



Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Extremism in schools](#), HC 473

Wednesday 9 July 2014

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Written evidence from witnesses:

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Members present: Mr Graham Stuart (Chair); Neil Carmichael; Alex Cunningham; Bill Esterson; Pat Glass; Siobhain McDonagh; Ian Mearns; Mr Dominic Raab; Mr David Ward

Questions 1-143

Witnesses: **Sir Michael Wilshaw**, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted; **Lorna Fitzjohn**, Regional Director for the West Midlands, Ofsted; and **Andrew Cook**, Her Majesty's Inspector, Ofsted, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Good morning and welcome to the three of you. Thank you for coming today to give evidence to the Education Select Committee on the issue of extremism in schools. Sir Michael, have children at any of the 21 schools that you inspected been radicalised while attending them?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We did not see that. The issue of extremism, in a sense, was outside our remit. It is an issue now, I think, for Peter Clarke and Ian Kershaw to look at. We were looking at the provision in the schools we inspected to see whether, in fact, the children in those schools were, as we put it in the report to the Secretary of State, "emotionally disconnected and culturally isolated" from society, which would have made them vulnerable to extremism.

Q2 Chair: Right. I am just trying to square that with your letter to the Secretary of State of 31 March, in which you said you tended to adopt the following approach: "Inspectors will gather and scrutinise evidence in order to make judgments about how well pupils in these schools are safeguarded and specifically protected from extremist ideas and intolerant beliefs."

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We did not see extremism in schools. What we did see was the promotion of a culture that would, if that culture continued, have made the children in those schools vulnerable to extremism because of, as I said, the disconnection from wider society and cultural isolation.

Q3 Chair: Yes, but there is a very great difference, is there not, between inculcating radical extremist views and extremely rigid religious views, which you can find in many faith communities and which may not necessarily lead to violence or hostility towards British values or British people?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, but what we did see were governors coming into the school and deciding that they were going to move head teachers and senior staff out of the school to promote their own ideas. That is what we did see.

Q4 Chair: Is that not what governors do? Is that not what they are for? In your note to the Secretary of State, I think it was, you said that governors were straying into the day-to-day management issues of schools. I understand that as a criticism, yet it is rather strange that it was effectively suggested—I forget the exact term—that they were having inappropriate sway over policy. I found that a rather extraordinary thing to say about governors, seeing as that is exactly what they are there for.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, from my own experience, the job is governors is that they are there to set the strategy for the school—

Chair: Which is policy, is it not?

Sir Michael Wilshaw:—and to hold the head teacher to account, but not to run the school themselves, which is what these governors were doing. If the head teachers and senior staff of those schools tried to stop them running the schools—because that is their job—then they were moved on, or intimidated, or undermined.

Q5 Chair: How many schools did that happen in? In how many schools did you find substantial evidence, as opposed to a disgruntled member of staff? If you go to any group of schools, you would find former staff or current staff who are a bit disgruntled, and might feel that they have been pushed around by a governing body that does not understand the realities of the way they work. In how many schools did you find really substantial evidence that there was this kind of deliberate intimidation in a clearly inappropriate way in the running of the school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Certainly the ones that went into special measures.

Q6 Chair: Okay. Moral panics create tough environments for fair assessment. How fair do you think you have been able to be?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think we have been as fair as we possibly could be. HMI went into the schools for a significant period of time. The evidence was very carefully assessed by HMI who went to quality-assure the evidence. I went to Birmingham for almost a week to speak to the HMI and the head teachers that were leading the schools of greatest concern. So we tried to be as fair and as balanced as possible.

Q7 Bill Esterson: Sir Michael, you talked about some governors seeing their job as running the school rather than setting policy. How much of a problem has this been from Ofsted experience elsewhere in the country?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are looking at other schools where this might be happening. We have certainly been into schools in Bradford and Luton. Where we receive information that this might be happening, we are conducting unannounced inspections.

Q8 Bill Esterson: My question is also about whether it happens in schools where there is no religious involvement. Is this a problem with governors generally?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Where we see serious problems with governance, then that affects our decision and our judgments. We have looked at about 20 schools, I think, which have been

downgraded from “outstanding” to “inadequate” because of failings, and serious failings, in governance.

Q9 Bill Esterson: So it is a wider issue.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is a wider issue, yes.

Q10 Chair: Where is the line drawn? If we have a strongly religious community with fairly rigid faith-based views, of whatever faith denomination that may be, they will seek to influence the ethos of the school better to fit the kind of education they would like their children to have. Is that ever appropriate, or inevitable? When does it cease to be appropriate and how would we know?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, conservative religious views, no matter which faith, should not allow governors to do what they were doing in these schools, which is to bully staff and to force head teachers out of their jobs. I mean, it was quite distressing for me as an ex-head teacher to see head teachers who had spent their career in these schools, building these schools up to an “outstanding” status and improving results over that period of time to ensure that youngsters got a good deal, treated in that way. Conservative ideology should not allow people to act in that way.

Chair: I would not necessarily use the word “conservative”.

Pat Glass: I would.

Chair: I hate to see it used pejoratively. Anyway, we will say “inflexible and rigidly held views”.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Conservative faith—

Ian Mearns: Dogmatic?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Dogmatic.

Chair: Sounds like a typical description of the political left.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I get your drift. It should not allow them to do what they have done to those heads. It should not allow them to bully staff. It should not allow them to use unfair employment practices or break the law in terms of equality and it certainly should not allow them to promote intolerant views.

Q11 Ian Mearns: That triggers a question in my mind. I understand that Ofsted have got a particular approach to how soon after an “outstanding” inspection a school should be reinspected. We have had a situation where some previously outstanding schools have got into some really quite difficult problems within relatively short timescales. Has that made you think about and reassess the previous attitude towards reinspection of outstanding schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. We do reinspect outstanding schools where there is a dip in performance and where our risk assessment processes trigger an inspection. I think we need to review this. I know the Secretary of State is thinking about this, and possibly there needs to be a change in legislation to allow us to inspect outstanding schools on a regular basis in the way that we intend to inspect “good” schools in the new arrangements in September 2015.

Q12 Mr Ward: I would like to focus on this issue of extremism and the definition of that. I do not know whether you saw it, but I made a comment about the statements by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education. I was quite concerned that the opening statement from the Home Secretary began with the tragic, awful case of Lee Rigby

and then, with a leap, we were talking about what has already been described as “conservative ideology” in schools. That seems a massive gap, certainly to me. When you were invited in or asked to go into schools, what was the definition of extremism that was used?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: At the risk of repeating myself, our job was to look at whether these non-faith schools—and I think it is worth emphasising that these were not faith schools; these were non-faith schools—were promoting a culture and a curriculum that allowed those youngsters not only to celebrate their own faith but also to celebrate the faith of others; that promoted tolerance; and that were outward-facing in terms of how that school connected with the local community and beyond. Now, if those schools promoted the reverse of that and encouraged youngsters through the curriculum to be intolerant of others, to look inwards and to not be aware of other cultures, faiths and traditions, then that would leave them vulnerable to extremist influences from outside.

Q13 Mr Ward: What would those be? Was it identified that these children would be vulnerable? Well, it was identified that they would be vulnerable—but to what and from where? What would be the source? When these children went home, would it be in their own homes? Are you suggesting that they would be vulnerable in their own homes or through social media? What would be the source that they would then be vulnerable to?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There would be influences outside. I mean, all you have to do is read the newspapers on this issue.

Q14 Mr Ward: Specific to their communities?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Specific to their communities, there are people who would exploit that issue with children who have no sense and no awareness of what is happening outside their community and no appreciation of other faiths, other cultures and other ways of living. There would be people who would exploit the insularity that was being promoted in those schools.

Q15 Mr Ward: Was there any evidence that that was the case in those communities?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We did not have that evidence, but obviously the people that the Secretary of State and Birmingham City Council have appointed to look at possible links with extremist influences will report later.

Q16 Mr Ward: Where there was evidence that these children would be returning into a community in which they would possibly come under the influence, who was responsible for that influence? Where would they get that from?

Lorna Fitzjohn: I think it goes back to the purpose of our visits to these schools. It was to inspect them and to look at leadership, management and safeguarding. We were not there to look at particular examples of where they may perhaps come across extremist ideology. We were looking at how safe they were kept by policies and practices in the schools—looking, for instance, at whether speakers who came into the schools were vetted; whether the right staff were appointed to come into the schools; whether there was strong enough leadership, management and governance to make sure that the potential was not there for them to be susceptible to any extremist ideology. That was the purpose of our visits.

Q17 Mr Ward: So it was the identification of a restricted view of broader British life that you were concerned about.

Lorna Fitzjohn: One of the things we would particularly look at on any inspection is whether there is a broad and balanced curriculum for those children that reflects life in modern Britain, so that they will be well prepared both for life as they go through the education system and life after that. It is one of the clear purposes of education in this country to do that, so on any inspection we would look for it. We were asked particularly to look at some issues on these inspections—and not only the ones identified by the Secretary of State. There were also six that we identified ourselves through information that had come through to us in Ofsted. We felt it was the right thing to go in to make sure that these children were protected and educated as we would all want.

Q18 Mr Ward: We will come back to this, because it was a phrase that you used. Is it right that the vulnerability directly stemmed from a conservative ideology of one particular faith that was being promulgated within schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As I said, it would be the duty of the head teacher and governors of a school where the great majority of children came from the Muslim faith to promote that faith and give them every spiritual support as necessary. It is also the duty of the head teacher and governors—particularly in a non-faith school—to ensure that those children understand and appreciate other faiths and other cultures and to promote tolerance of those other faiths and other cultures. That should be the case in non-faith schools and in faith schools as well.

Q19 Mr Ward: Could I ask at what point a non-faith secular school starts to become a non-secular faith school, in your view? So, a school may have halal meat; they may have some changes in accommodation and in terms of dress. These are well accepted and have been for many years in many schools, in different faiths. In your view, what is the tipping point when it stops being a secular school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Legally they are secular schools; they are non-faith schools. If they want to change their status and their designation, there is a process they have got to go through. However, even if they did become a faith school, the important issue is that they do promote tolerance.

Q20 Mr Ward: If it was a secular school and it decided to have halal food served, is that beyond the pale? Is that moving into a faith school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, not at all. If there were children there not of that faith who wanted another diet, then it would be important that the management of the school provided that other diet.

Q21 Mr Ward: What about separating boys and girls?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I have quite strong views on this. Unless there are good educational reasons for separating boys and girls, then it should not be done.

Q22 Mr Ward: Some people have very strong views on halal food as well.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It would be perfectly acceptable to serve halal food in a school with a large Muslim population. As I say, unless there are really good educational reasons why girls and boys should be separated—and that can be demonstrated to Ofsted and others—then girls and boys in mixed schools should be kept together.

Q23 Mr Ward: But we have many schools that are single-sex schools.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We have single-sex schools, but if you have mixed school, there is no reason why they should not be together for most of the curriculum. In PE, for example, lots of schools would separate boys and girls.

Q24 Mr Ward: So separating them in two separate schools is okay, but not separating them within one school.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That's fine, but in a mixed school that is designated as a mixed school, there is no reason why girls and boys should be kept separate and absolutely no justification for treating them differently in terms of where they sit.

Q25 Mr Ward: Can I just ask you about the preparation of the inspection staff for taking on this really quite difficult work? What training did staff have in looking for radicalisation or extremism?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Do you want to talk about that?

Andrew Cook: Yes. I think we would have to say that all of the inspections involved HMI, who were very experienced inspectors and had a range of experience, and who had inspected all sorts of schools. The HMI that were involved in these inspections also received, as part of the ongoing training that HMI receives, some training around how to ensure that we looked in detail at the issues around safeguarding—which is the reason we went into these schools. This included training on how we can ensure that pupils are made safe from extremism and radicalisation. So inspectors did receive training as part of their ongoing training, but like I said, all of the inspections had very experienced HMI leading and teaming on the inspections.

Q26 Bill Esterson: Is this really an issue about oversight? We have a system where we have this gap between academies and free schools and the Secretary of State's desk—and there are 3,500 schools—on the one hand. We certainly have a system in some local authorities where there is a confusion about the role of the authority, whether it is the maintained schools or the academies. Does it boil down to this lack of a middle tier, oversight and local day-to-day relationships with schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, this one is an important issue, because these schools were once judged to be outstanding but declined very rapidly. We inspect schools once every five years, and in the case of converter academies, once every seven. We are going to change that over the next year or two. There will be more frequent inspections, but even within those shorter inspection schedules schools can slip. The oversight of schools is really important. There is a big debate to be had about how increasingly autonomous schools are going to have effective oversight.

Q27 Bill Esterson: What would you like to see to address that oversight issue? Obviously you cannot be there every day or every week, or your inspectors cannot be there every day or every week. What is the system you would like to see to address this oversight issue?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In terms of Ofsted, we want to see HMI—Her Majesty's Inspectors—in schools once every three years to check that they are still “good” schools. You know that “requires improvement” schools and special measures schools are monitored more regularly than that. So we want to reduce the periods between inspections and we want HMI to lead those inspections.

However, it is really important that a system is set up that communicates with Ofsted on any issues that relate to the decline of those schools. Now, in this case, Birmingham has

responsibility for its schools and the department has responsibility for academies. The big question is: are those responsibilities taken as seriously as they should be, and how effective are they?

Q28 Bill Esterson: My question is how you would like to see that addressed.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: At the moment the Department is creating these new regional commissioners. They have large responsibilities—a large number of local authorities to look after.

Q29 Chair: Some would argue too large—impossibly large.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We will wait and see how large, but it looks to be a very big challenge to have oversight of academies and free schools in a large number of local authorities and a large number of schools. So we will wait and see how that develops. I have said quite publicly that my view is that there is already a middle tier; it is called the local authority. They are legally responsible for ensuring that all children in their area have good provision. If they see any school, no matter what their status, not doing as well as it should be, they should take action.

Q30 Bill Esterson: Yes. I was talking to my local authority about this issue the other day and they were saying that they had gone down from something like 50 school improvement partners—or whatever the correct name for them is—only a few years ago to about 10. They cannot possibly get round every school now to carry out the responsibilities that you describe. How do you address that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In a school-to-school improvement system, I think the future is ensuring that all schools, whether they are academies or not, join a cluster, a federation, a collaboration of some kind or another. If they are already in an academy chain, fine. However, if they are not, I think an element of compulsion is necessary—to say, “You have got to join a cluster of schools.” The “outstanding” leaders within that cluster will monitor the performance of those schools. I see the future for Ofsted as inspecting the cluster rather than individual institutions. That could be an option, especially if our budget is cut even more. Let us hope that does not happen—and I will certainly be talking to you if it is cut any more. However, it could be an option for us to look at the cluster, and talk to the lead school and the national leader of education—the outstanding leader who has the job of monitoring the performance of that cluster. We would then sample schools within that cluster. All sorts of things could be set up that could be more effective than what exists at the moment.

Q31 Bill Esterson: Yes, and if things go wrong in that cluster, you are expecting somebody within the cluster to blow the whistle.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, and some organisation has not only to broker that cluster but have oversight of its performance. There is no reason why it should not be the local authority. You do not need many people to do that.

Q32 Chair: Is there anything you can do now within the current brief you have from the Government to encourage greater collaboration? We heard while conducting our academies and free schools inquiry that more than half academies are not part of any formal partnership whatsoever as of February this year. That was DfE evidence provided to us. The direction of travel may be more and more collaborating, but the question we are obviously

wrestling with is how we create the right incentives to maximise that collaboration if we truly are to have the self-improving system you described.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think incentives are really important. I have mentioned to you before, Chair, that I am anxious to introduce another grade for those outstanding head teachers who are prepared to move beyond their school gates and support and challenge other schools.

Q33 Chair: This Committee has written approvingly of that. What about changes to the framework within which you examine schools, so that they see that Ofsted will measure them, and will come in and judge them on whether or not they are part of a genuine collaboration? One is always afraid of sticks; however, if you force them, they will go through the appearance of collaboration but not the reality, so it is somehow getting that balance right. What are your thoughts on how that could happen? As you say, if we create more resilient collaborations of schools, we make it less likely that we will have rogue behaviour.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We review our guidelines all the time. I am anxious that outstanding should mean outstanding. If you are an outstanding school and you are an outstanding head teacher, there is a moral obligation to share your good practice with other institutions. When we review our frameworks and our guidance to inspectors, we should say, “Look, if you’re going to keep your ‘outstanding’ rating, you have got to do more to support schools that are not as good as you in the local area.”

Q34 Chair: Is there anything stopping you doing that now?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, there is nothing to stop us doing that now. It just needs to be built into our framework. I am anxious to introduce this “exceptional” grade for those people who are doing a lot more, and a lot more than just supporting one school.

Q35 Mr Raab: Thank you, Sir Michael. The thing that caught my eye in your advice note to the Government was one of the recommendations: that the Government should further investigate whether there has been organised infiltration and manipulation of governing bodies. We know that there was very bad practice, and we understand why you would want to come down like a ton of bricks on those schools in Birmingham in particular, but do you have any evidence of organised infiltration and manipulation of governing bodies, or was that rather a precautionary recommendation? Is it grounded in anything concrete that you have seen and tested?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The head teachers I spoke to believed there was orchestration and manipulation.

Q36 Chair: How many?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I spoke to eight or nine present and past head teachers. They believed it was planned and orchestrated.

Q37 Mr Raab: Did they describe how?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: They believe that people got together and decided which schools to target. They believe that. They believe that there was a strategy to infiltrate governing boards. They believe that often governing board meetings could not take place in a normal manner because governors were determined to get their way—to filibuster a particular motion out and to leave the meeting to ensure that governing boards became inquorate when they opposed a particular motion. So they believe all that was planned.

Q38 Mr Raab: Were the eight or nine all in Birmingham or were they spread more broadly?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I spoke to head teachers in Birmingham who expressed this particular view.

Q39 Mr Raab: Did you test that in any sense? What I am asking is whether there was any corroborating evidence of this, or did you say, “Okay, I’ll flag in my mind that is something the Government should look at further,” without trying to test it yourself, given the restraints on you?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I said the Government should explore this matter further. It was one of the recommendations in my report. I certainly discussed this issue with Peter Clarke.

Q40 Mr Raab: Sorry, my question was whether you yourself have seen—either by testing this evidence or in any other way—any corroborating evidence of this idea of systemic attack on, and manipulation of, governing bodies.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As I say, the only evidence that we have are what the head teachers told us.

Q41 Mr Raab: That was the basis; so it was really a precautionary recommendation.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes.

Q42 Chair: What was your understanding of the purpose of this systemic attack?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: To do what was being done in the schools that we inspected: for governors to take over the running of the schools on a day-to-day basis to introduce policy and practices that were in line with their beliefs.

Q43 Chair: I have been involved in a systematic attack on the governance of schools before on behalf of the Conservative Party, when we realised we were not nominating enough Conservatives to governing bodies. We wanted to have people of our ethos sitting on more governing bodies rather than being marginalised. As I am sure the Labour party has done, we tried to get more of our people to come forward and sit on those governing bodies—doubtless to influence that ethos, although hopefully not to intervene and bully people or interfere with the day-to-day running of schools. I am just trying to find out where they crossed the line—and whether we are sure that that was the purpose. People organising to influence the ethos of schools to fit with their beliefs is exactly what we have governing bodies for. Muslim communities of strict religious faith are as entitled to seek to do that, within the law and the rules, as anyone else.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, we heard evidence from head teachers who knew this was happening and resisted it because they did not want particular people joining their governing boards who would do what we have reported—who would bully staff, would bully head teachers, would use unfair employment practices, would promote intolerance rather than tolerance and would treat boys and girls differently. They were aware that there were governors out there that wanted to do that.

Q44 Mr Ward: That links back to this issue of vulnerability. Was there any evidence that what they were seeking to do led to what you identified as increased vulnerability? Was the vulnerability simply a by-product of the activities or was there any suggestion at all that

the purpose was to create a vulnerability to extremist views outside of the school—to soften them or make them more impressionable towards influences that we have still not yet identified?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I suppose the bottom line on all this was that the result of these policies is for these youngsters to look inwards rather than outwards. If they do not have an understanding and an appreciation of other people and other faiths and do not have a tolerance of them, then it makes them more vulnerable to people who say the sorts of things that we have read about. So that is what those head teachers who were forced out felt; they were resisting that. That is what we put in this report.

Q45 Mr Ward: A bit like Eton and Harrow, then.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In the sense of—?

Chair: David, I'm going to leave that there.

Q46 Pat Glass: Sir Michael, a number of times you said that these schools deteriorated very quickly, but I think in at least one instance there was a school inspected and judged to be outstanding one week and three weeks later it was judged to be failing. So do you accept that, at least in that one school, the initial inspection was lacking?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, we do not accept that. Andrew will talk about this in a moment. What is important to say is that these inspections focussed on leadership and governance because that was the issue we were asked to look at. In a section 5 inspection we look at a whole range of things: teaching, behaviour, progress. If they did not look in sufficient depth at governance, I think it was in a sense understandable. Maybe a sharper-eyed HMI who knew the context and the background, and knew some of the stuff that came out in the course of our investigations, would have looked in more detail at that. Do you want to say something about that?

Andrew Cook: We need to be careful in a sense, in that some of the schools that we placed into special measures were placed into special measures because of issues around governance, leadership, and management, and issues around safeguarding. In some of those schools, judgments in terms of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching remained the same as at the time of the previous inspection. So what we were seeing in those schools was a rapid decline in the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Q47 Pat Glass: Three weeks?

Andrew Cook: I am not sure which school you are particularly talking about in that respect.

Q48 Pat Glass: However, if that is the case, then is the problem that the people who were doing the inspection were not looking at leadership and governance sufficiently, or is the problem with the framework—that Ofsted is too reliant upon looking at raw scores and outcomes for children and not necessarily looking at the wider issues?

Andrew Cook: No, I think the judgments reflect the changes that were taking place in the school. We took evidence from staff who talked to us about the changes that they had seen and how rapid they had been, and also pupils and students who had noticed significant changes in their schools. So it was the judgments about leadership, management and particularly governance, and the judgments around safeguarding, that took some of those schools from outstanding and placed them into special measures.

In one of them, achievement was still outstanding and teaching was still outstanding, but it was those crucial issues around leadership, management and governance, and around safeguarding, that put the school into special measures.

Q49 Pat Glass: Park View was the school that was inspected twice in a fortnight. I understand there were no issues of extremism that were found, even on the second inspection. So Ofsted accepts no responsibility for a school going from outstanding in one area to failing within two weeks.

Andrew Cook: That particular school is a good example in the sense that the previous inspection found teaching to be outstanding and achievement to be outstanding. It came out in the final inspection report that those judgments were good in both cases. However, in that particular inspection it was very clear that governance had changed dramatically; there had been significant changes in senior leaders and there had also been issues around safeguarding that had not been picked up. So it was very clear that those changes to those key issues made the inspection judgments very securely evidence-based, which placed the school into special measures.

Q50 Pat Glass: Can I ask you about faith schools? I will declare an interest as a supporter of faith schools. What are the lessons that you have learned in Birmingham around the inspection of faith schools and when will you be issuing new guidance, given that the previous guidance was saying that it was fine to have sexes separated, etcetera?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are constantly reviewing our guidance. Just to pick up on that last point, what we saw was that as a result of changes of leadership and head teachers being forced out, there were huge levels of staff turbulence, dissatisfaction, and a rapid loss in morale and confidence. Andrew led a number of inspections. Staff were coming to you on a regular basis to complain about what was happening to their school. It polarised the school community.

In terms of your question on faith schools and our framework, it is constantly under review. I just want to reiterate what I said: whether it is a faith school or a non-faith school, there is an obligation to comply with the law in terms of equalities and the rest, and to promote tolerance of other people.

Q51 Pat Glass: Do you have a date when the guidance will be published and when we can see it?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are reviewing our guidance at the moment and it will be published by the start of the academic year.

Q52 Pat Glass: Are you consulting with faith schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We consult with all faith schools and non-faith schools when we do research.

Q53 Mr Raab: Sir Michael, can I just press this issue of those schools that had received glowing reports before the recent inspections and then showed a marked deterioration? To what extent was that, as you have already started to hint, a very rapid decline in those schools? With the benefit of hindsight—which is always easy—to what extent do you think that perhaps you may have missed some of the warning signs before?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a really good question. We are in schools for one and a half days. The last half day is for the feedback and the summing up. It is possible to miss those

issues—particularly if head teachers, leaders and teachers are frightened to speak out to inspectors because they fear for their jobs or fear that they will not be promoted, or somehow they would be picked upon by particular individuals and governors in the school. I think it is difficult for inspectors to pick that up. In those second inspections we established what was happening because inspectors were looking at leadership and governance, and talking to a lot more people. As I say, when inspectors are in for two days, they are looking at progress, outcomes, teaching and a whole other range of issues; it is possible to miss that.

Lorna Fitzjohn: If I could add something, it is worth looking at three of the schools that you are perhaps particularly talking about there: Oldknow, Park View, and Saltley. If you look at the changes in the senior management team of each of those schools in a relatively short period of time, you can perhaps see how things could have changed quite dramatically. In Oldknow, of the senior team, only one person remained when we went in in April compared with January 2013. In Park View there were three changes of the principal since 2012. In Saltley, they had an Executive Head for only one day a week. So you can see a pattern there of quite dramatic changes in senior management. I am sure this happens in other schools, but I think that must be one of the contributing factors. Along with that, of course, there were six vacancies in the governing body at Saltley—so again, other issues have come to light, which could indicate why changes have been so dramatic.

Q54 Mr Raab: It sounds like the answer to my question is “a bit of both”. Obviously you want to be able to pick up the warning signs earlier if at all possible—and hindsight is a wonderful thing—but what you are actually talking about is a much more systemic problem for Ofsted, is it not? You want somewhere short of a whistleblowing culture—an openness to inspectors. If you go in there and people are defensive, what do you do about that? Is that a wider systemic problem that you face?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is a problem, but what tends to happen is that people complain; they whistleblow—they write to us or telephone us. That is why we went in initially into some of these schools—we went into three schools because of serious complaints made about governance and about staff. So we do pick up some of these issues, but if you are asking whether we need to review our guidance to inspectors, particularly in terms of governance, then we will surely do that. I have banged on about this for some time.

Q55 Pat Glass: Sir Michael, in a previous life the people who told me first when a school was beginning to fall over were the finance people and personnel people. If the finance officers said to me, “You do realise the school has got a massive surplus”—or a massive deficit or even a significant one—or, “Do you know that the deputy head has been on long-term sick leave?” etcetera, those were very strong indicators that things were going wrong in the school. Are your inspectors sufficiently trained to do that? Do they go in and look at things like the budget? Do they check on things like personnel and changes?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, we do not. We look at issues related to finance such as performance management—how staff salaries are awarded and so on. If we had more time on inspection and were asked to look at value-of-money issues and could look forensically at the budget, we would do that. However, that would be a huge additional expense for Ofsted.

Q56 Pat Glass: I am not asking you necessarily to look forensically through the budget, but is that something on which you think your inspectors should get additional training and maybe a little bit more time, given that these are very strong indicators of something going wrong in a school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You are quite right to say that these are indicators of things going badly wrong in a school, particularly in terms of leadership. I would come back my statement that if we are going to do a good job, we need more time to do it and we need more inspectors to do it. That has training implications as well.

Q57 Chair: If you want honesty about performance from everyone else, is it not also important that you be honest about your capabilities? Lorna was talking about changes—as were you, Sir Michael—and saying that a rapid turnover of staff contributes to a different picture painted by Ofsted. However, when at Oldknow academy a visit to Saudi Arabia is picked out for particular praise as suggesting the extracurricular activities and the richness of the offer of the school in January 2013, and the self-same visit is picked out as a particular sign of a cause for concern in April 2014, that does suggest some kind of inconsistency. It will raise questions about your capacity and capability to have an objective assessment when you are involved in a national moral panic and when you are not.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: But it does reinforce the point I had previously made, which is that in the first inspection we looked at a whole range of things, not just governance and leadership. On the second inspection we looked in much greater depth at governance and leadership—and in relation to Pat Glass’ point, we looked at how much money was being spent from the school budget to send children to Saudi Arabia and also whether it was open to all children and not just to some.

Q58 Chair: You would hope that if someone was bang to rights and had made an error, they would just put their hands up, would you not? Is that not what your inspectors would hope for from schools? Is that not what I have just invited you to do? You have just given me a carefully worded explanation of why the clearly unacceptable inconsistency was somehow okay. I would suggest to you it was not and that it would have been better to put your hands up and say, “That particular instance does not reflect well on us.” Would that not be better for the kind of transparency, openness and honesty that we all want to see from everyone?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We hope we are transparent and honest. I am very keen that the people we inspect have confidence in the quality of our inspections and the quality of our inspectors. I believe the quality of inspection and the quality of our inspectors has gone up over the last few years.

Q59 Chair: Part of that confidence is trust. When you try to make out that it is okay to find exactly the same thing great one minute and a sign of weakness another, and you cannot even say, “That was embarrassing; we got it wrong,” that does not encourage confidence in your systems, does it?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Before Andrew comes in, I just want to emphasise the point that the two inspections were very different. One looked at a whole range of issues. The second inspection looked at leadership and governance, and was where that HMI could really explore how that money was spent sending those youngsters to Saudi Arabia.

Q60 Chair: Forgive me for being unconvinced. Andrew, convince me.

Andrew Cook: I was on the Oldknow inspection and I think it would be very fair to say, as Sir Michael has just said, that we drilled down very much into some of the safeguarding issues around the trip. It would also be fair to say that this is again a school where staff were completely polarised. There were very many unhappy staff in that school, and many of those

staff were beginning to tell us things about the school and unearth evidence that had not been seen before. It was because of that, and because of our focus on safeguarding and looking at the management of that trip, that we identified some concerns about it.

Q61 Chair: It was particularly about the exclusion of some children from it. In truth, while it looked originally like a good, classic example of an enriching activity, it turned out it was rather a narrow, limited and unfairly distributed school good. Is that the point?

Andrew Cook: There was also, as reported, some issues around whether or not all of the safeguarding checks on all of those adults that attended the trip had been done as thoroughly as they should have been done.

Q62 Ian Mearns: That still leaves massive questions in my mind about the first inspection. It really does leave massive questions about the first inspection. A school has been declared outstanding even though all of those shortcomings were there. The problem was that the Ofsted inspectors on site did not unearth any of that. Now that, to me, tells me that there is a significant shortcoming in the regime of Ofsted inspections per se. That is the conclusion that I draw.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I strongly refute that. We have banged on over the last hour about the reasons why these schools declined. The main reason is because the heads left—were forced out—and there was huge instability. That instability can happen within weeks of the head leaving. That is why I think in the first inspection we did not pick that up: the heads were still there.

Q63 Ian Mearns: Lord Nash's letters to individual academies cite detailed evidence not found in your published reports. Is he in possession of a separate report, or separate reports, that have not been published? If that is the case, would you publish any further information that you hold in the interests of full transparency, in order to give all of those people concerned a chance to answer any allegations?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: He obviously has access to our published reports, but he and his officials also have access to the evidence base on which those reports were written—all the forms that inspectors fill in to provide the detail on which their judgments are made. The Department has had access to those at the Ofsted headquarters.

Q64 Ian Mearns: Given the public interest in what has been happening though, would you think it appropriate to publish all of that evidence?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: What are the legal arrangements around publication?

Andrew Cook: There will be certain restrictions on what we can publish and what we cannot publish. I think we will publish everything that we are duty bound to.

Q65 Chair: Doubtless you have already published that which you are duty bound to publish; the question is whether you will publish everything you legally can publish.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If questions are asked of the evidence base that contributed to our judgments, then we will publish that evidence base.

Q66 Ian Mearns: Sir Tim Brighouse has suggested that you should be more open about your working methods. Will you review your policy on how much information you publish, and on the conduct of any specific inspections?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes.

Q67 Ian Mearns: You said before that you are constantly reviewing the guidelines for inspections, so are you going to be publishing any updates of the guidelines, so that everyone can see exactly what the guidelines are?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes.

Q68 Ian Mearns: Will that be done quite soon?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: All our frameworks and guidance to inspectors are published online. Everyone can have a look at them, and of course head teachers and teachers look at them on a regular basis to see what inspectors will be looking at when they visit the school. Do we review this on a continuous basis? Yes, we do. Governance is a key issue. It has been at the heart of this debate. We need to spend more time on governance. Over the last 18 months a separate paragraph is written by HMI on governance. That did not happen before. We need to provide inspectors with even more detailed guidance on the sorts of questions they need to ask governors about their conduct in schools.

Q69 Ian Mearns: So the guidelines that are readily available on the website are up to date for anyone to inspect.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: They are. You and I, or anyone, can see them.

Q70 Siobhain McDonagh: To the observer, Sir Michael, there does seem to be an awful lot of bodies and organisations doing investigations into the same group of schools. Are there too many bodies involved in this oversight?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a question you need to ask the Secretary of State and Birmingham City Council rather than me. We had a job to do and I think we did it pretty well. It would be interesting to see what the reports from those two other commissioners say. I suggest you ask the Secretary of State and Birmingham City Council about that.

Q71 Siobhain McDonagh: Why did you consider it inappropriate for Ofsted to join the Birmingham City Council review group?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Our job is to inspect and to make judgments and not be influenced by others, so we made the decision not to get involved in any working parties or committee groups. That was the decision I took on that.

Q72 Chair: Given that you are instructed by the Secretary of State, is there any danger that you would be more likely, for instance, to decide that Birmingham City Council was failing in its oversight and less likely to say that DfE might have been rather weak in its oversight?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Absolutely not, Chair. I have made it clear that there has to be better oversight of academies than exists at the moment and my views are well known on Birmingham.

Q73 Siobhain McDonagh: If you are a concerned parent, a concerned member of the community or a concerned member of staff and you complain to the governing body of a school and get no response, who should you complain to?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You should complain to Ofsted. That is why we went into these schools in the first place before I received the letter from the Secretary of State.

Lorna Fitzjohn: If I could add to that, we went into six of the schools purely on our own evidence that had come through, which were examples of the complaints you are talking about. We had six, for instance, on Park View, and another seven came in between the two visits from staff and parents who complained. I have had another complaint again this morning from staff at one of the schools we are visiting. That does happen. We do take those very seriously; we investigate them.

Siobhain McDonagh: You record them.

Lorna Fitzjohn: We do. We carry out an investigation into each of the complaints and we decide then what the best course of action is. With these schools, we decided the best course of action was to go in and, particularly, to look at safeguarding, leadership and management, because those were the issues that were highlighted in the complaints. Yes, we do have and there is a line through to us to ensure that something is done about the concerns that they have.

Q74 Siobhain McDonagh: To make it loud and clear, if somebody is watching this morning and has some complaints, the people they need to contact are you.

Lorna Fitzjohn: Yes.

Q75 Chair: Do you think the overlap between your investigations and that of the Education Funding Agency is helpful?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In a sense they were helpful, in that their judgments were very similar to ours.

Chair: That is a good answer.

Q76 Bill Esterson: In your advice letter to the Secretary of State, you listed three categories of schools with regard to governance problems. You were talking earlier about the fact that in some of schools the head was removed and that was the factor that saw the dramatic change in your grading. However, some of the heads stayed in place. What support is available or should be available to those head teachers or other head teachers where the governing body is behaving that way?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a really good question, because some of these heads who are still there felt very isolated or were well aware of the problems they could face with particular governors being appointed who would try to do what others had done in schools in Birmingham—and they were frightened that the governing boards would be taken over. They had little or no confidence in Birmingham City Council and the authority.

It is in the report and it is well documented that head teachers had complained to Birmingham over a significant period of time about the behaviour of particular governors and their complaints had not been properly addressed. We are very critical in our report about the level of support given to these head teachers by the local authority.

Q77 Bill Esterson: There have been concerns about some schools in Birmingham for quite a long time, and some of these things have been in the public domain for a number of years. Why has it take until now for such a wide-ranging approach and series of investigations to be carried out?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, that is a really important issue. We went in because of complaints from parents and teachers and so on. I am very pleased that Ofsted was regionalised and we have people from the West Midlands office here, who need to have their ears very close to the ground on what is happening in Birmingham and in the West Midlands. If these sorts of issues are occurring elsewhere, they will be dealt with by Ofsted's regional offices.

However, it is whether we get that information. If there is a culture of fear and intimidation, if people feel frightened about coming forward about have legitimate concerns, it is a big issue for our system and a big issue for Ofsted. If they do not come forward, often we do not hear about it until we inspect them. Even then, as you have seen, it is difficult to establish what was going on.

Lorna Fitzjohn: If I can add something, since we have regionalised, which has been for 18 months now, we regularly meet with a group of head teachers from right across the West Midlands, which is a group that is actually very open and transparent. It is an opportunity for them to talk to us about some of the issues. The regionalisation has encouraged many more of those conversations to happen, not only with staff from schools but also the local authorities, with whom I meet very regularly. It is that local intelligence that allows us to get to the heart of the matter.

Q78 Neil Carmichael: I would like to go back to the question of Birmingham City Council's role in scrutinising or supporting the head teachers in terms of the governance. If they cannot, will not or could not do it, who should be responsible for making sure governors are doing the job properly in that situation?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If it is an academy, the Department has that responsibility. If it is a local authority school, the local authority has that responsibility. There is also a part to play for Ofsted as well. I have already said that we need to spend much more time on governance. We have done over the last two years. We need to do a lot more. The training for our inspectors in light of what we have found in Birmingham and other parts of the country means that HMI have to look at this in much greater depth.

It is also important that people feel free to speak up. One of the really upsetting things about what we found in Birmingham—and that I found personally upsetting, talking to head teachers—is that people were frightened about speaking. One head teacher had to be interviewed in a supermarket car park because she was so fearful.

Q79 Alex Cunningham: I wanted to ask about that meeting, Lorna. You meet head teachers. Are they head teachers from local authority or maintained schools, or are they head teachers from across the different mix of state schools within the area?

Lorna Fitzjohn: We aim to have—and have succeeded in having—a very wide, broad and balanced group. We aim to have—and have succeeded in having—representation from a variety of schools and a variety of different types.

Q80 Alex Cunningham: Has that changed so that all head teachers come into contact with you over period of time?

Lorna Fitzjohn: It would not be through that group, but I would regularly have contact with head teachers, either myself or Andrew, because I speak regularly to head teacher groups, meet with them, go out on inspection. There are other groups formed outside local authorities that already meet together, and we engage with them as much as we possibly can.

Q81 Bill Esterson: Would it be a good idea if head teachers did regularly meet you as a matter of course?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: They do.

Lorna Fitzjohn: They do.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are regionalised; there are consultation groups in each region.

Bill Esterson: This is already happening.

Lorna Fitzjohn: This is already happening.

Q82 Bill Esterson: In your reports, you show that a large number of leaders, in some of these schools at least, were either acting or newly appointed. Is this an ongoing cause of concern for you and does it mean you are going to be spending quite a lot of time going back into these schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We will be monitoring these schools that are in special measures or require improvement. That is what we do. When we do monitor, we will comment on whether there are continuing staffing issues, particularly in terms of leadership. Leadership is critical. Unless there is confidence in the leadership group and the staff, unless that leadership group is stable and unless they are well supported and challenged by governors in an appropriate manner, there will be continuing problems.

Lorna Fitzjohn: We regularly risk-assess all the schools in the region. A number of factors are looked at, but one of the factors is change of the head teacher, which we would know about; that is taken into consideration.

Q83 Bill Esterson: You made recommendations not to appoint newly qualified teachers. Can you explain why this was? However, equally, should you not have had a recommendation in there not to employ unqualified teachers?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Do you want to comment on that, Andrew?

Andrew Cook: It is standard practice. When we visit schools placed into special measures, there is a requirement that they do not appoint newly qualified teachers, but that is reviewed by the HMI monitoring inspector. The senior leaders can discuss that at any point, and if it is felt that it is right and that newly qualified teacher is going to get a good chance in that school, that decision can be overturned.

Q84 Bill Esterson: What about the point about unqualified teachers, who are allowed in academies?

Andrew Cook: In many ways, Ofsted inspectors will look at the quality of teaching. In terms of unqualified teachers, when we do observations of teaching etcetera, we do not make a judgment about that, but we do make a judgment about newly qualified teachers.

Q85 Bill Esterson: Presumably, however, if you do not advocate the employment of newly qualified, without pre-empting or pre-judging the quality, presumably there is a similar point to be made about unqualified teachers.

Andrew Cook: Ofsted has the responsibility to make a judgment about newly qualified teachers, yes.

Bill Esterson: You are not doing it purely because it is not in your remit.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As somebody who has worked in a special measures school, it is hard to get staff. If you have somebody who is unqualified who nevertheless can teach well, communicate well and has all the makings of being a good teacher, you get them on board as quickly as possible—but also accredit them as quickly as possible. That is what happens.

Bill Esterson: As long as they are working towards qualified teacher status, you are happy.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That was always my approach

Q86 Chair: To be clear, you are more trying to protect the NQT from the inadequate school than you are trying to protect the inadequate school from the NQT. Is that right?

Andrew Cook: Sometimes, when you make that difficult decision about whether a school is ready to appoint newly qualified teachers, you think about the range of experience that the newly qualified teacher will have. They will need to see and experience what outstanding teaching looks like; they will need to have the support of a good department or good leaders.

Chair: That is a “yes” to my question.

Andrew Cook: Yes, I agree.

Chair: Some people might think this is about saying, “The school needs the best teachers it can get; we won’t let them have these new, raw recruits.” In fact, it is making sure that the raw recruits do not start their career in a school with low standards and, conceivably, carry those standards with them.

Andrew Cook: Yes, it is so they get the best start possible.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is important to say that we are flexible on this one. Where we see NQTs going into a special measures school with good support, often because of a new head teacher coming in, obviously that would be fine.

Q87 Bill Esterson: According to the Trojan horse allegations, the plan was to take over the schools and convert them to academies to increase the control of the governors. You started to talk about this before. What more can you do to ensure robust monitoring of governance through your inspection?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, at the risk of repeating myself, we are spending a lot more time on governance arrangements. We need to review our guidance to spend a great deal more time looking at the issues that are relevant to the Birmingham case. We will keep that under review.

Q88 Bill Esterson: You made a series of recommendations in your advice note to the Secretary of State. What has been the response, particularly on the governance issues?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am sure the Secretary of State is deliberating on this one and will respond in due course to the Select Committee and others.

Ian Mearns: We will ask him next week.

Q89 Pat Glass: You talked a little bit earlier about the factors that caused you concern: isolation, limited and less advanced curriculum and awareness of factors that could potentially leave students at risk of influence from others. In some of the later reports, they came under the headline of “behaviour and safeguarding” and in others under “leadership and management”. Where should that be and how can inspectors draw the distinction?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: On safeguarding?

Pat Glass: On the factors you were talking about—these issues that may lead to extremism.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The curriculum is a big issue. We have come into a number of schools where the curriculum had been narrowed. Children were not being provided with a broad and balanced curriculum. It is a concern of mine that schools now, if they are academies and free schools, have a great deal more flexibility in terms of curriculum design. Most people approach that in a very sensible and appropriate manner and do provide a broad and balanced curriculum. As an ex-academy head, I simply adopted the national curriculum.

What we must be careful about is that there is not an abuse of those freedoms and an inappropriate and unbalanced curriculum is put on in schools. In terms of the review of our framework and guidance to inspectors, we need to look in much greater depth at the

curriculum. It falls under the “leadership and management” section at the moment, and often it is just a few lines. I want to see that expanded. You have seen in my recommendations to the Secretary of State that we should also consider a fifth judgment on the curriculum

Q90 Pat Glass: In Oldknow Academy in January, there was a judgment about recruitment of staff and safety around vetting procedures, etcetera, that said that these were handled well. In a later inspection in March/April, it was very clear that that was not the case; they were not safe vetting procedures and safe recruitment procedures. Do general inspectors simply take the word of the leader far too often?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I would hope not. There is usually somebody who is a specialist in terms of safeguarding on the team. The lead inspector would lean very heavily on that person’s expertise. Again, however, it comes back down to this issue: if on the second inspection we found weaknesses, that was because of the instability in leadership. In fact, that head teacher had left a considerable time before the inspection.

Q91 Pat Glass: Safeguarding during inspections used to about, “Do you have a safeguarding policy? Do you have adequate fences? Are there any ponds around?” It was that kind of thing. It has become much wider now. Considering what has happened and the lessons from what has happened, it is going to become wider still. Is it possible to have an Ofsted framework that takes in the whole area of safeguarding and the well-being of young people?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We do our best on that. We look at the single register and so on. One of the things we need to enhance is the inspection of school records on referrals to social services and other agencies. I am not sure that inspectors are doing that in the depth that they should at the moment. Again, we are toughening that up.

That leads me to say that there are responsibilities that schools have before an inspection takes place to ensure that inspectors are well briefed. We want schools to put on their website all sorts of information about their curriculum, about health and safety, about child protection, etcetera. Certainly if we move to unannounced inspection—and we are going to increase the number of unannounced inspections we are going to do from September—where there are concerns, particularly over the curriculum and governance, schools have to help inspectors by ensuring they are well briefed on what good practice exists in their schools.

Q92 Pat Glass: As a result of this and other issues that have arisen recently, should there be a greater balance between looking at the scores, the GCSEs—the raw scores—and the wellbeing, safety and ethos of a school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We hope we have that balance right at the moment. Safeguarding is a key issue for us and we commented on it in a separate paragraph in the “behaviour and safety” section of the report. We think we get it right in most issues. As I say, however, we constantly keep this issue under review. In a two-day inspection, we obviously look at teaching, we look at progress, we look at the outcomes, but we also look at the welfare and safety of students. If we did not do that, we would be falling down on our job.

Andrew Cook: Anyway, the inspections in Birmingham highlight the fact that, actually, we have got that balance, because some of these schools, as we have said, in terms of their achievement grades and their safeguarding grades, the safeguarding grade was the grade that actually took the school into special measures—or was one of them. In actual fact, we are saying that it is important that not only do pupils achieve but, inevitably, that they are also kept safe.

All the inspectors who were involved in the inspections were all trained in terms of safeguarding and—like all good inspectors—they would have triangulated that evidence. They would have spoken to people; they would have spoken to staff; they would have spoken to pupils; they would have looked at documentation. There would have been a number of checks to ensure that safeguarding was inspected thoroughly.

Q93 Pat Glass: Good, experienced people can walk into a school and get a real feel for it almost immediately, but head teachers and senior staff will go to great lengths to prepare the way for Ofsted. I know the no-notice inspections will help enormously with this, but in an ideal world would you want to have longer inspections, so that you can get a better feel of what is going on underneath in a school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am more interested in the quality of inspectors and the quality of inspection than the length of time it takes. Of course, there has to be a balance, but as you know, we are proposing one-day inspections of good schools—

Pat Glass: That is what we recommended as a Committee

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes—with two HMIs leading that inspection. It is very important they are experienced people who can spot things quickly. As you say, an experienced head teacher and an experienced inspector can spot things quickly. I am more interested, as I say, in the quality of our inspection workforce than in the length of time they spend in schools.

Q94 Chair: Do you impose different demands on different schools depending on which communities they belong to?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I do not believe so.

Q95 Chair: Looking at the reasons you put Oldknow into special measures, point one is: “Governors do not meet their statutory responsibilities to safeguard pupils because they have not taken steps to protect them from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.” Point three is: “Behaviour and safety are inadequate, because pupils and staff are not equipped well enough to deal with the risk of extreme or intolerant views.” At most schools, if you said to the governing body, “Have you really taken effective steps to protect your pupils from radicalisation and extremism?” they would look at you pretty blankly and say, “I am just trying to help them have a good day, learn a lot and enjoy themselves.” If you said, “Have you really equipped them well enough to deal with the risk of extreme or intolerant views?”, likewise, most schools would look at you blankly and think, “Well, apart from trying to create a tolerant atmosphere and a good educational environment, no, not really.” Yet here is

a school that gets shoved from one top category into the bottom category, because they are apparently not doing what most schools across most of the country, I would suggest, would not claim that they do.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If you talk to most head teachers, as I do regularly, they would say, “What sort of community do I run? I run a very tolerant community where children are taught tolerance to each other and to other cultures.”

Q96 Chair: Is it exactly the same as this? One of the worries here is that you send your inspectors on special training to look out for a certain thing. You send them in, in a partly newspaper-triggered investigation with investigations coming out of everyone’s ears, to go and take on this alarming issue. It is quite hard for people to stay objective and for the people on the receiving end not to feel they are being picked on and having standards and expectations asked of them that are not asked of anyone else. How do we square that and make sure we are doing something that is fair and reasonable and is not, as I say, triggered by a moral panic?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In terms of risks associated with or specific to particular communities, inspectors are aware of particular risks and sensitive to them. If I think of my own background and experience, a particular risk specific to my school was gangs, and large numbers of them around the school. It would have been wrong of me not to talk to the youngsters about those risks relevant to that community.

Q97 Chair: There are different expectations on different schools in different communities.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. In this case, it is obvious that there would be specific risks here, if safeguarding was not addressed properly.

Q98 Chair: Those schools serving Muslim communities could be expected to have more developed measures to inculcate those things we just talked about than might be true of schools that serve communities where there is no such risk of extremist views being promoted.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If you were the head of a school with a large Muslim population, you would want to talk to them about the associated risks of radicalisation and make sure that those youngsters were aware of what can happen if they are not careful.

Q99 Chair: Obviously, the concern is to make sure that we do something that is appropriate to the circumstances and yet is seen to be equitable and fair and does not make a community feel picked upon or a school feel as though it has been unfairly treated, and that there is some resilience in the framework so that when there is a big scare, they understand what is expected of them and can defend themselves.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Absolutely, I agree with that. It is the responsibility of community leaders and head teachers in those communities to make those youngsters aware of what can happen unless they are careful.

Q100 Alex Cunningham: Before we move on to the next section, can I ask about the no-notice inspection? How much do you consider that as the silver bullet that will find the things you might not otherwise find?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: At the moment, it is a few hours' notice before. It is in the afternoon before inspectors walk into a school. In the main, that works pretty well. You cannot change very much in the space of a few hours. However, in the context of these schools, it would be very easy, given even a few hours' notice, to change things to fool inspectors. We have to think carefully about this one and consider it. I am in conversation with the Secretary of State about no-notice inspection as a general rule. It is something I wanted two and a half years ago. We did not action it for a variety of reasons, but it is something we should consider now. We are going out to consultation on it in the new academic year for all schools.

Q101 Alex Cunningham: When I talk to head teachers about no-notice inspections, they throw their arms up in the air. I say, "If your school is working as it ought to be working, you should have nothing to fear", but they always say, "Yes, but I might not be there that day when you walk in the door." Is that a little unfair?

Chair: Dame Sue John told us—she sits on the board—she stopped it.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If you are a confident head teacher and a good head teacher, you are confident somebody can take over from you if you are not there. The school has to operate; children have to be educated.

Q102 Alex Cunningham: A leader wants to lead, don't they, in that circumstance?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, but somebody has to take responsibility for the school. If we did introduce unannounced inspection, it would remind head teachers of their responsibility to ensure that their deputies and senior staff could take over at short notice. It would encourage their professional development and, in many ways, it would be good for our education system that we were giving people experience of running a school.

Alex Cunningham: The Chairman has already said that you have given a good answer. I think that is another good answer. We will move on.

Q103 Bill Esterson: I am just going to pursue that point. When we were in Hull a couple of weeks ago, we spoke to some heads from schools in East Riding. This is normally Graham's topic. Where you have alliances in rural areas in particular, you could be supporting a school that is several hours away, potentially, and you could have not just the head but other senior staff out and about supporting other schools. Could that be problematic? That was a point that was put to us.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It could be problematic, but children are being educated. That is the key issue. Children are in school; they are in classrooms; they are being educated. We want to look at what it looks like on a normal day. As I say, it would incentivise head teachers to prepare for an unannounced inspection.

Q104 Chair: Yes, by staying there and not going to another school to help out, thus reversing the very policy of collaboration you wanted, which is Bill's point.

Bill Esterson: That is exactly the point.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You could say that you should not be out of your school if you lack confidence in your senior staff.

Q105 Chair: If you are the executive head of a couple of small primaries in a rural area, you would have enough trouble getting between those two. If you are miles away in York at your partner support school there, you are going to be pretty reluctant to have Ofsted coming in while you are not there, aren't you?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As I say, I think it would incentivise head teachers to professionally develop their senior staff.

Chair: Years away from the headship yourself, Sir Michael, you are losing touch with the incentives.

Q106 Alex Cunningham: I want to go back to the oversight and responsibilities of local authorities now. I know we have talked a little bit about it this morning already, but we know that both the maintained and academy schools are inspected in this vein, and yet the DfE memorandum implies the situation in Birmingham is due to the failure of the city council. Where would you lay the blame?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Birmingham has its fair share of problems. I just want to recount some of those problems to you. I cannot think of another local authority where there have been eight successive failed inspections of children's services.

Alex Cunningham: Can you blame Birmingham City Council for the academies?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That must be some sort of world record, and our latest inspection said very much the same as the previous inspections. This issue of so-called Trojan Horse is in Birmingham. There is a lack of confidence in Birmingham Council to support head teachers. Well before this issue came up, I went to Birmingham to speak to about 15 or 20 of the most successful heads of local authority schools and academies in Birmingham, who said that Birmingham were pretty useless, that they wanted to do more and that they had approached the local authority to do more so that they could engineer it and broker it, and they had been most unhelpful.

It is a blooming shame, really. This is the second city in the land. We are building HS2 to Birmingham. We are investing a lot of public money in getting people to Birmingham at a faster rate. It should be our second city.

Chair: Or getting people out.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You said that, Chair; I didn't. We should really worry about what is happening here. I look forward to the Government acting upon it.

Q107 Alex Cunningham: We are all worried about it; I do not think there is any doubt about that. What about academy schools? Where is the local authority responsibility there? Does some of this not rest with the DfE as well?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, I want to restate my view on this one. The local authority is responsible for the good provision for all children, no matter which school they go to. There are some local authorities in the country—I came from one of them—where, never mind which school they went to, if there was a dip in performance, they did something about it. They would haul the sponsor in and talk to them or they would write to the Department. All local authorities should do that.

Q108 Ian Mearns: Categorically, from your perspective, standards in schools are the duty of the local authority.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is the duty of the local authority to ensure that all children, no matter which type of school they go to, have good provision. If they do not have the powers to intervene themselves, they should do what I have suggested, which is to ensure that they telephone the sponsor, write letters, talk to the Department about their concerns, and they can write to Ofsted to do an inspection. I receive very few letters from local authorities saying, “We are really concerned about this school”—or this academy or this free school—“would you inspect?”

Q109 Alex Cunningham: I hope that Lord Nash reads the transcript of what you have just said because he does not want local authorities to have anything to do with academies.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: At the moment, they are responsible. Who knows what is going to happen in the future as more schools become autonomous? That is the trend. Another form of middle tier, no doubt, will be set up. At the moment, it is in flux.

Q110 Alex Cunningham: You have just pre-empted my next area of questioning, because I wanted to talk about that local oversight of all state schools. How can it be put right? It is inadequate at the moment.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a big policy issue for whoever is in Government to ensure oversight between inspections. We need to sharpen our own act up as well at Ofsted to make sure our regional offices work really well and that we pick up concerns at the appropriate moment. Everyone has to play a part in this one, but it is a big policy issue for Government.

Q111 Alex Cunningham: We have the new school commissioners. Some of them have actually started work. Their role seems to be more about finding sponsors and encouraging academisation, rather than having any real responsibility for oversight. Do you see their role being expanded?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I do.

Q112 Alex Cunningham: How would you do that? What would you see being done there?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: By increasing their number. It seems to me they have a pretty tough task.

Q113 Alex Cunningham: What responsibilities should they have in order to help us overcome some of these issues?

Chair: How many?

Alex Cunningham: I think you should answer my question first.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As many as the public purse can afford, I suppose. That is the issue here. However, it has to be workable. If they are going to have oversight, if that is their remit, if their job is to have oversight between inspections and to work with Ofsted, and with local authorities, I suspect, they have to have a practicable job to do.

Q114 Alex Cunningham: What role could there be for Ofsted in ensuring that governors, whether they be appointed by the local authority or by an academy chain, are actually the right people to be doing the role? How would better oversight help prevent what happened in Birmingham?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Governance is a big, big issue, particularly in autonomous institutions. It is absolutely critical. We have seen what happens when it goes badly wrong in Birmingham. Whoever is in power, Government has to address this issue of governance. We need more professional governance, full stop. We need, on every governing board, particularly in difficult areas, two people—ex-HMI, ex-local authority advisers, ex-head teachers—who can sit on the governing board and help and support non-professionals in doing their work.

Q115 Bill Esterson: Are there enough people to do these roles? There are a huge number of governors needed, potentially.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It has not been tested. There are lots of people who would value that sort of work; who are retired and want something to do; who are knowledgeable about education, because they have been there; and who would not mind a bit of a stipend in supporting their pension. We have not tried. We have still relied on amateurish governance to do a really professional job.

Q116 Bill Esterson: How much would you pay governors?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As much as the school budget could afford.

Q117 Bill Esterson: That could be very interesting when we look at the difference between the proportion of money spent on teaching and on governors.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As I say, most people want to do this because they have a commitment to a school in an area. The voluntary and philanthropic elements come in here. Nevertheless, a small amount of money should go to them, for instance for travel expenses.

Chair: He would like back pay for 29 years.

Q118 Alex Cunningham: I have two other questions. About half an hour ago, you talked about your concerns that the whistleblowing procedures might not be strong enough. What could be done to strengthen and protect the whistleblower, but also bring forward more people?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are happy to act as a whistleblower or to listen to whistleblowers' concerns. That is why we went into these schools in Birmingham in the first place. People must feel confident that they can speak up without fear of intimidation or retribution.

Q119 Alex Cunningham: What could change to make that happen?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We need to say something. Ofsted will say after this that if anyone is concerned, they should write into Ofsted and we will treat it confidentially and act upon it confidentially.

Q120 Chair: Have you ever failed in that respect?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I do not think we have. A lot of our risk-based inspections of schools are triggered—

Chair: For the record, as a message to send out, if something comes to you confidentially, as far as you know—and you will write to us if it is different—there is no record of someone's name being released.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I will give you a record of the number of inspections that have been triggered by whistleblowing events.

Q121 Chair: It is more the point about confidentiality, because one of the ways of getting people to contact you is making people really confident that their name is not going to be accidentally released by someone sharing a document by mistake.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I will write to you about our arrangements for ensuring confidentiality.

Chair: Thank you.

Q122 Alex Cunningham: Finally from me, we have challenged Ministers and we have challenged the Secretary of State himself on why they will not let you inspect academy chains. Let us say you are able to inspect academy chains. I would like to know from you today what it is you feel you are unable to inspect.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Other than academy chains?

Alex Cunningham: No, academy chains. You say, "I want to inspect academy chains", and the Government says no, but you are doing it anyway. What do you actually want to be able to do?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are inspecting local authorities and we are inspecting local authority school improvement services. That is the head office. We are inspecting the constituent schools in academy chains. We have already done one, E-ACT, and we are about to embark on another two, looking at the performance of schools in those two academy chains where we perceive performance to be poor.

Ofsted wants be able to do what we do with local authorities, using roughly the same inspection framework as for local authorities: in other words, look at what the head office is

doing, what the strategic direction is and what the performance indicators are. Who is setting the strategy? What policies are they adopting to improve performance? We want that power.

Q123 Ian Mearns: Taking what we have learnt from Birmingham, it looks like, from what you have said, in terms of children's services inspections, there has not been any significant improvement across a whole range of different things there. What should happen in Birmingham? As an urban authority, is it just too big to be manageable? Are there particular problems where you think we need a radical solution for Birmingham?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am going to use the same response as the last time I was asked this question by the Chair. I am old enough to remember what happened in London with the GLC and the old Inner London Education Authority. Look at London now; look at schools in London now.

Q124 Ian Mearns: It is about 30 years, Sir Michael, since the ILEA was abolished.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It provides a model for us, because I still bear the scars of a really poor, failing local authority that did very little to improve schools in London 30 years ago. Something radical happened and it has made a huge difference. The same thing should happen in Birmingham.

Q125 Ian Mearns: You think we need a "Birmingham challenge" in that case.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Or break it up.

Q126 Pat Glass: There was a long distance between abolishing the ILEA and improvements in London. It was not breaking up the ILEA, although I am not saying that was not part of the solution. A lot of it is down to London Challenge. It is not necessarily about breaking up Birmingham, although that might be part of the solution. It seems as if we do need a Birmingham Challenge.

Chair: Rather than contradicting the evidence, we will let Sir Michael submit the evidence as he sees it.

Ian Mearns: I was automatically thinking of Neil Sedaka: breaking up is hard to do.

Chair: In Birmingham it is, in particular.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Is he still alive?

Q127 Ian Mearns: He is, yes.

I would like to move on, Sir Michael, to tackling extremism and the Prevent strategy. A report in 2011 found that only 50% of schools were aware of the Prevent strategy. Have you any evidence of how widespread awareness is now and has awareness of the community cohesion duty declined since Ofsted stopped reporting on it separately?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In terms of the Prevent strategy, there are some areas, Newham being one of them—I know Newham well, because I was a head teacher there—that use it really well. Our specialist adviser on the Prevent strategy also comes from that part of the world and says they are first class in the way they use it and the way they professionally develop head teachers and staff in that borough. If that can happen in Newham, which has a very diverse population, it should be happening in Birmingham and elsewhere. It is not so

much the funding arrangements; it is about how seriously the local authority takes it and how well it engages all the relevant stakeholders in it, particularly head teachers. What was the second part of your question, sir?

Q128 Ian Mearns: Has awareness of the community cohesion duty declined since Ofsted stopped reporting on it separately?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is certainly part of academies' duties; community cohesion is part of the funding agreement. We would expect them to adhere to it. Do we write a separate paragraph on it in the way that we did? No, we do not. Is there a separate judgment on it in the way that there was? No, there is not.

Q129 Ian Mearns: In the light of what has been happening recently, do you think that is something you need to review?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is something I need to talk to the Secretary of State about. At this moment in time, I have to say I am more interested in having a fifth judgment not on community cohesion, but on the curriculum, because it is an area we need to do a lot more work.

Q130 Ian Mearns: The report on Washwood school cites it as an example of a school that uses the Prevent strategy well. What would you expect to see happening a school in such a case?

Andrew Cook: There are some really good examples that we found in some of the Birmingham schools. We must remember that there was some good practice that we saw. Where schools are using Prevent strategies or engaging with Prevent well, their policies for visitors, bookings and lettings will be informed by it. Head teachers will be involved in local intelligence meetings. There will be opportunities in the curriculum to promote integration and cohesion. In some of the schools that we visited, their staff had been involved in training that meant they were engaging in the Prevent programme. It was that heightened awareness of all of these issues and that heightened awareness of what the school could do to ensure their pupils and students were safe. That was a good practice that we saw.

Q131 Ian Mearns: The report on Waverley school also praises its use of Prevent, but criticises the local authority for not helping to spread best practice. Are there any particular recommendations you would make in order to tackle that?

Andrew Cook: The issue there was that here was a school where we felt things were going well. Actually, we come back to this issue that the school-to-school support. It is a crucial thing in order for schools in a community to help improve each other. One of the things that we would like to see is, where things are going well, where things are effective, that good practice is shared. Often the local authority can be the facilitator for that.

Q132 Ian Mearns: Are there any ways in which the Prevent strategy could be refined? Is there anything additional you think we can do in order to prevent such occurrences happening again elsewhere?

Andrew Cook: In terms of Ofsted, the Prevent strategy is obviously something for the Department and the Government. We have seen some good practice and we have reported that. In terms of Ofsted, what we would want to do is highlight where it is being used well

and report on that, so that schools can see where good practice is and what good practice looks like.

Lorna Fitzjohn: Out of 21 schools that we looked at, we have three that are outstanding and one that is good. We have there a basis on which those schools can be used to help other schools make better use of the Prevent strategy.

Q133 Mr Ward: I want to talk about British values first of all, but I will have one more go at extremism. The schools failed on their safeguarding test; it comes back to this vulnerability to extremism. I am still not quite sure what extremism they were more likely to be engaged in. Are we talking about going to Syria to fight later in life or attacking British Army personnel? What would they be more vulnerable towards being influenced to do as a result of going to these schools?

Lorna Fitzjohn: It is difficult to predict what they might do. What we are looking at is the potential, really. What we want children protected against are any potential influences they might have. We want children to have a broad and balanced view and to have British values instilled in them in schools so that they are better able to deal with any pressures they might have as they go through life, whether it be within their community, whether it be on the internet or any other way that they may well be influenced. It is that strength that they come out of the education system with that we are most interested in.

Q134 Mr Ward: On the British values issue, there is a consultation launched by the DfE on strengthening powers to intervene in schools that are failing to actively promote British values. I understand that Ofsted will be required to assess against these British values. If that requirement had been in place, would these schools have failed on that test in terms of British values?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I suspect so, yes.

Q135 Mr Ward: On which particular ones? The definition is democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. Was there evidence that they were intolerant of other faiths and beliefs or they did not believe in democracy?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Certainly, tolerance is a big issue and an intolerant attitude or a lack of communication with youngsters on other faiths, other cultures and other styles of living. It would have failed on fair employment practices. It probably would have failed in terms of equality. I suspect, yes, we would have failed it in terms of British values.

Q136 Mr Ward: If you had—there are quite a lot of eastern Europeans in Bradford—for instance a Slovakian who arrived in the school, what are the new British values that that Polish or Slovakian child would have to learn that would be contrary to their Polish or Slovakian values?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You promote values in a whole host of ways. The most important way a school does it is through the formal curriculum and the informal curriculum, and through extracurricular activities as well. What you say in assembly is important, as is what sort of curriculum you adopt.

Q137 Chair: I am going to press you there. What is peculiarly British about democracy, tolerance, equality et al?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There would be other countries around the world that of course have those values. We are shy about talking about it, I suppose, in a way that perhaps the Americans are not.

Chair: Is that a British value? Shall we add reticence or stiff upper lip?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Reticence and being shy about our culture and traditions—possibly. It was quite interesting watching the World Cup last night and the national anthems. I was interested, because I went to Brazil as part of an Ofsted group years ago to look at schools. I was struck when I was in Brasilia by the youngsters around the national flag singing this anthem, which you saw last night if you were watching the game, which went on for minutes, or quite a long time. They felt that the flag and Brazilian values were very important to them. They had a sense of a national spirit.

Bill Esterson: That did not work very well for the team.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We need to have the same here.

Chair: By the end they were cheering the “samba” Germans, weren’t they?

Q138 Mr Ward: In terms of the Great British value of equality, if you had a particular faith school that did not allow females to take on—

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is why I said I feel very passionate. Unless there are really good educational reasons, you treat boys and girls equally, and you get them together as much as you possibly can.

Q139 Siobhain McDonagh: What did you have in mind when recommending a greater clarity on what should be taught in a broad and balanced curriculum? Can this be done without extending the national curriculum to all schools, including academies?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: When I was a head, I adopted the national curriculum, because that I saw that as an entitlement curriculum for youngsters, no matter what their ability. It is up to schools now, if they are academies or free schools, to design their own curriculum

Q140 Chair: I was going to say, are you not supposed to encourage innovation, particularly among academies? Surely it is just that kind of behaviour by heads, just accepting the national curriculum, instead of tailoring it to their own needs, that you should be questioning.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: For me, innovation is teaching well those areas of experience that you think all youngsters should learn and enjoy, which are, obviously, English, maths, the sciences, the creative arts, technology, the humanities and so on. I think those are all vital areas and always done in my 40-odd years of teaching. Certainly in terms of British values, if you are not teaching history at key stage 3 and you have suspended that because you want to teach more English, that is wrong. The curriculum is a key vehicle in ensuring that youngsters are exposed to the sort of culture that we have in our country and to British

values. That is why I worry. With the freedoms that now operate, sensible head teachers will operate in a way that I operated, but some will not.

Q141 Siobhain McDonagh: What do you recommend should be done about those who do not?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are obviously inspecting that. As I said, we need to spend more time on curriculum issues. We are not doing enough of it at the moment. That is why I am anxious to revise our guidance to inspectors, as well as considering, with the Secretary of State, a fifth judgment.

Q142 Siobhain McDonagh: How would a new graded judgment on the wider curriculum work? What would your criteria be?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It would focus people's minds; that is the most important thing. Head teachers at the moment look at our framework. They look at the four judgments of progress and outcomes, leadership, behaviour and—what is the other one? Teaching. Once they see that fifth judgment there, it makes them think very carefully about the design of their curriculum and what they are offering their youngsters to ensure breadth, balance and coherence.

I am worried about this focus on English and maths, the SATs and making sure you are particularly good in those subjects. It very, very important, and head teachers can see that as important, but it is also important to give youngsters an exposure to the foundation subjects and to those issues that you feel are important for our society. We need to spend a lot more time in inspection on looking at the curriculum in schools. Schools are now obliged to put their curriculum design on their website. Certainly, when we move to new inspection arrangements in a year's time, inspectors will be armed with that curriculum design and will ask very serious questions of schools that are not offering a balanced curriculum.

Q143 Chair: Do you have any final thoughts? You might like to address parents in Birmingham who are following all of this.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I went to Birmingham, Chair, to talk to parents and I mentioned this to the Secretary of State. My colleagues were there as well. I found it a hugely rewarding experience. The great majority of those parents, many of whom were on governing boards, just wanted this issue sorted. They wanted their children to get on in peace, to learn and to be good citizens. They were really worried about banks of cameras turning up outside school. They were really concerned about it. I was hugely impressed with the parent body that I met. We need to get this sorted as quickly as possible and a resolution reached.

Lorna Fitzjohn: I was just going to add what happens now, really. It is important to note that we do not walk away from these 21 schools. Of course, there are some that are outstanding or good, and we would hope to encourage them to help the others. However, we are also, on a case-by-case basis, looking at what we do next. Those schools that are in special measures—the five that went into special measures during that activity and one that

already was—will be monitored very closely by Her Majesty’s Inspectors. We will have at least termly visits that will happen until we are confident that they have improved and they have moved out of special measures. Those that require improvement, similarly, will be monitored. It is important to say that we will continue to work with these schools to make sure the children are safeguarded and receive a good education.

Chair: We will be speaking to the Secretary of State next week and, after the summer, when all reports should be in, we plan to bring in various witnesses from Birmingham and report writers et al to take evidence on the record in the way we have done today, for which we are very grateful to the three of you, so that the people of Birmingham can see that there is an open process of scrutiny of all the investigations that have gone on. Thank you very much indeed for coming today

