

Campden Church of England Infant School

A board now hanging in the Muniment Room of St. James' Church states that In 1707 the Hon. James Thynne 'having founded a Charity School in this town, caused this Gallery to be built for the use of the poor children.' The gallery was probably in the church.



Another board, now on the wall of the Church Rooms (above), states: By indentures of Thomas Lord Viscount Weymouth heir at law of James Thynne late of Buckland in the County of Gloucester

for instructing and cloathing thirty poor girls of the Parish of Chipping Campden of the age of nine years and under the age of twelve years on their admission to receive the benefit of the said charity for the term of four years and no longer. Being children of such parents only who profess the Protestant Religion according to the doctrine of the Church of England..... (full inscription in CCHS Archives)

This refers to the Thynne and Weymouth Foundation, founded by Deed in 1710 (see Deed dated 1910 in CCHS Archives) which still exists today, providing grants to children leaving St. James' Primary School for Chipping Campden School.

The Charity Commissioners' Report 1835-1839 details the 1710 deed in full, including: *each to be clothed once every year, with a blue serge livery gown and coat, shoes, stockings, caps and shifts, and once in three years, with boddice [sic]* This may have been part of the national movement to found Blue Schools for the education of poor children. The girls must have been very distinctive in their uniforms, compared to the other poor children in the town.

The Universal British Directory 1793-98 states that there are ...

Two charity schools, one where 30 girls are taught to read, knit and spin and are clothed, the other for 24 poor children to read – the latter is possibly the school for boys funded by George Townsend under his will dated 1682; was James Thynne inspired by the example of George Townsend? It is not known where either of the schools were located in these early years.

The Hon. Charles Noel Noel, son of Sir Gerard Noel, was responsible for the management of the Campden estate. He was clearly concerned for the education of poor children in Campden and in 1820 he gave a plot of land near the Noel Arms to build a new School. It was now stipulated that it should take poor girls of Campden generally and no longer be restricted to Protestants.

The Charity Commissioners' Report (1839) stated:

The schoolhouse has been fitted up for a girls' school, with comfortable apartments for the schoolmistress, at an expense of £440. 9s. 10d., which was defrayed out of the accumulated surpluses, and by a sale of a portion of the funded property, as appears by the books.



It is very likely that these 'apartments' are the house on the left hand side – the lines of the construction follow through.

Photograph probably taken in 1907 at the celebrations for the coronation of King Edward VII.

Then in 1830 Charles Noel, now Lord Barham, gave some land between Grevel House (which he owned) and Seymour House for a new building to house the girls of the Blue School. This building comprised a teacher's house and a schoolroom. Later the teacher's house was incorporated to make a larger school.

The older building became the infants' school, taking boys and girls age 5-8 years.

School teachers at the Infants School

From the trade directories and censuses:

CHARRIER Sarah, mistress Infant School 1830

ALEXANDER Mary Ann, mistress Infants School 1842,1844

ALEXANDER Samuel, master Infants School 1842,1844

Sarah Penson, 65 years old, was listed as the schoolmistress in the 1841 census.

Her daughter Frances was living with her in the schoolhouse. Then Sarah retired to the Almshouses, and her portrait was painted in 1849 (along with seven other pensioners).

The schoolmistress listed in the 1851 and 1861 censuses was Caroline Baldwin, with her daughter Sarah as assistant. With her husband Samuel Baldwin, who was a farmer, they lived in the adjoining house.

In 1871 the Schoolmistress was Miss Ellen Grove, age 52, living next to the school
After that the school is listed as uninhabited. The schoolmistress lived elsewhere in the town.

DAW Elizabeth (Miss), mistress Infants School 1879

JOHNSON Harriett (Miss), mistress Infants School 1885

BURTON Annie (Miss), infants mistress National School 1889

In 1910 Miss Clara Bishop was the Schoolmistress, followed by
Miss Catherine Brinkworth (1914 Trade directory) and then
Miss Clara Melissa Baum (1918 and 1923 Directories).

During this time the school had a rollcall of 80 infants.

School attendance was always a problem: from the school logbook -

23 April 1868	Campden Cattle Fair, causing 18 children to be absent out of 35
21 Sept 1869	Several children absent potato picking
6 Oct 1869	Two of the children have died of fever – so much illness
6 May 1870	93 children have entered this week out of which number 21 were absent from the afternoon attendance
July 1873	The attendance rather small the children being kept home to pick fruit
Sept 1873	Very poor attendance the eldest children sent into the harvest fields
June 29 1899	Gertrude Nobes fainted three times, could not send her home as her mother had gone peapicking

Attempts were made to encourage attendance: in Nov 1883 the Infant School logbook entry read --

Distributed cards this evening to every child who had made every attendance during the week. A penny will be given for every card at the end of the quarter. Workmen are busy putting up a bell to call the children to school.

59 tickets were given out for good attendance.
Then they had to tighten up the scheme ----

Feb 1884 Vicar came to say the children are not to have their tickets for being present unless they came in time for prayers.
And later --- Today the children received their money for regular attendance.



Infant School children in 1906.
Some went to school from 3 years-old.
Little boys in the front row are wearing skirts and smocks: they were 'breeched' at about six years old.



In September 1913 the Evesham Journal reported:

The alterations and additions to the Infant School required by the Board of Education have now been successfully completed. It will be remembered that if the school managers had been unable to obtain land from Lord Gainsborough for the additions to be built upon and for playground space, it would have become obligatory to purchase a new site and to have erected council schools at considerable cost to the ratepayers.

This has now been avoided thanks to the energetic proceedings of the school managers, ungrudgingly assisted by the Thynne Trustees. The frontage of the Infant School as now completed forms quite an addition to the architectural attractions of Campden.

Mr J W Pyment is to be congratulated for completing the work in two months.

In 1970 the Infants School moved to its present location in Pear Tree Close and the Library moved in from the Upper Room of the Town Hall.