

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies Records of Schools



Pupils at Beaconsfield school 1901
(Ref: PH/Beac/309)

A guide to the records of schools and pupils
for the County of Buckinghamshire.

Education in the nineteenth century and earlier

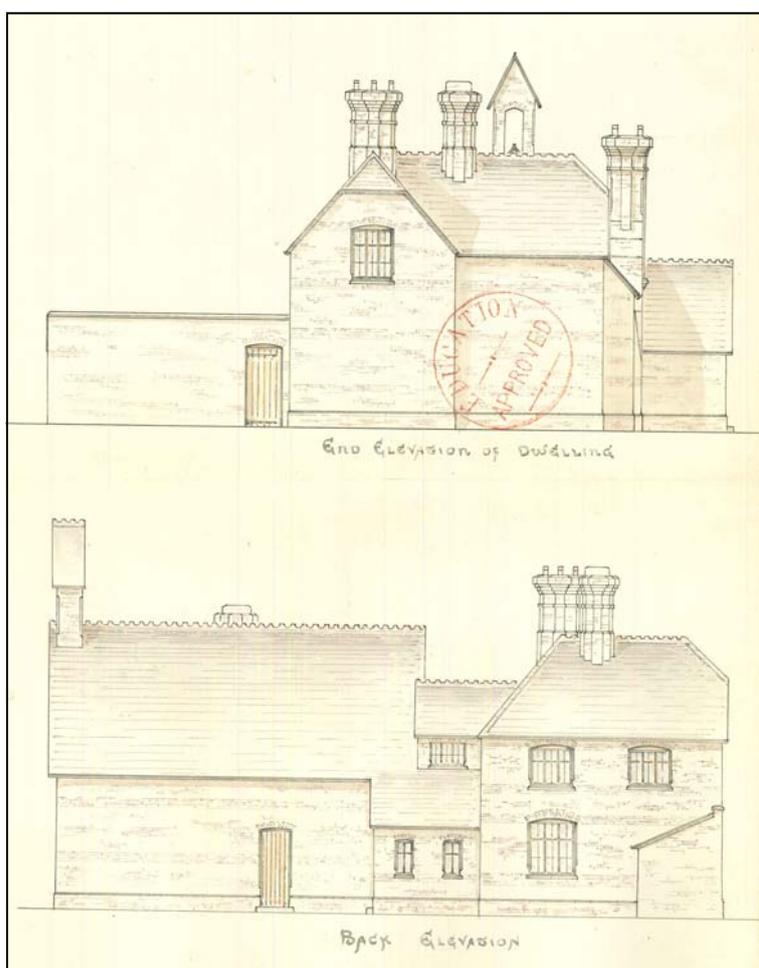
Until the late nineteenth century most of the population of Britain had little or no access to education. Only the wealthy could afford the fees of a public school or the expense of a private tutor. The few schools which provided education for the poorer members of society were established by voluntary effort, had varying standards and usually charged a small fee. Some had been set up by the charity of an individual in a specific area like the Aylesbury Grammar School and Royal Latin School in Buckingham.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries some villages had a school which only taught lace making or straw plaiting, these were popular as the children could learn a craft and earn wages. There were also "Dame" schools run by an individual for private profit. These schools provided a very basic standard of education, and usually did not exist for long.

National and British Schools

In the nineteenth century two societies supported schools for the poor throughout the country, "The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church" and "The British and Foreign School Society", which worked mainly with nonconformist schools.

The Societies gave grants to individual parishes to assist with the construction of the schools (at least part of the cost had to be found locally). They also set down what had to be taught and paid grants depending on the number of children being educated and their attainments. There is a letter from the vicar of Iver to his fiancé describing the annual school inspection and the tension as the children



Plan of proposed National School at Newport Pagnell, 1866 (Ref: AR 39/65/41)

were examined, with the knowledge that if they failed to answer correctly the school grant would be reduced. In some parishes there was an evening school so that boys (usually) working in the fields in the day could still continue education after work.

1870 Education Act

During the nineteenth century there was an increasing recognition that all the population needed to have at least a basic standard of education. As there were changes in voting rights from 1832 there was a feeling that those who now had the franchise must be educated so that they could use it responsibly. The 1870 Education Act was intended to achieve this. In every area where school provision was inadequate and voluntary bodies would not or could not fill the gap, a School Board was to be elected by the local ratepayers. The Board would levy a compulsory rate for the building and maintenance of an elementary school. The Education Department in London gave an annual grant for each school and set national standards of what was to be taught. Teachers had to be awarded a certificate, many being trained on the job in the pupil-teacher system.

		Year ended <i>31st December</i> 1880, (last day of Month).					
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		Boys (under) under Master	Girls (under) under Mistress	Infants	TOTAL Day School	Evening School	
						Males	Females
Claim on average Attendance, Art. 19 A and 22 (a)	1. General (4).....	4/ 75	4/ 59	4/ 81			
	2. Music (1)	4/ -	4/ -	4/ -			
	3. O. and D. (1).....	4/ -	4/ -	4/ -			
	Number for Payment at	4/ 75	4/ 59	4/ 81			4/
Deduct Infant Girls.....							
Infants, 4 to 7 years of age Art. 19 B 1	Presented			67			
	Number for Payment at	8/	8/	10/	67		
Examination in Standards Art. 19 B 2. and 22 (b)	Presented for Examination	59	58				
	Passes in Reading	48	52				
	" Writing	51	37				
	" Arithmetic	54	48				
	Total.....	153	137				
	Number for Payment at	3/ 149	3/ 126	4/			2/6
Classes - Article 19 C 1	Two subjects	4/ 75	59				
	One subject*	2/					
Article 19 C 6	Two subjects	2/					
	One subject*	1/					
Specific Subjects, Art. 21	Passes in <i>Literature</i>	0	8				
	Passes in <i>Physical Geography</i>	1	0				
	Passes in <i>Domestic Economy</i>						
	Passes in						
	Passes in						
	Total.....	1	8				
Number for Payment at		4/ 1	4/ 8	2/			

Grant paid by the Education Department to Linslade School Board, 1881 (Ref: E/133/X/14)

Establishment of elementary schools in each parish or group of parishes took time. Voluntary schools often bitterly resisted the creation of a School Board (particularly the Anglican schools since they saw it as a way for nonconformists to take control of education). Attendance could be hard to enforce as until the 1890's moderate fees could be charged, although Guardians of the Poor were able to assist some parents. Despite changes to child labour laws children could still earn money for their family by working, so many poorer parents would rather send them out to work than send them to school.

As provision and attendance improved, disputes arose over the scope of education to be offered. Board Schools were supposed only to provide "elementary" education, the classic three 'R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). However as time went on it was

clear that many children had the ability to learn more than just the basics. Many School Boards began to offer "secondary" education as well. Some Boards also provided "evening continuation classes" for older children and adults. This led to disputes as ratepayers could object that their money was being used for more than the Act gave the School Boards power to do, and hence they were paying more money than necessary.

1902 Education Act and subsequent developments

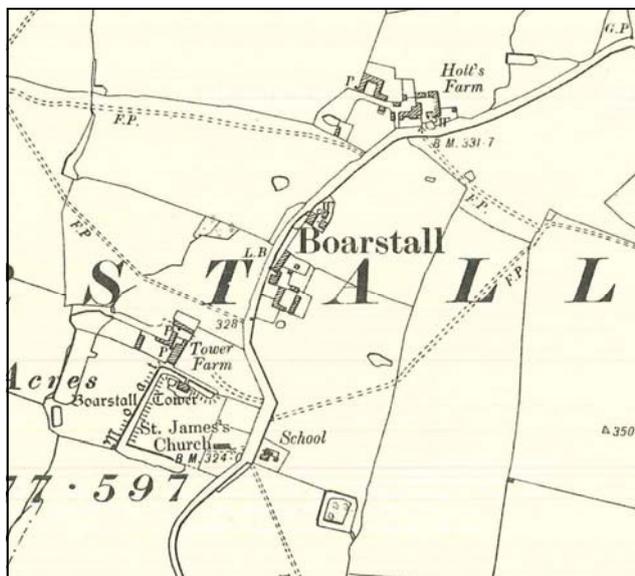
The 1902 Education Act was passed to clarify the situation. School Boards were abolished and Local Education Authorities [L.E.A.], usually part of the County Council, were established to provide both elementary and secondary education. Some urban districts and boroughs were responsible for elementary schools only, they were known as Part III Authorities and their functions frequently overlapped with the L.E.A. Voluntary schools maintained some independence but they now received financial aid, including teacher's wages, from their L.E.A. which also oversaw educational standards. In 1918 the school leaving age was fixed at 14 and in 1944 Part III Authorities were abolished, together with the fees which the new secondary schools had been permitted to charge.

Changes since then have included the raising of the school leaving age to 15, then 16 and (now) to 18 in England. More recent changes have involved giving schools more control over their own budgets and removing them partly or completely from the control of the L.E.A., as yet no records relating to this are held here. Interestingly this is returning to the situation as it was in 1902, when many voluntary schools despite nominal L.E.A. control, retained a good deal of autonomy.

Identifying the schools which existed

Very little is held at the Centre in relation to the public schools, many of which retain their own records. The following sources may be of some use:

- The Victoria County History contains information on some of the older public and endowed schools.
- Buckinghamshire Dissent and Parish Life 1669-1712 (B.R.S. Vol. 28) includes details of schools 1706-1712
- Few sources exist for lace, plait and dame schools which often did not last for many years. There is a list of known lace schools 1750-1858 in Box File 3 in Archives.
- A Parliamentary Committee made a survey of educational provision in England in the 1830's, an abstract of the returns for Bucks 1833 is found in Box File 3 in Archives.
- The "National Society" carried out an inquiry into church schools 1846-1847, and there is a photocopy in Archives.
- Kellys Directories (available in Archives and Local Studies) covering the years 1823-1939, usually give details of the schools in each parish, often with the date of foundation, name of headteacher and pupil numbers, with any significant expansions.
- A list of schools opened, closed and merged 1945-1965 is available, please ask staff for details.
- Ordnance Survey maps (from 1880) show the location of schools, sometimes with an indication of their type (see above for Boarstall Village in 1900).



Records of individual schools

The amount of material from each school varies considerably. Records are listed in the education catalogues in Archives, and it is also worth asking staff about records which might have been deposited but are not yet catalogued. Most of the records held are from elementary schools. Some records do not appear to have survived or some schools have retained their own records.

Records of Aylesbury Grammar School (Refs: CH 3, D 231, D 280), Buckingham Royal Latin School (Ref: CH 4) and Wycombe Grammar School (Ref: CH 1) are held in Archives. However these mostly relate to the administration of the school rather than details of individual pupils or staff.

Admission Registers

These supply information on individual pupils. Details include name, age, address, previous school if any, and where the pupil went on leaving. As they contain personal data they are generally subject to a closure period of 75 years

Registers of attendance are also sometimes held, these generally only give a list of names in each class.

Christian and Surname in full.	Date of Admission.			Date of Birth.			PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S Name and Residence.	Remarks.	Whether claiming exemption from Religious Instruction.	Last School attended before entering this School.
	Day	Mo.	Year.	Day	Mo.	Year.				
Layell, Caroline	11	10	80	20	10	80	Mentmore	Left for Service		
Layell, Samuel	3	4	81	27	4	81	"	" work		
Aspell, George	9	4	81	9	4	81	Mentmore	Boarding School.		
Duncan, Isabella	26	4	83	26	4	83	"	Come to Surrey		
Collins, William	14	2	84	14	2	84	Crafton	Long School		
Collins, Annie	29	8	85	29	8	85	"	Wife. Cook. Keeper.		
Collins, Joseph	15	8	80	15	8	80	"	Come to Long Sch.		
Collins, Alfred	7	8	83	7	8	83	"	"		
Bonest, James	18	12	85	18	12	85	Mentmore	Farm work.		
Harndell, Charles	13	8	80	13	8	80	"	Work Coachman.	Cheddington	
Harndell, Fred.	8	3	83	8	3	83	"	Expelled for striking the Governess.	"	
Harndell, Mary	26	9	87	26	9	87	"	Left for Service	"	
Harndell, Martha	7	6	85	7	6	85	"	Left Mentmore	"	
Kimbell, Matilda	12	5	83	12	5	83	"	"	"	
Clarke, Ernest	3	8	83	3	8	83	Bridgefield - Ledburn	Pen to Sandridge		
Keat, George	6	4	86	6	4	86	"	Come to work.		
Keat, Florence Emma	28	12	84	28	12	84	"	"		
Duncan, Hannah	22	5	85	22	5	85	Mentmore	Come to Surrey.		
Reke, Catherine Ada	7	8	84	7	8	84	Ledburn	"		
Comas, Ada	7	8	84	7	8	84	Crafton	Left Crafton		
Reynold, Alice	4	11	85	4	11	85	Mentmore	Come to London		
Gardner, Thomas	7	12	78	7	12	78	Mentmore	Come to Ched. Sch.	Greenock.	
Gyllver, Walter	19	2	84	19	2	84	Ledburn	Left Ledburn		
Driffells, Frederick	20	7	84	20	7	84	Crafton	Ill health after 3 years		
Hall, Eva	5	11	86	5	11	86	Crafton	Come away to School.		

Admission register for Countess of Rosebery's School, Mentmore
(Ref: E/AR/146/1)

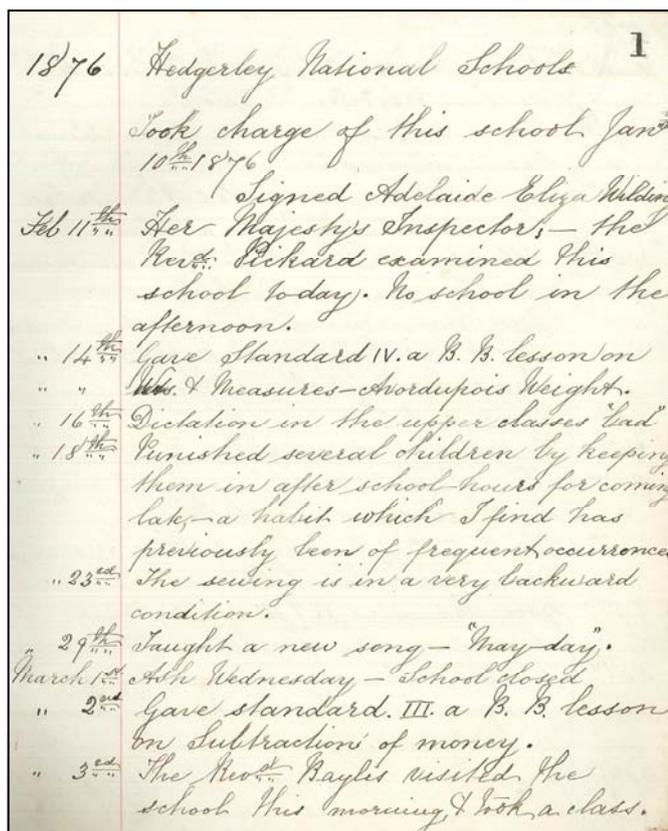
It is important to note that individual pupil files are not held at the Centre. In the early years individual files were not kept. The County Council Education Department does now maintain records relating to each pupil. However these are only held for a limited period after the child has left school, and are then destroyed.

Log Books

The most valuable source for the history of a school is the log book which was kept by the head teacher. In it were recorded any significant events in the school year including building work, prize giving's, visits, illnesses and staff changes. There are also details of the curriculum. Except in early years they are likely to be less helpful on individual pupils. Log books are generally closed for 30 years.

Minute Books

These are the records of the administrators, the School Boards, managers and governors. Their subjects include the budget, appointment of staff, discipline and any building work. More recent minutes are found in the "education: general" catalogue in Archives,



Log Book of Hedgerley National School, 1876 (E/LB/99/1)

including those of the governing bodies of some technical and further education colleges. These are generally subject to a 30 year closure. Also in this catalogue are the minutes of some of the attendance committees established by the Boards of Guardians for children they were assisting.

Accounts

These can be very informative about the equipment provided for a school and its running expenses. Those of School Boards also give details of the local rate. They had to be passed annually by the local government auditor.

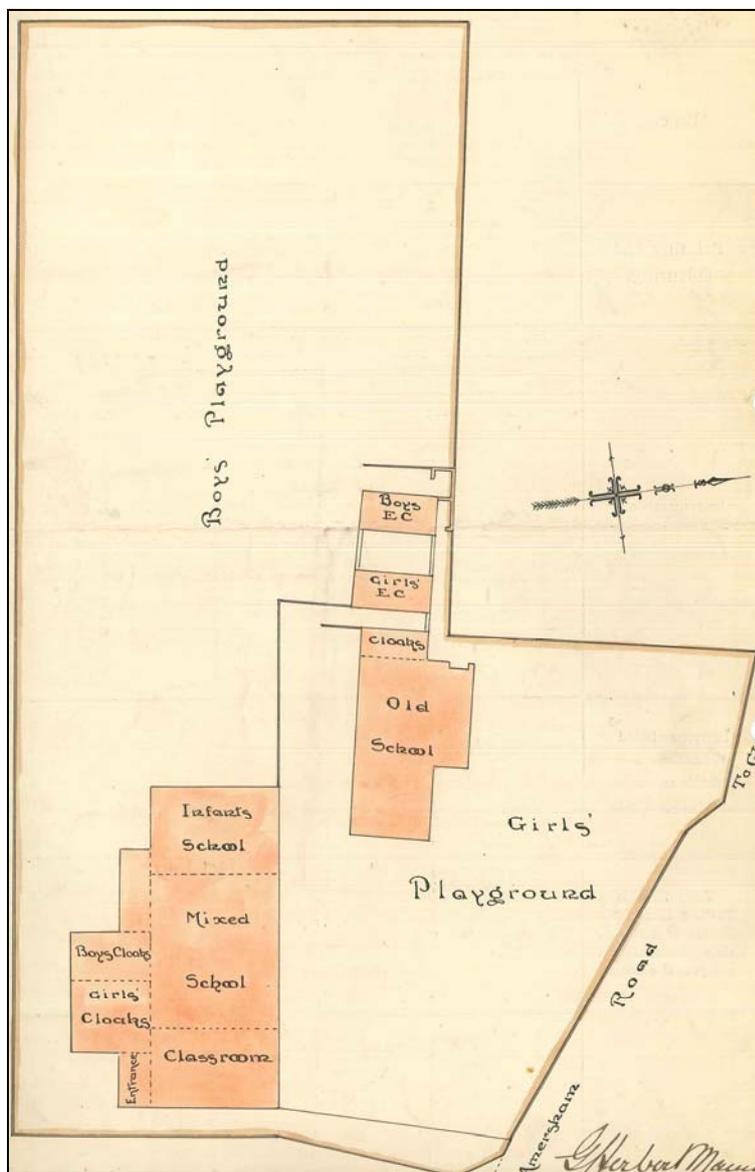
Plans / Surveys

Two main sequences are held, although individual schools may have others.

- School Building Grant Plans 1840-1875 (Ref: AR 39/1965)

These relate to grants which a committee of the Privy Council, later the Education Department, gave to schools through the British and National Societies for building work, provided at least half the sum needed was raised locally.

- Survey of elementary schools 1903 (Ref: AR 78/1992)
The Buckinghamshire L.E.A. carried out a survey of all the schools in the county to ensure that their accommodation met the standards required under the Education Act. Plans are held for around a third of the elementary schools in the county.



Survey of Little Missenden School in 1902
(Ref: AR 78/92/38)

Miscellaneous

Individual schools may have deposited records in Archives including, title deeds, correspondence, punishment books, H.M. Inspector's reports and exercise books. If few, or no, records are held, it is worth contacting the school itself, or its successor if it has closed. The L.E.A. may have some records, such as deeds, but these are likely to relate to current schools and may not be open to the public. Some records from places in the south of the county which were in Buckinghamshire until the boundary changes of 1974 are held in the Berkshire Record Office.

Note on Evacuation

During the Second World War children were evacuated from London and other cities which were likely to be the targets of bombing. Many evacuees came to Buckinghamshire as it was mostly considered to be

a safe location. In the first wave of evacuation in 1939-40 most children were evacuated in a group with their school. They often remained with that group being taught by their own teachers, rather than being incorporated into the local school. The log book of the local head teacher may give numbers of evacuees who came to the area, and may list the schools from which they came, but will not give the names of the pupils. Later in the war children tended to be evacuated as individuals rather than in groups. In this case they were likely to have become pupils at the local school and should appear in the admissions register if it has survived. A log book is held at the Centre for an evacuated boys school in Aston Clinton (Ref: E/8/LB/1). However most evacuated schools retained their own records, and did not deposit them locally.

General Sources

Please check the library and pamphlet index in Archives for general works on education and published items on individual schools.

The "education: general" catalogue lists the records of the Buckinghamshire County Council Education Committee. Mostly minutes and reports, they cover the county education policy, budget and dealings with individual schools. Some records may be subject to a closure period if they contain confidential information about teachers or pupils. There is a report 'Buckinghamshire County Council Development Plan (Education Act 1944)' produced in 1947 in Box File 4 in Archives. Also listed here are the minutes of Chepping Wycombe Borough, Buckinghamshire's only Part III Authority.

There is a list of diocesan institutions concerned with education 1839-1980 held at the Oxfordshire Record Office in Box File 7 in Archives.

Records of the National Society are held at the Church of England Record Centre, 15 Galleywell Road, Bermondsey, London, SE16 3PB. The records of the British Society have not survived, except for published Annual Reports.

The National Archives holds the records of the Department of Education and Science and its predecessors, the Committee of the Privy Council on Education and the Department of Science and Art of the Board of Trade.