

Witness Name: Sylvia Joan ALLEN (Previously BESSANT)

Statement No: WITN0487001

Dated: 05. August 2026

THE NOTTINGHAM INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF SYLVIA JOAN ALLEN

I, Sylvia Joan ALLEN, will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. I am the retired Headteacher of the previous Sir Thomas Picton School, Queensway, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 2NX – now reorganised as Haverfordwest High School.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Nottingham Inquiry (the “**Inquiry**”) with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 28th July 2026 (the “**Request**”).

BACKGROUND

3. I have been asked to set out specific general matters relating to the time that Valdo Calocane (“VC”) attended Sir Thomas Picton School. I will set out these matters from recall, as I no longer have access to any school records or documentation.

4. On the rare occasions that children for whom English was an additional language entered the school, special provision was made to accommodate their needs. This could include strategies such as being placed with a younger cohort, 1:1 support or withdrawal from non-compulsory subjects for intense English Language tuition. In 2009 an Estyn Report noted that “pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. Specialist individual teaching alongside good classroom support enables them to settle quickly into the school”.
5. During the period 2007 – 2011 the ethnic diversity of the school was a very low percentage.
6. I was aware that VC found it difficult to settle into school life and to maintain a positive pattern of study.
7. Whilst in the Sixth Form, VC fell into a pattern of non-attendance. This was quickly addressed by Mrs Rebecca Pritchard the Head of Sixth Form. I spoke with VC and it emerged that, unbeknown to his parents, he was spending his days in the Town Library. Although a Sixth Form study area was available at the school, VC chose not to access it. The Town Library offered quiet space which could, if wished, be used for private study and reading. VC’s parents were invited into school to join us for a progress meeting. I was present at that meeting, and we were fortunate that Mr Nigel Thomas (“NT”), a member of support staff, spoke Portuguese and could act as interpreter for VC’s parents. NT was already known to VC as he was his assigned support staff member. As I recall, the outcome of that meeting was that VC would be encouraged to attend school regularly and could additionally link in with NT as necessary.
8. The pattern of non-attendance continued and VC decided to leave school. I was not part of the discussion about his immediate plans thereafter.
9. I have not retained any records / relating to Sir Thomas Picton School.

10. I have considered paragraphs 8 and 9 of the witness statement of Mr Thomas, Teaching Assistant at Sir Thomas Picton School (WITN0476001). Having done so, I acknowledge that there may be some minor differences in our recollections but believe that these do not affect the overall picture of the situation.

Exhibits – index

No.	URN	Document description
1.	WITN0476001	Final Witness Statement of Nigel Edward Roy Thomas, Haverfordwest High VC School, paragraphs 8-9 only

Statement of Truth I believe the content this witness statement to be true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Signed: _____ **GRO-B** _____ Dated: 13th August 2026