



Shropshire Archives

9. A short guide to school records

- ◇ During the 18th century the main types of schools were **charity schools** for the poor, **Sunday schools**, **endowed grammar schools** and **private schools**.
- ◇ In the 19th century, Public elementary schools expanded in numbers due to the work of the **British and Foreign Schools Society** (non-denominational) and the **National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church** (Church of England).
- ◇ These voluntary schools were initially self-financing so education provision remained patchy nation-wide. After 1833, government funds were available for building. With later legislation requiring schools to be built and increasing the leaving age, the number of schools expanded.
- ◇ Schools were affected by the following legislation:
 - * 1870 Forster's Education Act divided England into districts each administered by an elected **school board**, which was responsible for providing non-denominational elementary schools to fill gaps locally.
 - * 1880 Education Act made school attendance to the age of ten **compulsory**. 1893 and 1899 legislation raised the school leaving age to eleven and then twelve.
 - * 1902 Balfour's Education Act abolished school boards. The provision of education then became the responsibility of **county and borough councils**.
 - * 1918 legislation raised the school leaving age to 14.
- ◇ In the 1920s and 1930s emphasis was increasingly placed on the provision of secondary education, with children to be transferred from primary schools after an 11+ exam.
- ◇ In the 1940s and 1950s secondary education was reorganised into grammar, technical, modern or comprehensive schools. The school leaving age was raised to 15 in 1947.
- ◇ 1960s saw comprehensive schools become official government policy. School leaving age was raised to 16 in 1966.
- ◆ Most school records held at Shropshire Archives are originals. This means that you need one of our **Readers' Tickets** to see them.
- ◆ Most school records are listed in the Education binders. It is also worth checking the parish lists (in blue folders) if the school was a C. of E. school.

- ◆ There are **two main types of records** - the school's own records and those created by external bodies.
- ◆ The school's own records include managers' minutes, logbooks, admission registers, punishment books, H.M.I. Reports, inventories, photographs etc. The records of external bodies can include building grant plans, school board minutes/accounts (c. 1870-1902), 1902 Education Act returns, Shropshire County Council Education Committee minutes and reports.
- ◆ Records include:
 - * *Managers' minutes* - record details of discussions during managers' meetings e.g. financial matters, staff appointments, building maintenance.
 - * *Log books* - act like a school diary by recording daily events. Detail varies considerably, can include poor attendance/discipline problems, employment of staff, lessons and equipment, medical epidemics, weather, school/local and national events. Dates vary, many commence after the 1862 Revised Code which required schools in receipt of government grant to keep a record of its daily activities. The annual government grant was also dependant on attendance and an annual inspection.
 - * *Admission registers* - relate to pupils' entry into school and they can include date of birth, names of parents/address as well as the date when pupils left school and reason for leaving. Unfortunately, most admission registers have not survived.
 - * *School building plans* - often include a plan of the site as well as plans of the internal arrangements of rooms. Many created after 1833 when plans could be submitted to secure a government building grant.
 - * *1902 Education Act Returns* - returns made under the Act, they include managers' names, details of buildings and staff, pupil numbers, subjects taught, and some financial accounts.
- ◇ Some school records, including admissions registers and log books, are subject to **closure periods** because of the confidential information they contain.

Shropshire Archives

Castle Gates, Shrewsbury SY1 2AQ
 tel: 01743 255350, fax: 01743 255355
 e-mail: archives@shropshire-cc.gov.uk
 web site: www.shropshirearchives.co.uk



Gateway to the history of Shropshire and Telford

