

'Salman Abedi was just an unpleasant and idle lout' – expert says Arena bomber's conduct in education can't be linked to 'radicalised' behaviour

From [The Manchester Evening News](#). At least they are not saying he was a 'lovely boy, who bought his mother flowers and that' this time.

Suicide bomber Salman Abedi was a 'problematic student', but his conduct at school, college and university 'could not obviously be linked' to 'radicalised' extremism, an expert told the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

The inquiry has heard none of Abedi's teachers and tutors at the five educational institutions he attended between 2007 and 2017 had any concerns he was displaying behaviour which could indicate radicalisation. They said Abedi had been 'badly behaved' and 'rude' at times, and had committed theft and been violent, but nothing he did suggested he would go on to commit the atrocity in May 2017, which killed 22 and injured hundreds at the Arena.

Professor Lynn Davies, a published expert in extremism and education, [gave evidence on Wednesday](#) about the role of educational institutions in Abedi's radicalisation. Prof Davies said, in her overall conclusion, that none of the educational institutions Abedi attended were 'culpable either in failure to recognise signs of radicalisation or of a failure to de-radicalise Salman Abedi given the information available to them'. Neither, she said, should the two colleges

have been expected to know that he went to Libya before he enrolled.

“His behaviour was problematic in each institution, particularly at Burnage Academy, with incidents of extreme rudeness to staff, fighting, swearing, theft and hooliganism.”

Prof Davies said even when Abedi was an adult at college, he was exhibiting ‘disrespect to staff’. That disrespect, she said, was often directed at female members of staff.

Prof Davies said there were only two incidents over 10 years that ‘could, potentially be a flag of radicalisation’. Abedi assaulted a female pupil at The Manchester College in 2012.

And prior to that his tutor at Trafford College saw a photo of him on his mobile phone holding a gun, but he told her he was on holiday in Libya ‘shooting’ on ‘family land’ in Tripoli at the time, Prof Davies agreed the incidents were at two different institutions and ‘of themselves there wasn’t enough to suggest they should be considered further’.

“At this stage Salman Abedi was just an unpleasant and idle lout.

“His behaviour was appalling but it was by no means the worst. He was not an easy student – but there was nothing in those behaviours that was radicalised. It just seemed to be loutish behaviour.”

Prof Davies, who was asked by the inquiry to provide expert reports, said there was no failure on the part of the university to identify or prevent Abedi’s radicalisation. “The problem with Abedi was he was not there enough to show any signs,” she said.

Prof Davies said Abedi ‘basically left’ the university five months before the bombing.

She said it was still a ‘mystery’ to her why he turned up to

sit an exam in January, 2017 but left after an hour, the earliest time he was allowed to leave the exam, without answering a single question on the paper. The inquiry is told he was marked 0/74. *Maybe he needed an alibi. Or to prove he was still a 'student'.*

The inquiry is considering 'preventability' on the part of Abedi and the attack he launched, as well as assessing his radicalisation.

Evidence continues on Thursday.