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Sex abuse claims 'are plot by boys'

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THIRTEEN deaf boys accused a house parent at their school of sexual abuse because he used to bully and tease them about their smelly socks, it was alleged at the Old Bailey yesterday.

Graham Gilford, 30, who worked at Oak Lodge school for the deaf in Wandsworth, south London, denies assaulting 13 boys, aged between 10 and 15, over seven years. He faces 21 charges, mainly of indecent assault but including buggery and inciting a child to commit an act of gross

indecenty.

Michael Latham, for the defence, said the boys had conspired against Mr Gilford and accused him of assault because "they were fed up with Graham's teasing about their socks and bullying". In September 1989, a deputation of boys complained to the headmaster about Mr Gilford's behaviour.

The youngest boy, who alleged that Mr Gilford had abused him when he was 10, told the court by sign language, through an interpreter, that all the boys were embarrassed by Mr Gilford's teasing. "Graham would pull our socks off and wave them around. He would show them to the girls and say that they were smelly socks." He denied that the boys had plotted against Mr Gilford.

The trial continues on Monday.

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