



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Mrs Anupe Hanch: Professional conduct panel outcome

**Panel decision and reasons on behalf of the
Secretary of State for Education**

June 2015

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Professional conduct panel decision and recommendations, and decision on behalf of the Secretary of State

Teacher:	Mrs Anupe Hanch
Teacher ref no:	8950654
Teacher date of birth:	22 July 1965
NCTL case ref no:	10060
Date of determination:	7 May 2015
Former employer:	Gearies Junior School, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge

A. Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (“the National College”) convened on 27 April to 7 May 2015 and 3 June 2015 at 53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH to consider the case of Mrs Anupe Hanch.

The panel members were Mr Brian Hawkins (teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Nicolé Jackson (lay panellist) and Mr Luke Graham (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Thomas Whitfield of Eversheds LLP Solicitors.

The presenting officer for the National College was Ms Sophie Lister of Kingsley Napley LLP Solicitors.

Mrs Anupe Hanch was present and was represented by Mr Andrew Faux of Counsel.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

B. Allegations

At the outset of the hearing, the presenting officer applied to amend the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 15 January 2015. During the course of the hearing the presenting officer sought further amendments of the allegations, by deleting allegations 2.l, 4.d, 5.a, 11.b, 11.c, 11.e and 11.f. The teacher's representative consented to each application to amend the allegations. The panel allowed each of the amendments sought and the panel went on to consider the allegations as amended, which were as follows:

It is alleged that Mrs Anupe Hanch is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct in that whilst employed as a Head Teacher at Gearies Junior School (the "School") between January 2005 and December 2012, she:

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:
 - a. On 14 January 2005, she accused Witness A of neglecting her professional duties when she took time off work to make arrangements for her sister-in-law's funeral;
 - b. On 14 November 2007 she said to Individual A, that she did not like the fact that she covered her face, referring to her headscarf; that she should wear more make-up; and that she should take clothing advice from other staff members;
 - c. On 3 December 2007, during a meeting, she instructed Witness A to read out loud to Individual A, in a meeting to be held the following day, Anupe Hanch's notes relating to Individual A's performance, the content of which was derogatory;
 - d. On 4 December 2007, she stood outside Witness A's classroom and referred to Individual A as a "spoilt brat who threw tantrums";
 - e. In or around 2010, she referred to Individual B, Office Manager, as "dirty" and "smelly" in front of Witness B;
 - f. In or around 2010, she told Witness B that she would like to "chop off her [Individual B's] head and see her walking around headless";
 - g. In September 2010, when referring to her colleagues, she said to Witness C "I'm not going to be like those fucking Muslims taking a day off for Eid";
 - h. In or around 2011, she told Witness D that Witness C's sick leave was "a waste of school funds", or words to that effect;
 - i. In February 2008, she shouted at teachers, Witness A, Individual C and Individual D, stating that they were "incompetent" for not having arranged an event for Mother's Day;

- j. In or around 2012, she instructed Witness B to tell a staff member, Individual E, to "stop dressing like a tramp";
 - k. On 19 January 2011, she referred to Witness J as "spineless" and with "no backbone" in front of Witness B;
 - l. [omitted];
 - m. In May 2011, she said to Witness F and Individual E in relation to instructor, Individual F, words to the effect of "but what will it look like if he is outside the mosque handing out leaflets";
 - n. On 10 November 2011, she instructed the office staff not to make a cup of tea for Witness C and her union representative when they arrived for a meeting;
 - o. In 2012, she said to Witness H, Office Manager, words to the effect of "I'm going to have to break down 5,000 years of Islam to get through to her", referring to Witness D who had asked for time off in order to volunteer for the Olympics;
 - p. In 2012, she referred to Witness D as "fucking useless" in front of Witness H and Individual G;
 - q. On an unknown date, she said to Witness H "Queen [redacted] is coming to take over, he is useless" when referring to Individual H, the incumbent head of Gearies Infant School;
 - r. On an unknown date, during a review of CVs for a Newly Qualified Teacher position, she said to Witness C words to the effect of "if we have any more Muslims in here it's going to start looking like Al Jazeera in here";
 - s. On an unknown date said to Witness C that staff member, Individual I, looked "like a Polish slapper";
2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:
- a. On 19 January 2005, she threatened Witness A with "serious consequences" if she did not meet her expectations during "on the spot" observations;
 - b. On 30 January 2008, she pointed her finger at Witness A and said, to her in an aggressive manner, that she was negative, not good enough and inadequate as a teacher;
 - c. In or around 2011 she directed Witness D to place the job section of the Times Education Supplement on Witness C's desk every Friday;
 - d. On 23 July 2010, without explanation, she locked Witness C in Anupe Hanch's office for a meeting with her from 4pm until 7pm;

- e. In June 2011, she stood in front of Individual J, with her hands on her hips, shouting at him to look for a document;
 - f. In November 2011, she shouted at Witness A, calling her “complacent”, saying that her voice had “no impact” on Anupe Hanch;
 - g. On an unknown date, when at the School at the weekend, she directed Witness I to do Anupe Hanch’s washing using the School's washing machine;
 - h. In January 2012, during a meeting, she threatened Witness I with dismissal as a consequence of her having taken sick leave;
 - i. [omitted];
 - j. [omitted];
 - k. On 13 March 2012, she threatened Witness G with a negative reference if he handed in his notice;
 - l. [omitted];
3. She did not give legitimate or fair criticism of colleagues’ performance or behaviour at work in that:
- a. In or around late Autumn 2009, she telephoned the head teacher at Essex Primary School and told them that Individual A was a "trouble causer";
 - b. In or around late Autumn 2009, she telephoned the Head Teacher for Cleves Primary School in Newham to report that Individual K was a “trouble causer” and that he had a lot of sickness absence;
 - c. [omitted];
 - d. In or around February 2011, she told Witness B that Witness C had bullied a staff member at her previous school and had caused the staff member to have a miscarriage;
 - e. She did not give sufficient notice to Witness D in order to prepare for her performance review meeting on 19 March 2012 and then criticised her for being underprepared;
4. She unfairly and without good reason withheld references, and forms for colleagues in that:
- a. From July 2005 to July 2006, she withheld forms from Redbridge Borough which she was supposed to fill in for Witness A and Individual L; to confirm that they had completed their teacher training;
 - b. [omitted];
 - c. [omitted];
 - d. [omitted];
 - e. In May, June and July 2012, she withheld a reference for Individual M;

5. She instructed her colleagues to make false statements on the following occasions:
 - a. [omitted];
 - b. In 2010, she directed Witness I to write a false statement about Witness C having shouted at Anupe Hanch;
 - c. In 2011, she directed Witness I to spread a false rumour amongst staff to say that Witness C was “a bully”;
 - d. In January 2011 she called Witness B into Anupe Hanch’s office and locked the room, stating that she wanted her to amend the original minutes of a meeting between Witness C and Anupe Hanch to make a false record of Witness C having agreed to leave the School in February or Easter 2011.
6. In July 2011, she interrupted a meeting between teachers Witness A, Individual N and Individual O and referred to Pupil E as “a devil”;
7. In 2011, she directed the pupils in Pupil D’s class to write statements in relation to Pupil D to state that Pupil D was not wanted in the School;
8. In 2011, she directed Teacher, Witness F not “to be nice” to Pupil D;
9. On 8 July 2011, she read the statements, referred to at paragraph 7 above, to Pupil D stating that she was not liked by her classmates, “was trouble” and was not wanted at the School, before excluding Pupil D from the School;
10. On 8 July 2011, she said to Pupil E that she was lying about an incident involving another pupil, and alleged that her sister was a known “thief” and “a liar”;
11. She did not treat pupils and their parents with dignity and respect in that:
 - a. [omitted];
 - b. [omitted];
 - c. [omitted];
 - d. In 2010, during a conversation with Witness B, she referred to Mother B and Mother A as “bitches”;
 - e. [omitted];
 - f. [omitted];
 - g. [omitted];
 - h. On 3 July 2012, she shouted at a SEN, Pupil J, using words to the effect of; “do you want to become/people to think that you are a paedophile?”; “do you want to become/people to think that you are a pervert?”; “do you like touching woman’s breasts?”; and “do you like touching women’s private parts?”;
12. [omitted];

13. After her suspension in July 2012, she retained at her home documents belonging to the School, namely the personnel file for Witness C;

14. Her conduct at paragraph 5 above was dishonest.

Mrs Hanch denied the facts of the allegations, save as follows. In respect of allegation 1.n Mrs Hanch admitted that she instructed the office staff not to make a cup of tea for Witness C and her union representative when they arrived for a meeting. Mrs Hanch did not admit that the date of this event was as alleged, nor did she admit that this amounted to not treating colleagues with dignity and respect, as alleged. Mrs Hanch denied that she was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

C. Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications, save for those referred to in Section B above and under the heading 'Documents' in Section D below.

D. Summary of evidence

Documents

In advance of the hearing, the panel received a bundle of documents which included:

- Section 1: Chronology and Person Identifier, with page numbers from 1 to 20.
- Section 2: Notice of Proceedings and Response, with page numbers from 21 to 33.
- Section 3: National College for Teaching and Leadership Witness Statements, with page numbers from 34 to 148.
- Section 4: National College for Teaching and Leadership Documents, with page numbers from 149 to 455.
- Section 5: Teacher Documents, with page numbers from 456 to 590.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the above documents in advance of the hearing.

At the outset of the hearing, the teacher's representative, with the consent of the presenting officer, applied for the chronology to be removed from the bundle. The panel agreed to this removal.

In addition, during the course of the hearing, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- An email exchange between Witness A and Kingsley Napley LLP, given page numbers from 591 to 593.
- An email exchange between Witness H and Kingsley Napley LLP, given page numbers from 594 to 595.
- Minutes of a meeting held on 14 January 2011, given page numbers from 596 to 598.
- Extracts from a Department for Education and Skills document entitled “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education”, given page numbers from 599 to 603.
- A text message exchange between Anupe Hanch and Witness E, given page number 604.
- An email from Witness D to the presenting officer, given page number 605.

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from:

- Witness A, a teacher at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness B, at relevant times the parent support officer at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness C, at relevant times an assistant head teacher and then acting deputy head teacher at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness D, a finance officer at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness E, at relevant times a teacher at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness F, a teacher at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness G, at relevant times a teacher at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness H, office manager at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Witness I, a caretaker at the School, called by the presenting officer;
- Mrs Hanch;
- Witness J, at relevant times deputy headteacher at the School, called by Mrs Hanch’s representative; and
- Witness K, headteacher at Laycock Primary School, called by Mrs Hanch’s representative.

E. Decision and reasons

The panel has carefully considered the case before it and has reached a decision.

Mrs Anupe Hanch qualified as a teacher in 1991. Between 2000 and 2004 Mrs Hanch was an acting headteacher / deputy headteacher at Henry Green Primary School, Essex. In January 2005 Mrs Hanch joined Gearies Junior School as headteacher. It is this period to which the allegations relate. Mrs Hanch resigned from her post as headteacher by notice of 29 May 2012, as she was due to start as a headteacher of Jubilee Primary School, Hackney in January 2013. However, Mrs Hanch was suspended from her role at Gearies Junior School in the meantime and was dismissed with effect from 31 December 2012.

Findings of fact

The panel has found the following particulars of the allegations against Mrs Anupe Hanch proven, for these reasons:

- 1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:**
 - a. On 14 January 2005, she accused Witness A of neglecting her professional duties when she took time off work to make arrangements for her sister-in-law's funeral;**

The allegation was denied by Mrs Hanch, who stated that she instead made Witness A aware that if she exceeded 30 days of absence in her NQT year, she could not progress from the status of NQT within that year.

The allegation was supported by the written and oral evidence of Witness A, who stated that she clearly remembered the accusation as alleged, as it made her feel embarrassed and as if she had chosen to take time off.

The panel found Witness A to be a highly credible witness. She was frank with the panel, for example admitting that she had taken unpaid leave for a pilgrimage, prior to Mrs Hanch's arrival. Witness A also admitted to the panel that she questioned her own conduct, indicating that, when Mrs Hanch made the accusation in question, Witness A did wonder whether she was indeed neglecting her duties to the school, by making arrangements for the funeral of her sister-in-law and looking after her mother at the time. Witness A was also frank with the panel in relation to matters other than this allegation. For example she accepted that she had signed off a document concerning the performance of Individual A that had been amended by Mrs Hanch, when Witness A should not have done so. Witness A stated that she had done so because she was scared of Mrs Hanch. This frankness reinforced Witness A's credibility in the eyes of the panel.

Witness A's evidence was in the main clear and it stood up to cross-examination, indeed the panel found that the only substantial area where there was a lack of clarity (around promotions being a path to people leaving the School) became clearer upon questioning, adding to the panel's view that Witness A's testimony was a true reflection of the facts.

The panel did not see any plausible basis for Witness A being seen in any way as dishonest and did not see it as plausible that her evidence was in any way a result of, or influenced by, any improper motive, such as a desire to harm Mrs Hanch. On the contrary, the panel found that Witness A showed a tendency to avoid conflicts, such as by leaving the staffroom when she heard crude jokes or leaving a room when she saw Individual J being shouted at, save where she saw conflict as unavoidable.

This was to be contrasted with the panel's view as to the overall credibility of Mrs Hanch. Particular inconsistencies and explanations that seemed implausible to the panel are identified in relation to the relevant allegations, below. In relation to this allegation, the panel noted that the evidence before it suggested that Witness A had had significantly fewer than 30 working days' absence, being the amount of absence after which there would be an impact upon the completion of her induction year. The panel considered that this undermined Mrs Hanch's credibility, given Mrs Hanch's assertion that this was the subject matter of the conversation and her assertion that she had only offered appropriate advice.

Weighing up the conflicting evidence of Mrs Hanch and Witness A, the panel was persuaded by the evidence of Witness A. On this basis, the panel finds it to be proven that on 14 January 2005, Mrs Hanch accused Witness A of neglecting her professional duties when she took time off work to make arrangements for her sister-in-law's funeral. The panel is also satisfied that this amounted to Mrs Hanch not treating Witness A with dignity and respect.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- c. On 3 December 2007, during a meeting, she instructed Witness A to read out loud to Individual A, in a meeting to be held the following day, Anupe Hanch's notes relating to Individual A's performance, the content of which was derogatory;**

Mrs Hanch informed the panel that she did not recall asking Witness A to read out Mrs Hanch's assessment of Individual A's performance.

Witness A provided the panel with a clear recollection of this event, in line with the allegation. Witness A was Individual A's mentor at the relevant time and in oral evidence she stated that if she had read out Mrs Hanch's notes regarding Individual A, as instructed, she would have been lying. Witness A stated that the notes asserted that Individual A taught at an inappropriate level, that she did not respect authority, that she had relationship issues with children, staff and parents, that she dressed inappropriately with too many layers and that Individual A did not take mentor and headteacher advice

on board. Witness A's evidence was, on the contrary, that Individual A was a strong candidate, albeit with some points to work on, as with any NQT.

On the basis of Witness A's evidence, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Hanch had given the alleged instruction and that the content of the notes was derogatory. The panel found that in doing so, Mrs Hanch had not treated colleagues with dignity and respect, both by undermining Witness A as Individual A's mentor and by seeking to deliver, via Witness A, an unjustifiably derogatory assessment of Individual A's performance, that was at odds with the experience of Individual A's mentor.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- d. On 4 December 2007, she stood outside Witness A's classroom and referred to Individual A as a "spoilt brat who threw tantrums";**

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation.

The evidence of Witness A relating to this allegation was clear and credible. Under questioning, Witness A provided further details of the event, stating that Mrs Hanch imitated Individual A.

More generally, the panel found Witness A to be a more credible witness than Mrs Hanch.

Weighing up the conflicting testimonies of Mrs Hanch and Witness A, the panel found, on the balance of probabilities, that Mrs Hanch had referred to Individual A as a spoilt brat who threw tantrums and was satisfied that this amounted to a failure to treat colleagues with dignity and respect. The panel therefore finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- e. In or around 2010, she referred to Individual B, as "dirty" and "smelly" in front of Witness B;**

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation. She stated that she had spoken to the office staff as a whole, indicating that they should be clean, covered and comfortable, but that she had not singled out Individual B, or used the words alleged.

Witness B provided written and oral evidence to the panel that supported the allegation. Witness B was able to provide detail about the context in which such comments were made. The panel's overall impression of Witness B was that she was a very credible witness. Her evidence withstood questioning from the teacher's representative and the panel. She became visibly emotional when discussing the effect of various events on children and seemed to the panel to be motivated by protection of the interests of children, rather than any animosity towards Mrs Hanch.

As explained elsewhere in this decision, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch to be a particularly credible witness. In relation to this particular allegation, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch's explanation of how she dealt with this situation particularly plausible, particularly in light of the conflicting evidence. Mrs Hanch accepted in evidence, in relation to allegation 3.d, that she confided in Witness B and so it was entirely plausible to the panel that she would mention such concerns about Individual B to Witness B. Moreover, throughout the hearing the evidence was that Mrs Hanch showed a tendency (which she accepted) to be direct and challenging in her assessments of people. The evidence was that Mrs Hanch would often share those concerns with other people. In the light of this, the panel does not consider it likely that Mrs Hanch would only have dealt with concerns about Individual B by addressing the office staff as a whole, which is the impression that Mrs Hanch sought to give to the panel.

Having weighed up all of the evidence available to the panel, it finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- f. In or around 2010, she told Witness B that she would like to “chop off her [Individual B’s] head and see her walking around headless”;**

Mrs Hanch told the panel that she did not say this and that she never speaks like this.

Witness B gave written and oral evidence to the panel that Mrs Hanch had spoken in the manner alleged. Witness B was able to provide further details of the alleged meeting and her testimony stood up to questioning. As noted above, the panel found Witness B to be a credible witness.

As noted in relation to other allegations, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch to be a particularly credible witness, with her testimony contradicting a large number of other witnesses that the panel found to be credible, and being implausible in places.

On the weight of the evidence before the panel, the panel is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the allegation is proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- g. In September 2010, when referring to her colleagues, she said to Witness C “I’m not going to be like those fucking Muslims taking a day off for Eid”;**

Mrs Hanch denied making such a statement and indicated that such words go against everything Mrs Hanch has worked for in education and everything she believes in.

The allegation was supported by written and oral evidence from Witness C.

It was clear from the evidence, including that of Mrs Hanch, that Mrs Hanch was seeking to improve pupil attendance, including over religious festivals, and that she felt that this would benefit from staff leading by example.

The evidence of Witness C and Mrs Hanch regarding the alleged conduct itself was however in direct conflict.

It was clear to the panel that Witness C's view of Mrs Hanch was coloured by the impact that she felt Mrs Hanch had had upon her life and that Witness C's motivation in giving evidence to the panel was not solely to assist it in determining whether the facts alleged did in fact take place. In evidence it became apparent that Witness C was, quite separately, threatening legal action arising from Mrs Hanch's conduct relating to Witness C and was seeking compensation as a result of this conduct. At one stage, Witness C showed considerable agitation when the panel sought to focus upon the matters pertinent to the allegations.

That being said, when Witness C was providing evidence of facts other than Mrs Hanch's treatment of Witness C or Mrs Hanch's character in general, the evidence was in the panel's view plausible, detailed and withstood examination.

The panel concluded that Witness C was not deliberately misleading the panel in any aspect of her evidence; however her overall view of Mrs Hanch's character and Witness C's interpretation of Mrs Hanch's conduct directly against her were skewed by Witness C's position and history.

Against this background and after careful consideration, the panel found Witness C's evidence relating to this allegation to be credible.

As noted elsewhere in this decision, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch to be a credible witness in general. In particular, it did not believe Mrs Hanch's account of this allegation to be true. Allegations that Mrs Hanch made disparaging remarks based on others' cultures and religions were not only founded on the evidence of Witness C; they were at the very least supported by the evidence of Witness H (as detailed below). The panel did not find the racist nature of the alleged comment to be completely contrary to the nature of Mrs Hanch, as she had suggested. The panel had also heard that Mrs Hanch used the word "fuck" on other occasions and so it did not consider the particular language used to be obviously out of character for Mrs Hanch.

Taking all of the above into account, the panel determines on the balance of probabilities that this allegation is proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- h. In or around 2011, she told Witness D that Witness C's sick leave was "a waste of school funds", or words to that effect;**

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation, but stated that she may have commented about the impact on the school of a senior leader being off ill for a long period. The panel found that the insurance cover mentioned by Mrs Hanch did not cover the period in question (being when Witness C was on her phased return to work).

Witness D gave written and oral evidence that supported this allegation

The panel found Witness D to be a particularly credible witness. Her account was balanced – for example she indicated to the panel that she had not ever heard Mrs Hanch swear and indicated that Mrs Hanch was capable of treating staff in an appropriate manner, with the issue being her lack of consistency in this regard. Her evidence withstood cross-examination and she sent an email, after giving oral evidence, to clarify her evidence in a manner that if anything was favourable to Mrs Hanch’s position.

Having balanced the evidence of Witness D against that of Mrs Hanch, the panel determines that around 2011 Mrs Hanch did tell Witness D that Witness C’s sick leave was a “waste of school funds”, or words to that effect. Moreover, the panel is satisfied that was an example of not treating colleagues with dignity and respect. On these bases, the panel finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- i. In February 2008, she shouted at teachers, Witness A, Individual C and Individual D, stating that they were “incompetent” for not having arranged an event for Mother’s Day;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation.

Witness A provided written and oral evidence to the panel in support of this allegation. As stated above, the panel found Witness A to be a credible witness in general. In relation to this particular allegation Witness A provided considerable detail about the meeting in question and its surrounding circumstances. She was also able to elaborate on details and her thoughts at the time, when asked about the event during the giving of oral evidence. Her account of the circumstances of the allegation, relating to Mrs Hanch’s determined focus on teaching and learning, chimed with other evidence provided to the panel, throughout the hearing.

Notwithstanding the fact that the panel has not been presented with evidence from Individual C or Individual D, based on the evidence that is before it, the panel is satisfied that Mrs Hanch did shout at the teachers in question, call them incompetent for not having arranged an event for Mother’s Day and is satisfied that this amounted to Mrs Hanch not treating colleagues with dignity and respect. On this basis, the panel finds this allegation to be proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- j. In or around 2012, she instructed Witness B to tell a staff member, Individual E, to "stop dressing like a tramp";**

This allegation is denied by Mrs Hanch.

It was common ground that Individual E in fact had a very smart style and that the alleged instruction was therefore odd. Mrs Hanch sought to rely upon this as evidence of the implausibility of the allegation. In the panel's view however it could also be said that the oddity of the statement meant both that Witness B was more likely to remember the statement correctly and that it was less likely that, if she was to make up an allegation about Mrs Hanch, this is the sort of statement that she would fabricate.

The panel determined, not least given the oddity of the alleged statement, that the reason for the discrepancy between the accounts of Witness B and Mrs Hanch was not that one had forgotten, or misremembered the event, but rather than one was seeking to mislead the panel deliberately.

As noted above, the panel found Witness B to be a credible witness. Moreover, there did not appear to be a compelling reason why she would seek to mislead the panel, given that Mrs Hanch had already left the School. Further, if Witness B was to fabricate an allegation against Mrs Hanch, this would be a highly unlikely allegation to make.

As to why Mrs Hanch would make such a statement, Witness B notes that Mrs Hanch started to criticise Individual E around the time that she found out that Individual E intended to leave the School. This accords with other evidence given to the panel about Mrs Hanch's attitudes towards staff members who wished to leave the School. Given Individual E's apparent pride in his appearance, a comment about this would have the propensity to cause him considerable hurt. Whilst it is, to say the least, concerning to the panel that such a comment would be made with such a motivation, this seems to the panel, on the basis of the evidence before it, to be more plausible than the notion that Witness B fabricated the alleged facts, for reasons unknown.

The panel also finds that Mrs Hanch's conduct amounted to her not treating colleagues with dignity and respect.

On the balance of the evidence, the panel finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- k. On 19 January 2011, she referred to Witness J as "spineless" and with "no backbone" in front of Witness B;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation.

Witness B provided written and oral evidence in support of this allegation. She also stated that Mrs Hanch asserted that Witness J had an Achilles' heel, being his family. In oral evidence Witness J, called on behalf of Mrs Hanch, accepted that Mrs Hanch had told him that he had this Achilles' heel and questioned how Witness B would be aware of this.

As noted above, the panel found Witness B to be a credible witness. In relation to this particular allegation, the fact that Mrs Hanch did view Witness J as having a weakness; and that she used the same expression – "Achilles' heel" to Witness J himself and to Witness B, added to the plausibility of Witness B's account.

On this basis, and given the panel's view as to the general credibility of Mrs Hanch, the panel is satisfied that Mrs Hanch did refer to Witness J as spineless and with no backbone in front of Witness B and the panel is also satisfied that this amounted to Mrs Hanch not treating colleagues with dignity and respect. The panel finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- o. In 2012, she said to Witness H, Office Manager, words to the effect of "I'm going to have to break down 5,000 years of Islam to get through to her", referring to Witness D who had asked for time off in order to volunteer for the Olympics;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation.

The allegation was supported by the written and oral evidence of Witness H. Again the panel does not consider it likely that Mrs Hanch or Witness H has forgotten or misremembered this event. At the time of the alleged event, Witness H had only been in role for a few months. It appeared from the evidence to have been a formative memory for Witness H, in terms of her view of Mrs Hanch, her new manager. Mrs Hanch's assertion that she did not use such words is clear. The panel considered instead that either Witness H or Mrs Hanch was deliberately seeking to mislead the panel.

The panel could see no plausible reason why Witness H would seek to mislead the panel. Witness H's account was plausible and withstood cross-examination and questions from the panel.

The panel did not find Mrs Hanch's assertion that she had spoken about the culture amongst the office staff, rather than the culture of Islam, to be fully plausible.

Having weighed the evidence of Witness H against that of Mrs Hanch, the panel finds this allegation to have been proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- p. In 2012, she referred to Witness D as “fucking useless” in front of Witness H and Individual G;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation.

Witness H provided written and oral evidence in support of this allegation. The panel found Witness H’s account to be credible. The panel heard that Mrs Hanch did use the word “fuck” from time to time and the panel has found that Mrs Hanch did make derogatory remarks about other staff members. The event alleged was not therefore so out of character for Mrs Hanch that the allegation would not be proven.

Witness J gave oral evidence to the effect that he had never heard Mrs Hanch swear about someone; rather he had only heard her swear in a general manner. However, Witness J’s evidence did appear to the panel to be inconsistent – in written evidence he had stated that “At no point have I ever seen Mrs Hanch shout, swear or be rude to anyone” and yet in oral evidence he readily stated that he had heard Mrs Hanch swear and in particular that she used the word “fuck”. Whilst the written evidence could be read to be consistent with the oral evidence, that was not the natural reading of the words in the panel’s view and they were not filled with confidence by this apparent difference in Witness J’s evidence. In any event Witness J could not speak directly to the event in question.

The panel was mindful that they did not have any evidence from Individual G, but nonetheless, on the basis of the evidence from Witness H, taking into account the evidence of Mrs Hanch and Witness J, the panel finds this allegation proven, including that Mrs Hanch did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- q. On an unknown date, she said to Witness H “Queen [redacted] is coming to take over, he is useless” when referring to Individual H, the incumbent head of Gearies Infant School;**

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation, stating that she never referred to Individual H as “Queen [redacted]”.

Witness H provided oral evidence to the panel in support of this allegation, which was consistent with the evidence she provided to Capita around October 2012.

The panel found Witness H’s account to be credible and consistent with other evidence heard about the manner in which Mrs Hanch referred to others. It was also consistent with Witness C’s evidence that Mrs Hanch frequently insulted Individual H and referred to his professional performance as being useless. The panel found no reason why Witness H would seek to mislead the panel, nor any indication that she had misremembered the events in question.

Whilst giving oral evidence, Mrs Hanch appeared to become most distressed when discussing Individual H and his ambition to become headteacher of a combined primary school (ie combining Gearies Infant School, of which Individual H was headteacher, and Gearies Junior School, of which Mrs Hanch was headteacher). It was clear to the panel that Mrs Hanch felt that Individual H also had significant failings. This background added to the credibility of the allegation.

On the basis of all of the above, the panel finds this allegation proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- r. On an unknown date, during a review of CVs for a Newly Qualified Teacher position, she said to Witness C words to the effect of “if we have any more Muslims in here it’s going to start looking like Al Jazeera in here”;**

Mrs Hanch denied making such a statement.

The allegation was supported by the evidence of Witness C. As noted above, the panel had some reservations about aspects of Witness C’s evidence. However, Witness C’s evidence relating to this allegation related to specific facts and not to Witness C’s view of Mrs Hanch’s character or any alleged bullying of Witness C. This aspect of Witness C’s evidence was in the panel’s view credible. It was plausible, detailed and withstood examination.

As noted throughout this decision, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch to be a credible witness.

Having weighed the evidence of Witness C against that of Mrs Hanch, on the balance of probabilities the panel finds this allegation proven, including the allegation that Mrs Hanch did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- s. On an unknown date said to Witness C that staff member, Individual I, looked “like a Polish slapper”;**

Mrs Hanch denied making such a statement. She observed that the allegation implied that Mrs Hanch was racist, which she stated she was not.

The allegation was supported by the evidence of Witness C. Again, this aspect of Witness C’s evidence was in the panel’s view credible. It was plausible, detailed and withstood examination, notwithstanding concerns the panel had about other aspects of Witness C’s evidence.

Moreover, in relation to Mrs Hanch's denial that she is racist and therefore that she would never make such remarks, the panel notes that Witness H has given evidence that undermines Mrs Hanch's assertion, in addition to the evidence of Witness C.

As noted throughout this decision, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch to be a credible witness.

Having weighed the evidence of Witness C against that of Mrs Hanch, on the balance of probabilities the panel finds this allegation proven.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- a. On 19 January 2005, she threatened Witness A with "serious consequences" if she did not meet her expectations during "on the spot" observations;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation, indicating, as the panel understands it, that her comments to Witness A were not intimidating.

The evidence of Witness A was clear, as to the statements made and the effect upon her.

The panel notes that as at 19 January 2005, Witness A was an NQT, who had only known Mrs Hanch for around 15 days. In these circumstances, being given on the spot observations would in itself be intimidating to Witness A. Warning her of serious consequences if she did not meet expectations during these observations would be particularly intimidating.

On this basis, the panel finds this allegation proven.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- b. On 30 January 2008, she pointed her finger at Witness A and said, to her in an aggressive manner, that she was negative, not good enough and inadequate as a teacher;**

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation, asserted that she does not speak to staff like this and stated that in any event at the time in question Witness A was not performing poorly.

Witness A's detailed evidence supported this allegation. She stated that Mrs Hanch provided a list of things that Witness A was doing wrong, whilst pointing a finger aggressively five centimetres from Witness A's chest and saying that she was not good enough and was inadequate as a teacher. Witness A refuted any suggestion that Mrs Hanch was telling Witness A how she could improve; all of her comments were negative and were delivered aggressively.

As noted above, the panel found Witness A to be a credible witness. The evidence provided to the panel over the course of the hearing consistently showed, at the very least, that Mrs Hanch delivered her feedback in a direct manner that, on occasion, caused staff to feel intimidated. This consistency supported the credibility of Witness A's evidence on this particular event.

On these bases, the panel accepts the evidence of Witness A as providing an accurate version of events, is satisfied that Mrs Hanch's behaviour was intimidating, and is satisfied on the basis of this evidence that this allegation is proven.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

c. In or around 2011 she directed Witness D to place the job section of the Times Education Supplement on Witness C's desk every Friday;

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation, stating that the direction to Witness D was to place the whole of the TES on Witness C's desk, as Witness C needed to be aware of recent developments in education, given her prolonged absence on health grounds, from which she had recently returned. Mrs Hanch indicated that she was aware that other heads used this as a tactic to encourage staff to leave, but did not accept that she did so.

Witness D was adamant, in her evidence to the panel, that she had been asked to place only the job section of the TES on Witness C's desk. As noted above, the panel found Witness D to be a credible witness.

The panel heard that the School received only one copy of the TES. The panel did not find it plausible that Mrs Hanch directed the sole copy of the entire supplement to be placed in Witness C's office, thereby denying Mrs Hanch its benefit, as well as the rest of the staff, who had previously been able to review it in the School's staffroom.

Witness D's account in relation to this allegation also tied in with the allegation that the panel has already found proven, about Ms Hanch stating that Witness C's sick leave was a waste of school funds. The panel heard evidence that Witness C was on a phased return to work at the relevant time, which Mrs Hanch had found difficult to manage.

Having found Witness D to be a more credible witness than Mrs Hanch and finding Mrs Hanch's explanation to be implausible, the panel concludes on the balance of probabilities that the event happened as alleged, that this was bullying behaviour and this allegation has been proven.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- d. On 23 July 2010, without explanation, she locked Witness C in Anupe Hanch's office for a meeting with her from 4pm until 7pm;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation, stating that she never locked the door to her office.

As noted above, the panel exercised caution with aspects of the evidence of Witness C. Nonetheless, the panel found her evidence about this allegation to be credible, with plausible detail around the circumstances of the meeting to support her version of events. By way of example, Witness C recalled that the meeting was on the last day of term and that she was due to meet her parents for dinner, with the result that they were left waiting for her whilst the meeting took place.

Mrs Hanch's assertion that she never locked the door of her office contradicts the evidence of Witness B, in relation to allegation 5.d, undermining Mrs Hanch's credibility further and reinforcing that of Witness C in relation to this allegation.

Mrs Hanch's view of the length of the meeting also seemed to shift between her written statement and oral evidence, as she came to accept that the meeting was a long one, albeit certainly not continuing until 7pm.

Having weighed up all of the evidence before it, the panel determines that Mrs Hanch's behaviour was intimidating and/or bullying and that this allegation has been proven.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- g. On an unknown date, when at the School at the weekend, she directed Witness I to do Anupe Hanch's washing using the School's washing machine;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation and relies upon a statement of Individual P regarding the plausibility of the allegation.

The panel did not find the statement of Individual P to be of significant assistance, as he was unable to comment directly upon the event in question.

The evidence of Witness I, which did go directly to the allegation, was clear, that Mrs Hanch had directed her to do the washing as alleged. Witness I was able to provide further detail regarding the run-up to this event and her account withstood cross-examination.

On the basis of the evidence of Witness I, the panel finds that Mrs Hanch's behaviour was demeaning and that this this allegation is proven.

3. She did not give legitimate or fair criticism of colleagues' performance or behaviour at work in that:

- d. In or around February 2011, she told Witness B that Witness C had bullied a staff member at her previous school and had caused the staff member to have a miscarriage;**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation, but accepts that she had been told by the headteacher of a school that had previously employed Witness C that Witness C had bullied a staff member to the extent that there had been a miscarriage that some staff attributed to Witness C's actions. Mrs Hanch also accepted that she discussed this with Witness B, whom Mrs Hanch regarded as a confidante.

The written and oral evidence of Witness B supported the allegation. Moreover, the panel was shown an email from Mrs Hanch to her union representative, dated 11 March 2011, in which Mrs Hanch stated "I checked [Witness C's] references and telephoned her previous heads. All 3 colleagues said that she had in fact bullied staff at their school – one GTP had a miscarriage because of her bullying [sic] ..." In the panel's view this undermined Mrs Hanch's position, as stated to the panel, that Mrs Hanch was informed about and was discussing with Witness B the fact that this was rumoured but was not true. The panel considered that the email instead supported Witness B's version of events, as reflected in the allegation, that Mrs Hanch was reporting Witness C's conduct and the consequences as fact.

In light of the evidence, the panel finds that that Mrs Hanch's behaviour was bullying and finds this allegation proven.

4. She unfairly and without good reason withheld references, and forms for colleagues in that:

- a. From July 2005 to July 2006, she withheld forms from Redbridge Borough which she was supposed to fill in for Witness A and Individual L; to confirm that they had completed their teacher training;**

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation. She stated that she was unaware that the teachers in question had not received their certificates. She also stated that because they had not been sought earlier, before her time at the School, they were received late, but would have been received even later had Mrs Hanch not intervened.

The panel notes that Ms Hanch was in post from 4 January 2005, well before the teachers in question completed their NQT year and the necessary forms were to be provided to Redbridge Borough. Moreover, whilst Individual Q retained responsibility for NQTs until Easter 2005, Mrs Hanch took over that responsibility completely thereafter.

The panel is not therefore persuaded that, as Mrs Hanch asserted, responsibility for this failing lay with Individual Q.

Moreover, the panel heard evidence from Witness A that the teachers in question informed Ms Hanch in September 2005 that Redbridge Borough had not received the necessary forms. In these circumstances, there was no good reason for Mrs Hanch to continue any assumption that the relevant forms had been provided to Redbridge Borough. The forms, or at least copies thereof that could have been (and eventually were) submitted to Redbridge Borough, were in fact in the possession of Mrs Hanch. Given that some or all of the forms were provided to Mrs Hanch after her arrival at the School, the panel was not persuaded by the explanation given by Mrs Hanch that they were in disorganised filing left by the previous acting headteacher. The panel finds that the forms were withheld during the alleged period unfairly and without good reason and finds this allegation proven.

5. She instructed her colleagues to make false statements on the following occasions:

b. In 2010, she directed Witness I to write a false statement about Witness C having shouted at Anupe Hanch;

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation. She stated that she asked Witness I to write down what happened but that she did not direct Witness I what to write.

Witness I's evidence supported the allegation. Moreover, she asserted that the letter exhibited by Mrs Hanch, purporting to be written by Witness I, was not in fact written by Witness I, save that Witness I recognised the signature as her own.

The panel accepted the oral evidence of Witness I that she told Mrs Hanch that she had not heard Witness C shouting at Mrs Hanch, before being asked to write a statement. The panel was satisfied therefore that Mrs Hanch knew that Witness I would not be able to write a true statement which asserted that Witness C had shouted at Mrs Hanch. On this basis, the panel did not find it likely that Mrs Hanch would have simply asked Witness I to write a statement – it would not support Mrs Hanch's version of events, nor would it have had much value in ascertaining the truth of the matter if Mrs Hanch believed that Witness C had shouted, but Witness I had not been there to witness it.

Witness I was clear in oral evidence that Mrs Hanch directed her to write that Witness C had shouted at Mrs Hanch.

On balance, the panel found Witness I to be more credible than Mrs Hanch in relation to this allegation. The panel finds this allegation proven.

5. She instructed her colleagues to make false statements on the following occasions:

- d. In January 2011 she called Witness B into Anupe Hanch's office and locked the room, stating that she wanted her to amend the original minutes of a meeting between Witness C and Anupe Hanch to make a false record of Witness C having agreed to leave the School in February or Easter 2011.**

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation. She accepts that there was a conversation in which she asked Witness B to amend minutes, but asserts that this was to ensure that they accurately reflected what had been said in that meeting.

Both Witness B and Witness C gave evidence that Witness C had not said at the meeting that she agreed to leave the School in February or Easter 2011.

In light of the evidence of both Witness B and Witness C, the panel finds that Witness C did not agree to leave the School in February or Easter 2011. Moreover, the panel finds Mrs Hanch's assertion, that she believed that Witness C had agreed this, to be implausible. From the evidence of all those present at the meeting, this would have been an extremely important aspect of the meeting, that one would have expected to have been discussed and commented upon, rather than passing unheard by Witness B and not remembered by Witness C.

It has been observed that the original of the minutes has not been provided by Witness C. However, the panel notes that the crux of the disagreement between Mrs Hanch on the one hand and Witness B and Witness C on the other is what was actually said in the meeting, rather than what amendments were made to the document. Mrs Hanch accepts that she sought amendments, but relies on those amendments providing in her view a more accurate reflection of what was said.

Having considered all of the evidence, the panel finds this allegation proven.

6. In July 2011, she interrupted a meeting between teachers Witness A, Individual N and Individual O and referred to Pupil E as "a devil";

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation.

The allegation is supported by the evidence of Witness A.

As noted above, the panel found Witness A to be a credible witness.

The panel has not received any evidence from Individual N or Individual O.

The panel has therefore had to weigh the evidence of Witness A against that of Mrs Hanch, taking into consideration the lack of evidence from other sources. Given the concerns that the panel has about the credibility of Mrs Hanch's evidence to the panel,

the panel is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities that the facts of the allegation are true. The panel finds this allegation proven.

8. In 2011, she directed Teacher, Witness F not "to be nice" to Pupil D;

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation.

The panel received written and oral evidence from Witness F, in which Witness F made clear that Mrs Hanch had told her not to be nice to Pupil D.

The panel found Witness F to be a credible witness, who was open about those details she could not remember and clear on those details that she could remember. Witness F's account of the event was sustained under cross-examination.

By contrast, the panel did not find Mrs Hanch's oral evidence on this point to be particularly persuasive. In particular, the panel felt that under cross-examination Mrs Hanch failed to address directly the questions put to her about the alleged event.

The panel is satisfied, on the basis of the evidence before it, that this allegation has been proven.

9. On 8 July 2011, she read the statements, referred to at paragraph 7 above, to Pupil D stating that she was not liked by her classmates, "was trouble" and was not wanted at the School, before excluding Pupil D from the School;

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation. She accepted that the statements were discussed but stated that she did not use them to vilify Pupil D. Mrs Hanch noted that there had been two investigations of these matters by governors at the School, each of which cleared Mrs Hanch of failing to treat children with dignity and respect.

The allegation was supported by evidence from Witness B, who was present during the meeting in question. The panel found Witness B's evidence regarding this event to be particularly credible. Whilst giving oral evidence, it was clear to the panel that Witness B had been particularly upset about the treatment of Pupil D and was persuaded that her motivations in reporting the matter related to the welfare of Pupil D, rather than any desire to harm Mrs Hanch. The panel noted that Witness B called the child protection officer at the time, such were her concerns about the event.

Mrs Hanch accepts that Pupil D was excluded, albeit she indicated that the exclusion was for one day. Mrs Hanch indicated that she did not recall that Pupil D did not return to the School thereafter, indicating that she had not checked attendance records. Given the importance of this event and the fact that the incident had been investigated twice by governors, this did not seem to the panel to be a plausible position.

Having weighed the evidence available in relation to this allegation, the panel believes that the evidence of Witness B accurately reflects what took place and finds this allegation proven.

10. On 8 July 2011, she said to Pupil E that she was lying about an incident involving another pupil, and alleged that her sister was a known "thief" and "a liar";

Mrs Hanch denies this allegation. She asserts that no reference was made to the family of Pupil E and that there was no need to say that Pupil E was lying, as she was telling the truth.

Witness B's written and oral evidence supported this allegation.

As indicated above, the panel found Witness B to be a credible witness. In relation to this allegation, her written and oral evidence provided to the panel was consistent with the information she provided in her statement to Capita in September 2012 and the information she provided in evidence to the disciplinary hearing relating to Mrs Hanch, which took place in December 2012.

Taking into consideration both the evidence of Witness B and that of Mrs Hanch, the panel is satisfied that this allegation has been proved.

11. She did not treat pupils and their parents with dignity and respect in that:

d. In 2010, during a conversation with Witness B, she referred to Mother B and Mother A as "bitches";

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation.

The allegation was supported by the written and oral evidence of Witness B.

Witness B's recollection of the event was clear and she was able to provide further detail about the conversation in question and the reason for the comment, both in her written statement and when questioned on the events. The panel also noted that there was reason for there to be disagreements between the parents in question and Mrs Hanch, as Mother A was a parent of Pupil D and Pupil E (referred to in other allegations) and Mother B had been involved in a payment dispute with Mrs Hanch. The panel was satisfied that this dispute took place, notwithstanding that the allegation relating to that dispute was not pursued by the National College.

On the basis of the above, the panel finds this allegation proven.

11. She did not treat pupils and their parents with dignity and respect in that:

h. On 3 July 2012, she shouted at a SEN, Pupil J, using words to the effect of; "do you want to become/people to think that you are a paedophile?"; "do you want to become/people to think that you are a pervert?"; "do you like touching woman's breasts?"; and "do you like touching women's private parts?";

Mrs Hanch denied this allegation. She asserted that there was no such meeting on 3 July 2012, about which she could be certain because she was involved in Packtype training throughout the day. Mrs Hanch indicated that the meeting in question took place on 12 July 2012, minutes of which she provided to the panel. Mrs Hanch indicated that the parent of Pupil J was present at the meeting in question. Mrs Hanch did accept that she used the words “paedophile” and “pervert” during the meeting, but denied making any reference to “breasts” or “private parts”.

Witness F’s written and oral evidence was that there was a morning break in the Packtype training (which both Witness F and Mrs Hanch attended), during which Ms Witness F went to the toilets, passing Mrs Hanch’s office. Witness F gave evidence that whilst passing Mrs Hanch’s office, and continuing on to the toilets, she heard Mrs Hanch shout very loudly at Pupil J saying, “Do you want people to think that you are a paedophile? Do you want people to think that you are a pervert?” Witness F confirmed in oral evidence that this event took place on 3 July 2012. Witness F indicated that the door to Mrs Hanch’s office was open at the time; that Witness F looked into the office and that she saw only Mrs Hanch, Pupil J and Individual G in Mrs Hanch’s office at the time (ie the parent of Pupil J was not present). Witness F’s written and oral evidence to the panel was consistent with the information she provided to Capita on 17 September 2012.

Witness H provided evidence which corroborated that the meeting in question took place on 3 July 2012, because she recalled staff discussing the event on that day, being the day after a school trip to which the discussion with Pupil J related, and being the day on which Packtype training was being delivered. The panel notes however that Witness J, who was at the Packtype training, was not aware of such a discussion in the staffroom.

The panel notes that the whistleblowing report dated 9 July 2012 detailed the incident in question and referred to it taking place on 3 July 2012. The timing and detail of this report undermines the credibility of Mrs Hanch’s position that the only meeting took place in the presence of the parent of Pupil J, on 12 July 2012, three days after the date of the whistleblowing report.

On the basis of the evidence described above, the panel determines that the events took place on 3 July 2012, were as alleged, and finds this allegation to be proven.

13. After her suspension in July 2012, she retained at her home documents belonging to the School, namely the personnel file for Witness C;

Formally, Mrs Hanch denied this allegation, although her position throughout has been that she did take home the personnel file for Witness C on 29 August 2012 and retain it, after Mrs Hanch’s suspension, returning the documents the following term.

Mrs Hanch asserted that she did so with the permission of Individual R, director of education of the Borough of Redbridge.

On the basis of Mrs Hanch's own evidence and the fact that Mrs Hanch further admitted to the panel that she retained copies of some such documents for use in her disciplinary proceedings, the panel finds this allegation proven.

14. Her conduct at paragraph 5 above was dishonest.

The panel went on to consider whether Mrs Hanch's conduct in relation to allegations 5.b and 5.d was dishonest.

In relation to allegation 5.b, the panel first considered whether, when directing Witness I to write a false statement about Witness C having shouted at Anupe Hanch, Mrs Hanch was acting dishonestly by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest teachers.

As explained in relation to allegation 5.b, the panel has found that Mrs Hanch knew Witness I did not believe that Witness C had shouted at Anupe Hanch. The panel considered whether Mrs Hanch could have forgotten that Witness I had said that she had not heard Witness C, or that Mrs Hanch could have been mistaken about this. However, given the apparent importance of this question to Mrs Hanch (as shown by her desire to obtain a written statement from Witness I) and the fact that the request for a statement was only a week or so after Witness I had said that she had not heard Witness C shouting, the panel did not consider these to be plausible scenarios. The panel was satisfied, on the basis of Witness I's evidence, that Mrs Hanch knew, when directing Witness I to write a statement about Witness C shouting at Mrs Hanch, that Witness I could not honestly give such a statement.

On this basis, the panel was satisfied that by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest teachers, Mrs Hanch's conduct was dishonest.

The panel therefore went on to consider whether Mrs Hanch herself must have known that what she did was by those standards dishonest. The panel considers that Mrs Hanch must have known that it was dishonest, by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest teachers, to direct Witness I to write a statement that Mrs Hanch knew Witness I could not give with an honest belief in its truth.

In relation to allegation 5.d, the panel first considered whether, when stating that she wanted Witness B to amend minutes to record Witness C having agreed to leave the School in February or Easter 2011, Mrs Hanch was acting dishonestly by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest teachers.

Further to its findings in relation to allegation 5.d, the panel has found that Mrs Hanch did not believe that Witness C agreed to leave the School in February or Easter 2011. It was not plausible, in the panel's view, that Mrs Hanch could have mistakenly believed at the time, or subsequently recalled, that Witness C did agree to this, given the importance that such an agreement would have had. The panel heard from Witness B that, when asking her to amend the minutes, Mrs Hanch had asserted to her that Witness C had whispered the agreement. The panel found this particularly implausible given firstly the importance

of this matter and secondly Witness C's denial, in her evidence to the panel. The panel concluded that when asking Witness B to amend the minutes Mrs Hanch knew that Witness C had not made such an agreement and that the amendment would be false.

On this basis, the panel was satisfied that by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest teachers, Mrs Hanch's conduct was dishonest.

The panel therefore went on to consider whether Mrs Hanch herself must have known that what she did was by those standards dishonest. The panel considers that Mrs Hanch must have known that it was dishonest, by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest teachers, to direct Witness B to amend the minutes of a meeting, to include a record that she knew to be false.

On the above bases, the panel finds this allegation proven.

The panel has found the following particulars of the allegations against Mrs Anupe Hanch not proven, for these reasons:

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- b. On 14 November 2007 she said to Individual A, that she did not like the fact that she covered her face, referring to her headscarf; that she should wear more make-up; and that she should take clothing advice from other staff members;**

The panel was satisfied that a conversation did take place relating to Individual A's clothing, but Mrs Hanch offered good reasons why such conversations took place and in the absence of evidence from Individual A concerning the explanations given by Mrs Hanch, the panel found this allegation not proven.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- m. In May 2011, she said to Witness F and Individual E in relation to instructor, Individual F, words to the effect of "but what will it look like if he is outside the mosque handing out leaflets";**

Mrs Hanch was able to give a plausible explanation of the true nature of this discussion. The evidence before the panel was that Individual E and Witness J were both present during this discussion, in addition to Witness F. Witness J attended the hearing and yet did not give evidence about the contents of this discussion, nor did Individual E provide any evidence to the panel. Given that such witnesses could have been expected to clarify any points of difference between Witness F and Mrs Hanch and that they had not done so, the panel was not satisfied that the National College had discharged its burden of proof in relation to this allegation.

1. Did not treat colleagues with dignity and respect in that:

- n. On 10 November 2011, she instructed the office staff not to make a cup of tea for Witness C and her union representative when they arrived for a meeting;**

Mrs Hanch indicated that she instructed office staff not to make tea for Witness C and her representative, on the basis that the meeting was expected to be short. The evidence as to which meeting this related to was inconsistent, with the result that the panel cannot be satisfied as to whether Mrs Hanch knew that this meeting would be a long meeting and so whether her conduct can be seen as a failure to treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- e. In June 2011, she stood in front of Individual J, with her hands on her hips, shouting at him to look for a document;**

The evidence of Individual J provided to the panel makes no reference to this event. On this basis, the panel finds this allegation not proven.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- f. In November 2011, she shouted at Witness A, calling her “complacent”, saying that her voice had “no impact” on Anupe Hanch;**

The evidence to the panel indicated that Individual O (the Reading Subject Leader), Witness J and Individual G were all present during this event. Despite this, no evidence was provided to the panel from any of these witnesses. In the absence of such evidence, notwithstanding the evidence of Witness A, the panel was not satisfied that the National College had discharged its burden of proof.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- h. In January 2012, during a meeting, she threatened Witness I with dismissal as a consequence of her having taken sick leave;**

Mrs Hanch indicated that she did not threaten Witness I with dismissal; she merely brought Redbridge’s sickness policy to the attention of Witness I. Given that Witness I had had a significant time off work, due to ill-health, this seemed to the panel to be a plausible explanation. The panel was also concerned that, although Witness J was said to have been present at the time he did not provide any evidence about the event in

question. In these circumstances the panel was not satisfied that the National College had discharged its burden of proof.

2. Engaged in intimidating, and/or demeaning and/or bullying behaviour towards colleagues in that:

- k. On 13 March 2012, she threatened Witness G with a negative reference if he handed in his notice;**

The evidence about the precise nature of Mrs Hanch's comments was insufficiently clear for the panel to be able to conclude that the allegation was proven. In particular, the evidence before the panel was that Witness G wished to leave the School without completing his NQT year and on this basis it was feasible that Witness G's reference would be inherently negative in this one regard. It was unclear to the panel whether Mrs Hanch's comments went beyond highlighting this risk to Witness G.

3. She did not give legitimate or fair criticism of colleagues' performance or behaviour at work in that:

- a. In or around late Autumn 2009, she telephoned the head teacher at Essex Primary School and told them that Individual A was a "trouble causer";**

This allegation concerned a conversation between Mrs Hanch and the headteacher at Essex Primary School. As Mrs Hanch denied the allegation and the panel did not have any evidence from the headteacher at Essex Primary School, the panel determined that the National College had not discharged its burden of proof.

3. She did not give legitimate or fair criticism of colleagues' performance or behaviour at work in that:

- b. In or around late Autumn 2009, she telephoned the Head Teacher for Cleves Primary School in Newham to report that Individual K was a "trouble causer" and that he had a lot of sickness absence;**

Similarly, this allegation concerned a conversation between Mrs Hanch and the headteacher at Cleves Primary School. In addition, Individual S was said to have been present during this conversation. As Mrs Hanch denied the allegation and the panel did not have any evidence from the headteacher at Cleves Primary School or Individual S, the panel determined that the National College had not discharged its burden of proof.

3. She did not give legitimate or fair criticism of colleagues' performance or behaviour at work in that:

- e. She did not give sufficient notice to Witness D in order to prepare for her performance review meeting on 19 March 2012 and then criticised her for being underprepared;**

There was ambiguity in the evidence before the panel as to whether Mrs Hanch asked that it be noted in the minutes of the meeting that Witness D had not been given the chance to prepare properly (ie noting that this should be taken in Witness D's favour); or that Witness D should have been, but was not, prepared (ie criticising Witness D). In these circumstances, the panel found this allegation not proven.

4. She unfairly and without good reason withheld references, and forms for colleagues in that:

- e. In May, June and July 2012, she withheld a reference for Individual M;**

In oral evidence, Witness H contradicted her written statement, indicating that the reference had been withheld for three weeks; not three months. Moreover the panel was not supplied with any corroborating evidence from Individual M or the recipient of the reference. In these circumstances the panel found this allegation to be not proven.

5. She instructed her colleagues to make false statements on the following occasions:

- c. In 2011, she directed Witness I to spread a false rumour amongst staff to say that Witness C was "a bully";**

The panel was asked to weigh the testimony of Witness I against that of Mrs Hanch. In this instance, the panel felt that the allegation lacked credibility, in that Mrs Hanch was unlikely to see Witness I as someone she could use to spread rumours, not least given the allegation that the panel found proven regarding Mrs Hanch directing Witness I to do the washing of Mrs Hanch. In these circumstances, on the balance of probabilities, the panel found this allegation not proven.

7. In 2011, she directed the pupils in Pupil D's class to write statements in relation to Pupil D to state that Pupil D was not wanted in the School;

The panel did not have the benefit of the statements in question, nor any evidence from the pupils themselves. It seemed unlikely to the panel that Mrs Hanch would ask the pupils to write particular statements about Pupil D, not least because identical statements from an entire class would be so obviously implausible as true records of events. In the absence of more direct evidence, the panel found this allegation unproven.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct

Having found a number of the allegations to have been proven, the panel has gone on to consider whether the facts of those proven allegations amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In doing so, the panel has had regard to the definitions in the *Teacher Misconduct – The Prohibition of Teachers* advice, which we refer to as the ‘guidance’.

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Hanch in relation to the facts found proven, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considers that by reference to Part Two, Mrs Hanch is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position;
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
 - not undermining ... tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

In particular, in relation to the statutory frameworks that set out teachers’ professional duties and responsibilities at the relevant time, the panel considered that Mrs Hanch’s conduct acted contrary to:

a. the provisions of the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers that took effect on 1 November 2004, in that she:

- seriously demeaned or undermined colleagues.

b. the following principles of conduct and practice set out in the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers that took effect on 1 October 2009:

- put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first;
- demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality;
- work as part of a whole-school team;
- co-operate with other professional colleagues; and
- demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

The panel has also considered whether Mrs Hanch's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on page 8 and 9 of the guidance and has found none of them to be relevant.

The panel has gone on to consider whether Mrs Hanch's conduct, as found proven, amounts to misconduct of a serious nature, falling significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher.

The panel finds that Mrs Hanch's conduct does amount to unacceptable professional conduct, by reference to this definition. In coming to this conclusion the panel had particular regard to the fact that it had found that Mrs Hanch had acted dishonestly; that her conduct continued over a period of seven years; involved NQTs, teaching staff, senior leaders, non-teaching staff at all levels, pupils and parents; that some of her actions could have had a long term detrimental effect on those involved, including teachers and pupils; and that she showed a concerning attitude to race and belief.

The panel is satisfied that Mrs Anupe Hanch is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct, it is necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel has to consider whether it is an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it is in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

The panel has considered the particular public interest considerations set out in the guidance and having done so has found each of them to be relevant in this case, namely the protection of pupils and other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

The panel's findings against Mrs Hanch included (in summary):

- referring to a pupil as a devil;
- directing a teacher not to be nice to a pupil;
- telling a pupil that she was not liked by her classmates;
- alleging to a pupil that her sister was a known thief and liar;
- referring to parents of pupils as bitches; and

- saying to a pupil with special educational needs words to the effect of “do you want to become/people to think that you are a paedophile”.

In light of these findings, there is a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils and other members of the public, ie their parents.

The panel also considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Hanch, which as well as the above included bullying, dishonesty and concerning attitudes to race and religion, were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

Similarly, the panel considered that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mrs Hanch was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

As well as the specific public interest criteria in the guidance, the panel took into consideration, as part of its consideration of the public interest, the public interest in the retention in the profession of headteachers who oversee significant improvements in outcomes achieved at their school.

Notwithstanding the clear public interest considerations that were present in respect of a prohibition order, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order taking into account the effect that this would have on Mrs Hanch.

In carrying out the balancing exercise the panel has considered the public interest considerations both in favour of and against prohibition as well as the interests of Mrs Hanch. The panel took further account of the guidance, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proven. The panel has found the following to be present in this case:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers’ Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving vulnerable pupils) or violation of the rights of pupils;
- dishonesty especially where there have been serious consequences, and/or it has been repeated and/or covered up; and
- sustained or serious bullying, or other deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues.

Even though there were behaviours that would point to a prohibition order being appropriate, the panel went on to consider whether or not there were sufficient mitigating factors to militate against a prohibition order being an appropriate and proportionate measure to impose, particularly taking into account the nature and severity of the behaviour in this case.

There was no evidence before the panel that Mrs Hanch's actions were not deliberate.

The panel accepted that Mrs Hanch was under a very significant amount of pressure in her role, caused by the need, that she rightly perceived, to improve external outcomes for the School. However, this is not an uncommon situation for a head teacher and the panel had no evidence of a third party placing Mrs Hanch under duress to behave in the manner that the panel has found proven.

The panel did however treat Mrs Hanch as being of previous good history – although the conduct examined by the panel continued over a number of years, the panel had no evidence of any concerns, misconduct or disciplinary proceedings arising prior to Mrs Hanch becoming headteacher at the School.

Mrs Hanch demonstrated to the panel only extremely limited insight into her conduct, and no remorse. The panel was told that her behaviour was driven by a desire to improve externally assessed outcomes at the School. Whilst the panel recognised that these outcomes did improve, the manner in which she approached this task was fundamentally incompatible with her responsibilities to staff, parents and pupils.

The panel reviewed written evidence from Individual T, a fellow councillor of Lambourne Parish Council, who wrote of Mrs Hanch's excellent character; from Individual U, site manager of the School, who wrote of Mrs Hanch's professional manner and how she always put the care and development of staff and children first; and from Individual V, a school residential trip volunteer who described Mrs Hanch's character as exemplary.

The panel also reviewed written evidence from Individual W, Head of Primary School Improvement at Islington School Improvement Service, which has employed Mrs Hanch since January 2014 as a teaching and learning consultant. Individual W wrote of Mrs Hanch: "At all times she has enhanced the service, its qualities and outcomes of the Islington Community of Schools ... [Mrs Hanch's] skills have brought about a significant improvement to schools, particularly in relation to the school teaching and learning profiles. Her coaching of teachers is exemplary. All feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive."

In addition to the written evidence, the panel heard oral evidence from Witness J, at relevant times deputy headteacher at the School, who spoke of Mrs Hanch's outstanding contribution to the School; and Witness K, headteacher at Laycock Primary School, who has experienced Mrs Hanch's work in her role as a teaching and learning consultant for

the London Borough of Islington, and who spoke of Mrs Hanch's professionalism and the high value of her input.

Notwithstanding the character references provided to the panel and the evidence of the value of Mrs Hanch's current work, the panel is of the view that prohibition is both proportionate and appropriate. The panel has decided that the public interest considerations outweigh the interests of Mrs Hanch. The following were significant factors in forming that opinion:

- the fact that Mrs Hanch acted dishonestly on more than one occasion, with the potential for serious professional harm to Witness C;
- the fact that her conduct continued over a period of seven years;
- the fact that her conduct involved bullying, demeaning and intimidating behaviour;
- the fact that her conduct involved NQTs, teaching staff, senior leaders, non-teaching staff at all levels, pupils and parents; and
- the demonstration of intolerant attitudes, including to race and belief.

Accordingly, the panel makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered. The panel were mindful that the guidance advises that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances in any given case that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than two years.

The guidance indicates that there are behaviours that, if proven, would militate against a review period being recommended. These behaviours include:

- intolerance and/or hatred on the grounds of race/religion or sexual orientation;
and
- fraud or serious dishonesty.

The panel has found that Mrs Hanch displayed intolerance on the grounds of race and/or religion.

The panel has also found dishonesty, which the panel considers to amount to serious dishonesty, given the potential harm to the career of Witness C which could have flowed therefrom.

Many of the matters that the panel has found proven were considered by Capita, in an investigation and report, which was published in October 2012. Mrs Hanch has had a very significant period of time to reflect on her conduct, which stretched back to 2005,

and then a further opportunity to reflect on the findings of the Capita report. Notwithstanding these opportunities and the overwhelming weight of evidence against her, Mrs Hanch continues to deny that many of these events took place and to deny responsibility for most of her actions.

Mrs Hanch has professed to have developed a degree of self-reflection and insight. The panel found this to be of a very limited nature.

Mrs Hanch has shown extremely limited insight and no remorse, despite having had up to ten years to reflect on her behaviour to date and over two years since this behaviour was highlighted in the Capita report. This indicates to the panel that the attitudes which gave rise to the conduct in question are deep-seated and that Mrs Hanch is simply incapable of recognising and altering them.

The panel felt the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and as such decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to the findings and recommendations of the panel in this case. They have found a number of the allegations to be proven and judged that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In summary Mrs Hanch's behaviour and actions have included bullying, demeaning and intimidating behaviour, demonstration of intolerant attitudes including to race and belief and acting dishonestly on more than one occasion, with the potential for serious professional harm.

Furthermore her conduct involved NQTs, teaching staff, senior leaders, non-teaching staff at all levels, pupils and parents and continued over a period of 7 years.

The panel has considered the particular public interest considerations set out in the guidance and having done so has found each of them to be relevant in this case, namely the protection of pupils and other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct. They have considered Mrs Hanch's actions to be deliberate and whilst she was under pressure to improve performance at the school there is no evidence that she acted under duress.

The panel have taken account of positive evidence relating to Mrs Hanch's previously good record and professionalism.

I agree with the panel's recommendation that prohibition is an appropriate and proportionate sanction.

Despite the time that has elapsed since the events, Mrs Hanch has shown no remorse and very little insight. I agree with the recommendation that the order should be without the opportunity to apply to have it set aside.

This means that Mrs Anupe Hanch is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against her, I have decided that Mrs Anupe Hanch shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of her eligibility to teach.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Mrs Anupe Hanch has a right of appeal to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.

NAME OF DECISION MAKER: Paul Heathcote

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Heathcote', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Date: 4 June 2015

This decision is taken by the decision maker named above on behalf of the Secretary of State.