

## Education in Wales

In medieval times education was the preserve of the very few who could afford it. Charitable institutions and church organisations were the main providers of education. In Wales, the circulating school movement made a significant impact during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, establishing small village schools. Of greater importance in terms of widening access, particularly to education in the Welsh language was the Sunday school movement, with particular emphasis on the Scriptures. Meanwhile private schools and seminaries continued to flourish, ranging from large, long-established schools to small establishments consisting of a single teacher and a small group of resident pupils.



Elementary schools began to be established in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by religious groups, without state funding. Government grants were made available for new schools in 1833, but over the course of the next century control over elementary schools gradually passed into the hands of local authorities. The following table gives details of the landmark legislation and events affecting the development of education:

1811	National Society established: sets up Anglican (church) schools
1814	British and Foreign Society established to promote non-sectarian religion
1833	First state funding for schools: grants made available for the British Society and the National Society for building new schools.

1847	In 1847 a commission (consisting of Anglican Englishmen) to look into the state of Welsh education reported back, in what became known as the "Treachery of the Blue Books".
1862	Revised Code of Regulations says that head teachers of all schools receiving a grant must keep a log book recording important events in the life of the school
1870	Elementary Education Act provides for establishment of school boards of elected members to oversee provision of elementary schooling on a local (parish) basis. School boards were given the power to create new schools and pay the fees of the poorest children. Board schools could insist on the attendance of children between the ages of five and 13.
1876	Principle established that all children should receive elementary education
1880	School attendance becomes compulsory to the age of 10
1891	Elementary education becomes free of charge
1893	School leaving age raised to 11
1899	School leaving age raised to 12
1902	Under the Education Act 1902, powers were transferred from school boards to local education authorities, which administered schools in groups run by specially appointed boards. These new Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were given powers to establish new secondary and technical schools as well as developing the existing system of elementary schools.
1918	School leaving age raised to 14. Other features of the Act included the provision of additional services in schools, such as medical inspections, nurseries and provision for pupils with special needs.
1944	Butler's 1944 Education Act saw the reorganisation of school administration. Education Authorities were abolished and replaced by divisional executives. The Tripartite system of grammar, secondary modern and technical schools (with the eleven plus exam) was set up to give all pupils access to free secondary education. School leaving age raised to 15
1951	The General Certificate of Education (GCE) as well as O-levels and A-levels were introduced, mainly to grammar schools, in 1951, and replaced the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate.
1973	School leaving age raised to 16
1974	Schools pass totally into the control of local authorities
1988	The National Curriculum was introduced in the 1988 Education Act. It made all education the same for state-funded schools, ensuring that all pupils had access to a basic level of education. A selection of subjects were made compulsory including maths, English, science and some form of religious education. Pupils were divided into Key Stages, depending on their age, Key Stage 1 for pupils aged 5-7, Key Stage 2 for pupils aged 7-11, Key Stage 3 for pupils aged 11-14 and Key Stage 4 for pupils aged 14-16. The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was introduced to replace O-levels and the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE).

## Types of School

### Sunday Schools

Sunday school is the generic name for many different types of religious education pursued on Sundays by various denominations. They provided basic literacy education alongside religious instruction. Their work in the industrial cities was increasingly supplemented by ragged schools (charitable provision for the industrial poor), and eventually by publicly funded education under the late nineteenth century school boards.



### Circulating Schools

During the 1730s circulating schools were set up by individuals in order to teach people to read. The schools were established in one location by itinerant teachers who would spend three months at the school, and then move on to establish a school elsewhere.

### Charity Schools

A charity school was originally a type of elementary school erected and maintained in various parishes, by the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants, for teaching poor children to read and write. They were usually maintained by religious organisations, which provided clothing and education to students freely or at little charge. In most charity schools, children were put out to trades or services on the same charitable foundation.



### Ragged schools

Ragged schools is a name commonly given after about 1840 to the many independently established 19th century charity schools in the United Kingdom which provided entirely free education and, in most cases, food, clothing, lodging and other home missionary services for those too poor to pay.

### Dame Schools

A Dame School was an early form of a private elementary school. They were usually taught by women and were often located in the home of the teacher. Dame schools were quite varied, some functioned primarily as day care facilities overseen by illiterate women, while others provided their students with a good foundation in the basics. Dame schools became less common in Britain after the introduction of compulsory education in 1880.



### **National School**

A national school was a school founded in the 19th century by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. These schools provided elementary education, in accordance with the teaching of the Church of England, to the children of the poor. Together with the less numerous **British Schools** (Nonconformist) of

the British and Foreign School Society, they provided the first near-universal system of elementary education. The schools were eventually absorbed into the state system, either as fully state-run schools or as faith schools funded by the state.

### **Private Schools**

Private schools, also known as independent schools, are not administered by local, state or national governments, which means they retain the right to select their students and are funded in whole or in part by charging their students tuition, rather than relying on public (state) funds.

### **Parochial School/Church School**

Parochial school is one term used to describe a school that engages in religious education in addition to conventional education. A school which is controlled by a religious organisation and which usually receives no money from the government.

### **Board School**

The Elementary Education Act 1870 imposed stricter standards on schools, and provided for the setting up of locally elected school boards in boroughs and parishes, empowered to set up elementary-level board schools where voluntary provision was insufficient. Parents were still required to pay fees, though the fees of the poorest were paid by the board. The Education Act



1902 abolished school boards, transferring their functions to counties and boroughs acting as Local Education Authorities. Board schools were then renamed County schools.

### **Elementary School**

Elementary school was formerly the name given to publicly funded schools which provided a basic standard of education for working class children aged from five to 14, the then school leaving age. Elementary schools were set up to enable working class children to receive manual training and elementary instruction. They provided a restricted curriculum with the emphasis on reading,

writing and arithmetic (the three Rs). The schools operated on a 'monitorial' system, whereby one teacher supervised a large class with the assistance of a team of monitors, who were quite often older pupils. Elementary school teachers were paid by results. Their pupils were expected to achieve precise standards in reading, writing and arithmetic such as reading a short paragraph in a newspaper, writing from dictation, and working out sums and fractions. Before 1944 around 80 per cent of the school population attended elementary schools through to the age of 14. The remainder transferred either to secondary school or junior technical school at age 11.

### **Primary School**

A primary school is an institution where children receive the first stage of compulsory education known as primary or elementary education. In the UK schools providing primary education in the state sector are known as primary schools. They generally cater for children aged from four to eleven (Reception to Year Six). Primary schools are often subdivided into infant schools for children from four to seven (Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1) and junior schools for ages seven to 11 (Key Stage 2).

### **Infants School**

An Infant school is a type of school which caters for young children, usually between the ages of four and seven years. It is usually a small school serving a particular locality. An infant school forms part of the local pattern of provision for primary education. Children start at infant school between the ages of four and five in a Reception class. Reception is the final part of the Foundation Stage, and is compulsory (unlike Nursery). Pupils then transfer to Year One in the September following their fifth birthday, and to Year Two the following year. These two years form Key Stage 1 in the English education system. At the end of this time, most pupils will move to a linked junior school, although some may move to a through primary school.

### **Junior School**

A junior school is a type of school which caters for children, between the ages of 7 and 11. A junior school forms part of the local pattern of provision for primary education. Most junior schools cater for pupils moving from infant schools from the September following their seventh birthday. Pupils join in Year 3, and stay at the school for four years, leaving at the end of Year 6 when most pupils are aged 11. These four years form Key Stage 2 in the English education system. At the end of this time, most pupils will move to a secondary school.

### **Intermediate/Middle School**

Middle school or junior high school serves as a bridge between elementary school and high school. In the United Kingdom, some English Local Education Authorities introduced Middle Schools in the 1960s and 1970s. The notion of Middle Schools was raised by the Plowden Report of 1967 which proposed a change to a three-tier model including First schools for children aged between 5 and 8, Middle Schools for 8–12 year-olds, and then Upper or High Schools for 12–16 year-olds.

### **Reformatory schools**

The term reformatory (or reformatory school) was commonly used during the 19th century throughout the United Kingdom in reference to penal facilities for children under the age of 14. Reformatory schools were for actual offenders. Juveniles up to the age of sixteen were sent to Reformatory School when convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment. The order for detention was made by the Court, and the maximum limit for a Reformatory or Industrial School was the age of nineteen. Established in 1854.



### **Industrial Schools**

Industrial schools were designed for neglected and destitute children, and those in danger of falling into crime. They were established in 1854.

### **Secondary School**

Secondary school is a term used to describe an educational institution where the final stage of compulsory schooling, known as secondary education, takes place. It follows on from elementary or primary education. Secondary school is for children from the ages of 11 to 16 or 18.



### **Tripartite System**

The 1944 Butler Education Act promised a secondary schooling system with three tiers: grammar schools, secondary moderns, and secondary technical schools. The Tripartite System was largely abolished by 1970.

### **Grammar School**

Grammar schools became the selective tier of the Tripartite System of state-funded secondary education operating from the mid-1940s to the late 1960s. Grammar schools were intended to teach an academic curriculum to the most intellectually able 25% of the school population, selected by the eleven plus examination. Initially they studied for the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate, replaced in 1951 by General Certificate of Education examinations at O-level (Ordinary level) and A-level (Advanced level). After 1970 most maintained grammar schools were amalgamated with a number of other local schools, to form neighbourhood comprehensive schools, though a few were closed. By the end of the 1980s, all of the grammar schools in Wales had closed or become comprehensive.

**Secondary Modern School**

A secondary modern school is a type of secondary school that existed from 1944 until the early 1970s under the Tripartite System, and was designed for the majority of pupils - those who do not achieve scores in the top 25% of the eleven plus examination. Those who were thought unsuitable for either an academic curriculum or a technical one, were sent to the secondary modern, where they would receive training in simple, practical skills. Education here was to focus on training in basic subjects such as arithmetic, mechanical skills such as woodworking and domestic skills, such as cookery. The first secondary moderns were created by converting around three thousand Senior Elementary schools, which had previously offered a continuation of primary education to the age of fourteen, into separate institutions. Many more were built between the end of the war and 1965, in the effort to provide universal secondary education. Secondary moderns prepared their students for the CSE examination, rather than the more prestigious O level, and although training for the latter was established in later years, less than one in ten children took advantage of it. They were replaced in most of Britain by the comprehensive school system.

**Secondary Technical School**

A Secondary Technical School was a type of secondary school that existed in the mid-20th century under the Tripartite System of education. For various reasons few were ever built. They taught mechanical, scientific and engineering skills to serve industry and science. Their curriculum was well shaped for dealing with real world employment, and had a solid practical edge. The schools had good links with industry and commerce.

**Community School**

A community school is a type of school that is run wholly by the local education authority (LEA). The LEA is responsible for the school's admissions, owns the school's estate and employs the school's staff.

**County School/County Secondary School**

The Education Act 1902 abolished school boards, transferring their functions to counties and boroughs acting as Local Education Authorities. The board schools were thus renamed county schools. The Act also introduced county secondary schools, which were greatly expanded during the 20th century.

**Combined School**

In 1967 the Plowden Report recommended a change in the structure of primary education in England, it proposed an arrangement of first and middle schools, catering for pupils aged 4-8 and 8-12 respectively. It also proposed the use of the term combined school to refer to those through schools which accepted pupils from age 4 to 12. In addition, some schools were provided as combined schools catering for pupils in the 5–12 age range as a combined first and middle school.

**Comprehensive School**

A comprehensive school is a state school that does not select its intake on the basis of academic achievement or aptitude. Comprehensive schools were introduced in the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Early comprehensives mostly

modelled themselves, in terms of ethos, on the grammar school, with gown-wearing teachers conducting lessons in a very formal style.

**Voluntary School**

A voluntary aided school is a state-funded school in England and Wales in which a foundation or trust (often a religious organisation) contributes to building costs and has a substantial influence in the running of the school. The state began to provide elementary education in 1870 and secondary education in 1902, but also continued to increase funding to the schools run by private organisations, now known as voluntary schools. In return these schools were increasingly influenced by the state, and were subject to jointly administered inspections. In 1926, voluntary secondary schools were required to choose between being grant-aided by the Local Authority, or receiving a direct grant from central government. Under the Education Act 1944, most of the direct grant schools became direct grant grammar schools. The Act also imposed higher standards on school facilities, and offered the remaining voluntary schools a choice in funding the costs this would incur: Voluntary controlled schools would have all their costs met by the state, but would be controlled by the Local Education Authority. Voluntary aided schools would be only partly funded by the state, with the foundation responsible for 50% of capital works but having greater influence over the school.



## **Types of record**

The West Glamorgan Archive Service only holds records of Elementary Schools and some Secondary Schools for the area. Detailed schedules of these records can be found using the Catalogues marked EDUCATION RECORDS: PRIMARY SCHOOLS and EDUCATION RECORDS: SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BOARDS. Records referring to other types of school may exist amongst other smaller collections. Please check with a member of staff.

For many elementary schools, few historic records survive other than the log books and perhaps the admission registers. However there are a variety of possible records that may be encountered:

**Log books:** the keeping of log books was a requirement under the Revised Code of Regulations in 1862. Head teachers had to make a regular entry regarding progress, new staff and other major events affecting the life of the school. In practice the level of information given varies considerably according to the preference of the head teacher, but nonetheless log books generally contain much more than just school matters. They can include a wealth of information about the local area, local and national events, the curriculum, behaviour of pupils and school events. Log books are the principal source for the history of a school.

**Admission registers:** these record details of the children admitted to the school. Information given includes child's name, names of parents or guardians, and name of previous and subsequent school, and sometimes reason for leaving. Sometimes an indication is given as to their progress in the school.

**Attendance registers:** these constitute a daily record of attendance of children in the school.

**Photographs:** these may be formal class photographs or more informal showing school events, such as plays, outings or sports events.

**School histories:** sometimes a commemorative book on the history of a school is produced to mark a significant anniversary.

**Other records:** there are many other different day-to-day records kept by schools and which may appear within the archive collections. These include stock books recording supplies and equipment, inspectors' reports and returns, circulars from the Board of Education, and staffing records. Occasionally punishment books, correspondence, minutes and programmes of events also survive.

## **Records relating to schools in other collections**

**School board minute books:** in the years following the Elementary Education Act 1870, school boards were created in most of the parishes in the West Glamorgan area. These consisted of elected members and the business discussed included general matters to do with the equipping, maintenance and

general running of the schools within their appointed area. They ran to 1903 when responsibility for the administration of schools passed into the hands of Local Education Authorities, who were given powers to group several schools together under one body of managers. Minutes are held for these groups and also for the Local Education Authorities, although coverage is not complete. Reference E/SB

**Architectural plans:** there are plans of schools in West Glamorgan giving detailed plans of school buildings. Reference C/C E PI and D/D PRO/EBG

**School compendia:** these are in the form of printed reports and give valuable information about the equipment, facilities and state of repair of schools in 1932. Reference GCC/E Comp

**Sunday School and Church School records:** these records appear with the Parish church and Nonconformist chapel records. See the detailed catalogues marked ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH and NONCONFORMIST RECORDS for more details.

**Reports by H.M. Inspectors on schools in the Western Glamorgan area:** These contain details of the history of the school, the extent to which Welsh was spoken in the area and in the school, and an assessment of the adequacy of the school accommodation, equipment, teachers and teaching methods. Reference D/D PRO ME

**Education Building Grant Plans:** From 1839 applicants for educational building grants had to complete a detailed questionnaire and submit plans of the proposed work to the Committee of Council, Department of Education, London. The Building Grant Applications remain at the National Archives (reference Ed. 103), but a number of architectural plans of primary schools in West Glamorgan, can be found at the Archive Service. Reference D/D PRO/EBG

**Other records:** National Institute of Housecraft (Employment and Training) Ltd. Reference D/D NIH.

It is also worth checking through the indexes in the searchroom for school records which may appear in miscellaneous collections such as D/D Z or D/D X

**Library books:** There is a selection of books on education and school histories in the Searchroom Library. Reference EDU

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