

Social History 2. Education

The earliest known school was a 'Day and Sunday School in 1833, in which 7 males and 12 females were instructed at the joint expense of a lady and the Vicar'.¹ The location of this early school is not known, but in 1903 it was recalled that it had been held in a cottage 'for many years'.² Jane Dalton, wife of an agricultural labourer living at Strip, was paid £2 a year by the churchwardens 'for keeping school' at least from 1837 until Christmas 1844.³ The same woman remarried in 1845⁴ and, as Jane Benham, was paid the same sum; in 1851 she was living near the church in Up Nately.⁵ The 1861 census for Up Nately shows several children as 'scholars', with schoolmistress, Jane Benham, then living in Up Nately Lane in Nately Scures.⁶

A new stage in the education of the village emerged with the construction of a purpose-built school. In 1867, it was noted that 'A school for boys and girls is now in the course of erection', The conveyance of a piece of land near the church by Thomas Hutton of Tunworth, who was a substantial landholder in Up Nately, to the Minister and Church Wardens of Up Nately on 23 Jan 1868 includes a plan of a school that had 'lately been erected'.⁷ (See Figure 1) The drawing on the conveyance corresponds precisely with a separate plan said to have been drawn in the 20th century. Despite the new building, there was considerably continuity, and Jane Benham continued to be paid by the churchwardens until Dec 1871, having held the post for more than 30 years.⁸ The school belonged to the Church of England with its

¹ *Education Enquiry* in Parliamentary Papers, HMSO, 1835, v.42, 861.

² HRO, 3M70/147, Return from the Up Nately school to the Committee of the Council on Education, 1903.

³ HRO, 66M80/PW1; TNA HO107/386/2/4-6.

⁴ HRO, 66M80/PR6 (Jane Dalton married Charles Benham 15 Feb 1845).

⁵ TNA, HO107/1681/15.

⁶ *Ibid*; TNA RG9/709/68-70; RG9/709/44.

⁷ HRO, 3M70/146.

⁸ Kelly's P.O. Directory 1867; 66M80/PW1(unpaginated), *passim*.

management vested in the Minister.⁹ Although the schoolroom was only 30 feet by 16 feet, giving space for 28 children, fluctuations in the roll included a high of 37 in November 1897. Children between the ages of three and thirteen were admitted and included pupils from Andwell, Greywell and Nately Scures. At times, children aged less than five years were ‘withdrawn’ to make room for older pupils.¹⁰ Only simple subjects were taught and religious instruction by the rector and singing figured largely in the syllabus. Despite the lack of space, the senior children were divided into several different grades and were taught separately from the infants. It is clear from repeated comment in the log books that there was a great deal of disruption from pupils, and punishment had to be administered for bad behaviour. There was never more than one mistress, but a monitress assisted her by looking after the infants. The latter created a particular problem by ‘getting very fidgety’, and in October 1896 it was noted that ‘The small children get very little of the mistress’s attention’ and ‘the monitresses help keep them quiet & that is all’. In December 1905 the mistress wrote ‘Have found work very difficult without the aid of a monitress this last fortnight’.¹¹

Unqualified teachers were employed for the first 23 years of the school’s existence, but a certificated mistress was appointed in September 1891 in order to qualify for a government grant. Until then the school had been funded by ‘School Pence’ and a number of subscriptions, including the ‘Sheppard Bequest’ of £8 a year. After that year annual grants in aid were received from the Education Department.¹²

⁹ The school log books covering the period 1891 to 1927 are in strict chronological order and page numbers have been omitted from the footnotes: HRO 126M87/LB1-2.

¹⁰ HRO, 3M70/146; 48M71/16; H/CA1/1/170/1; 126M87/LB1-2

¹¹ 126M87/LB1-2 *passim*.

¹² HRO, 66M80/PJ1.

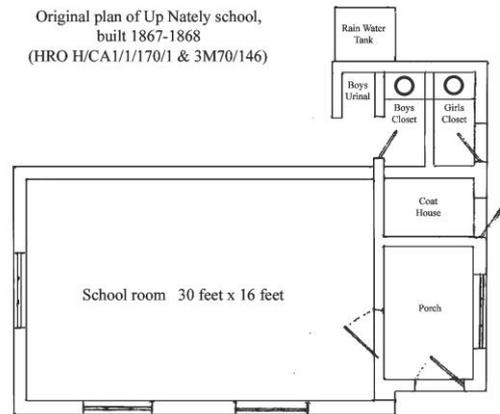


Figure 1 *Plan of Up Nately School, 1868*

Teaching was almost entirely by women. The sole male teacher was Edward Pennicott, (1883-1891). The poor accommodation and difficulties caused by the age range of the pupils, and probable underfunding, was subsequently reflected in the difficulty the school managers experienced in retaining staff, with 13 different teachers employed during the 14-year period from July 1891 to March 1905. In a particularly difficult spell between June 1896 and April 1902 no teacher stayed in post for more than six months.¹³

The teacher's salary varied. It was £26 a year in 1881 but rose to £75 a year on the appointment of Catherine Bulford in April 1902. The three-fold increase must have reflected the difficulty in recruiting staff for a deteriorating school in an out-of-the-way situation. The post became more attractive after 1902, since only three teachers were in post from then until the closure of the school in 1927. The pay of the monitress varied according to her age and was £15 a year. at age 16 in 1906. The expenses of the school included lodgings for the teacher.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ *Ibid* & HRO, 66M80/PJ1 & HRO, 11/ED/4/1/1.

The requirements of children in the varied age bands inevitably suffered from the teacher's need to divide her time between them. Consequently, pupils were frequently described as backward by teachers and inspectors alike. Following the inspector's report at the end of February 1896, it was stated that 'It is not without hesitation and only after considering all the circumstances that HM Inspector has recommended payment of the grant on the present occasion. My Lords will look for improvement in the school work another year if the Managers are to escape a formal warning'. It is evident that further discretion was exercised in subsequent years.¹⁵

Attendance varied widely and absences were mainly due to bad weather and illness. Ringworm was a frequent cause of absence and there was a diphtheria epidemic in May 1901. School closures took place due to outbreaks of chicken pox in October 1916, mumps in February 1897, June 1906 and February 1915, and to whooping cough epidemics in June 1908 and November 1912. In addition to the religious holidays, five weeks 'harvest holiday' were given from the end of July until early September, but the return to the classroom was often postponed while families were harvesting in the hop-fields of Odiham. In October 1891 attendance was 'very poor' because children were absent gathering acorns. A half-day holiday was granted annually on Shrove Tuesday so that the children could take part in the old custom of 'shroving'. Empire Day was celebrated annually on 24 May by the singing of patriotic songs and saluting the flag, Basingstoke Fair was an annual disruption in October and in April 1911 disturbance was caused and closure of the school postponed due to the presence of fox hunters in the playground.¹⁶ The pupils received treats from time to time. Thomas Hutton (a leading supporter of the school) frequently brought presents of money and

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ HRO, 126M87/LB1-2.

food, there were Sunday School outings and a seaside trip for 20 children was provided in July 1894.¹⁷

There appears never to have been any purpose-built accommodation for the teacher. Jane Benham, aged 57, was still the schoolmistress in 1871 and was living with her husband in a cottage on the road to Greywell.¹⁸ The teacher in 1881 was 16-year-old miller's daughter Frances Legrove, who was living with her parents in Basing.¹⁹ Edward Pennicott was lodging at Upper House Farm in 1891.²⁰ No teacher was recorded in Up Nately in 1901.²¹

A report of 1903, drawn up after the county took over responsibility under the 1902 Education Act, revealed the inadequacy of the school building. Although substantially built, it had a large number of deficiencies. Space was severely limited, the washing facilities comprised a portable iron stand with an iron basin, there was no ventilation, no supply of drinking water and the privies and urinal were 'unusually close' to the school building.²²

One obvious feature of this school was its small size, even for rural schools in Hampshire. A survey published in 1903, listed the elementary schools together with the amount of pupil accommodation: it showed Up Nately to be one of the smallest schools in the county, one of only six with accommodation of 36 or less.²³ In 1908 it had 20-22 children on the books, in 1926 there were 23, and in its final year, the school still had only 26-7 pupils.²⁴ It was very vulnerable to closure and on 17 June 1927, the Education Authority gave notice that the

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ TNA, RG10/1235/110.

¹⁹ HRO, 66M80/PJ1 & TNA RG11/1255/41.

²⁰ TNA, RG12/958/116.

²¹ TNA, RG13/1109/39-40.

²² HRO, 48M71/16.

²³ VCH *Hants*, ii, 210-22.

²⁴ HRO, 126M87, LB2.

school was to be closed. The final entry in the school log book, 29 July 1927, reads ‘This little School closes finally today’.²⁵ The school building was sold by the Diocesan Board of Finance to the Parochial Church Council for £10 in 1956 and was said to be derelict in 1958.²⁶ It was resold into private hands for £50 in 1961, the net proceeds going to the Aided Schools Fund.²⁷ (*see also* Domestic Buildings)

²⁵ HRO, 126M87, LB2.

²⁶ HRO, 66M80/PJ2.

²⁷ HRO, 128M96/C3/65.