidents falling into the category of over harsh or unlawful.
3. The present Headteachers have been working with the Child Protection Agencies, the education authorities and the Metropolitan Police since the allegations first appeared on a web site nearly 12 months ago. Regular meetings with these officials have taken place since the Inquiry started over seven months ago. At all stages the authorities and the Headteachers have sought to satisfy themselves that the best child protection policies are operative in today's schools, that there are robust systems of management and complaint procedures in place, and that all teachers are complying fully with best practice in the safeguarding of children, as required by law. The child protection authorities have NO current issues or complaints with the current schools. This is consistent with the recent ISI Inspection Reports ([Click here](#)). There is NO current intention by these authorities to take any further action with regards to the present staff now that the Inquiry Report has been published.
4. In the case of one *former* teacher Mr Townend has recommended that such a person is unfit to teach or tutor again. The relevant authorities have been informed. Mr Townend, however, has made NO such recommendation for any of *today's* current teachers. Their record over the full length of their service will be taken into account when the Governors make their final decision on what, if any, disciplinary action should follow the findings in Mr Townend's report. Legal advice on employment law relating to past and present disciplinary issues will also be fully considered and taken into account.
5. All present staff named by Mr Townend are being interviewed by the Governing Body in line with legal advice. The teachers are being invited to comment on Mr Townend's

findings, and if accepted, are being asked to participate in the reconciliation process.

6. One former teacher named by Mr Townend remains employed in an associate school abroad. His disciplinary approach is found to have been harsh, but not unlawful, in two incidents over 20 years ago.
7. Staff are employed in accordance with modern best practice, including complete compliance with regulations relating to all child protection matters. Appointments are made by the Headteachers and confirmed by a Management Committee of Governors. No other person or organisation is involved.
8. Mr Townend was given complete independence by the Governors to investigate complaints and reach his findings. However, the procedure adopted was designed to establish the truth and create a platform for reconciliation. It was not a quasi 'court of law', and the process did not include cross-examination by 'accused' or 'defendants'. The Governors clearly note Mr Townend's description of some past actions as unlawful, but point out that until or unless a court of law finds someone 'guilty' of an offence, individuals cannot be regarded as 'criminal'. All actions which have been found to be too harsh, over zealous or 'unlawful' are utterly unacceptable, as the Governors' apology has pointed out. At the present time the Metropolitan Police are investigating one complaint relating to one former teacher.
9. The relationship between the SoES and the St James schools is clearly spelt out elsewhere on this website ([Click here](#)). Over 30 years the relationship has matured considerably. The intention of the Governors is to allow the relationship to mature further. The Governors and Headteachers are grateful for the continued inspiration and assistance received from the SoES. However, the Headteachers and Governing Body are entirely responsible for day-to-day management and policy direction in the schools. Critics of this relationship are poorly informed and their views are shaped by personal experience of long ago. Two Governors have children at the schools; the children of two other Governors have recently completed their education at the schools. The Board sees no need to change its policy on the selection of Governors and there is nothing in the Townend Report which would cause it to do so. A very distinctive ethos of discovering the unity of the 'one human family' lies at the heart of the schools. The Governing Body is determined to ensure that this remains central to the schools future development.
10. St James schools today are highly successful and very happy places, as the Townend Report indicates. The Governors will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the reputation of the present schools is completely protected. The Governors are willing to meet past pupils or parents to discuss these issues, and the Headteachers have invited past pupils and parents to see the modern schools for themselves. This has been an invitation held out since well before the Inquiry began but has not been taken up; nor have those leading the attacks on the schools stepped from behind the cloak of anonymity. For reconciliation to occur, they will need to do so.

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Reconciliation

The aim of the Townend Inquiry was to establish the truth of events so that a firm platform could be in place to allow reconciliation between complaints and those teachers about whom complaints were made.

The means or process for reconciliation may well be different for different individuals.

Some reconciliation has already begun with individual teachers offering apologies and opportunities to meet and discuss issues of the past. Where this has happened, the process has been positive and restorative for all concerned. So far it has been conducted informally, between the individuals, and with no other participants.

The Governors have seen the reconciliation in several steps, and will now be writing to all those complainants and teachers who were named in the Inquiry, offering help with facilitation if the reconciliation process is felt to require it.

Step	Description	Status
Step 1	Inquiry Aim: To establish the truth.	COMPLETED
Step 2	Report Aim: To publicly report & apologise	COMPLETED
Step 3	Acceptance of report Aim: To secure acceptance from named teachers to the findings of the Report.	IN PROCESS
Step 4	Offer of reconciliation	IN PROCESS
Step 5	The pupils who want to indicate desire for reconciliation	IN PROCESS
Step 6	Individual meetings with or without facilitator	AWAITING RESPONSES TO STEPS ABOVE
Step 7	Publication of final review of process	AWAITING RESPONSES TO STEPS ABOVE