

Education in Welford-on-Avon: A History

Introduction

For most of its recorded history Welford-on-Avon taught its children in borrowed rooms: a chantry, a rector's parlour, a weaver's shed, a dame's front room, a chapel. Only in 1851 or 1852 did the village get a building made for the purpose, the brick schoolroom that the curate James Davenport raised on Headland Road. That room served for more than a century before the county replaced it with the school opened on 11 February 1966, which still stands. This essay follows that long story from the four boys taught by Tewkesbury monks in the 1530s to the primary school of the twenty-first century, using the scanned archive of the Welford and Weston Local History Society.

The archive is rich in some places and silent in others, and the essay tries to say which is which. Three documents carry most of the weight. The first is Gilda Gray's article "Schools in Welford", printed in the parish magazine of January 1957 (05/02, with a summary at 13/33). The second is her longer typescript of the same name, written in the early 1980s (17/07). The third is D. Ray's paper "Education in Welford and Weston", written for the Society around 1975 to 1976 (10/31, with copies at 13/32, 15/01 and 15/13). Ray in turn leaned on an unpublished thesis by Mrs Joyce Colston, "Rural Education on the Warwickshire/Gloucestershire border, 1870 to 1900", which quoted the Victorian school log books at length. The log books themselves are not in the archive, so their words survive here only second-hand.

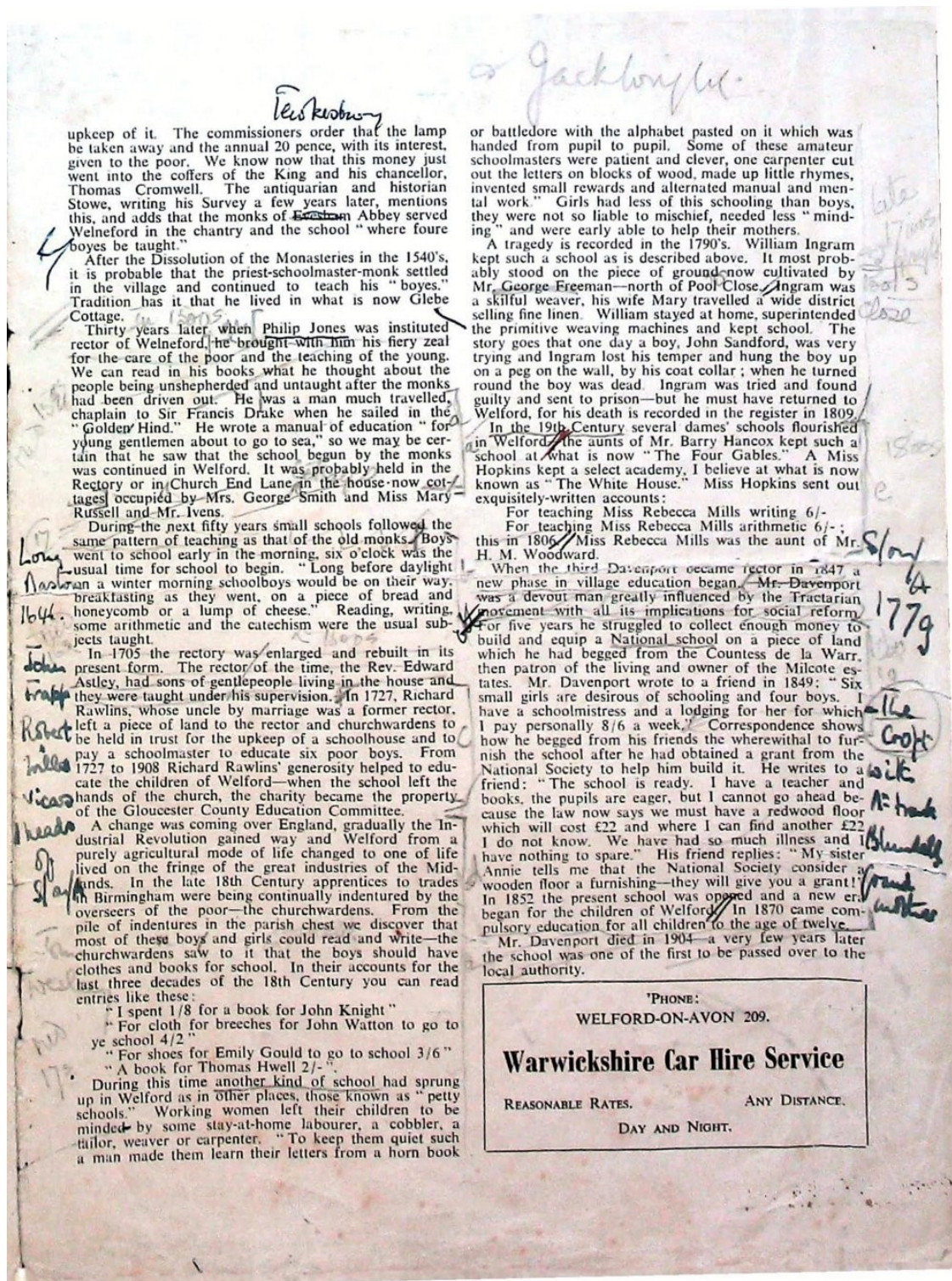
Around these three histories sit many smaller witnesses. Censuses from 1841 to 1911 name the schoolmistresses and count the "scholars" (48/01 to 48/12, 14/12, 01/49). Trade directories give the size of the Board School (46/98, 46/99). Parish Council minutes record the school managers after 1902 (19/23) and the arguments over charity money (18/13, 18/16). An inspector's report of June 1955 describes the school room by room (03/24, filed in the 03/21-31 scan). Later come trust minutes about the playing field (60/01, 59/10), letters to the Herald (01/26), and the memories of people who sat in the classrooms (48/45, 36/06, 36/13, 49/20).

The Methodists ran their own teaching in Chapel Street for most of the nineteenth century, and their story is told from the history of the Wesleyan chapel and its Sunday school (44/31). Welford also belonged to a wider web of charities and grammar schools. These include the Rawlins charity of 1727, John Cooper's foundation at Long Marston, Thomas Eden's charity schools of 1773 and King Edward VI School in Stratford, where several Weston vicars were masters. They appear where they touched Welford children.

A word on boundaries is needed. Until 1931 Welford and Weston lay in Gloucestershire, so the school passed to Gloucestershire County Council after the 1902 Act and only came under Warwickshire when the county boundary moved. Weston-on-Avon had its own small school

from 1835 until its pupils were merged into Welford's in the twentieth century. Weston therefore appears throughout as Welford's partner rather than as a separate subject.

The sources disagree often, and sometimes on basic facts such as the year the school opened. Rather than smooth these over, the essay names the disagreement where it arises and gathers the main ones in a table at the end. Where the archive is thin, notably for the seventeenth century, the first half of the twentieth century and the decades after 1975, the essay says so instead of filling the gap with guesswork. References in brackets, such as (17/07), are to the folder and item numbers of the Society's archive.



Gilda Gray's "Schools in Welford", parish magazine, January 1957, heavily annotated by a later reader (05/02).

Before the schoolroom: chantry, charity and dame schools, 1530s to 1850

Four boys and a chantry

The first written trace of teaching in Welford comes from the 1530s, on the eve of the Dissolution. A contemporary writer, named as Stow in Gilda Gray's 1957 article, recorded that the monks of Tewkesbury Abbey "served Welneford in the Chantrey and the School, where foure boyes be taught" (05/02, 10/31). Tewkesbury held the living, and a chantry priest whose main duty was to say masses for the dead would often teach a few boys their letters and catechism as well. D. Ray imagined the parents' reluctance to spare sons who could scare birds from the open-field strips, and four pupils fits that picture (10/31).

The sources do not agree on how far to trust this. In 1957 Gray treated the chantry school as the start of Welford's educational story. Writing again in the early 1980s, she said the opposite: although monks served Welford for centuries, "there is no record or even tradition" of any school before the Reformation (17/07). The 1530s quotation is therefore the only evidence, and it reaches us through two later village writers rather than from the original text, which is not in the archive.

After the monasteries fell, several former monks held the living in turn. Richard Ewer was a Benedictine. Richard Quene, whose name survives in Quiney's Leys, was deprived for marrying under Mary. John Woode, once a monk of Tewkesbury, married in 1562 and was buried in 1581 (10/31, 19/45, 47/70). Ray and Gray both assumed these men went on teaching "the boyes". Tradition placed them at Glebe Cottage in Church Lane, but that is an assumption rather than a record (05/02, 13/33).

Philip Jones and the schoolroom that moves

The one Elizabethan rector with a real reputation as an educator is Philip Jones, instituted on 19 October 1581 after his predecessor Christopher Jones died within a month of taking office (17/07). Every village writer repeats that he had sailed round the world with Drake as chaplain on the Golden Hind. They add that he held Welford together with the vicarage of Cirencester and wrote on the education of boys, including a tract on turning gentlemen's sons into seamen (05/02, 10/31, 17/07). Gray pictured him riding between Welford and Cirencester to oversee his curates and preaching against the landowners who had grown rich on abbey lands. She even suggested that his teaching inspired the Welford families who later sailed for Virginia (17/07).

That Jones kept a school is accepted by everyone. Where he kept it is not. The archive offers at least five answers:

- the Rectory, or "cottages in Church End Lane" (Gray, 1957: 05/02, 13/33);
- "the old timbered cottage in Church End Lane" that once belonged to Mary Russell and Alf Ivens and was almost rebuilt by Percy Clarke in 1970 to 1971 (Gray, early 1980s: 17/07);

- "Tower View" in Church End Lane, "recently modernised by Mr P. F. Clarke" (19/02, and Gray's notes on the rectors at 19/45);
- Box Tree Cottage, Church Lane (the printed "Rectors Past and Present", 47/70);
- Glebe Cottage, which a correspondent signing "A.B." thought was purely Elizabethan and built by Jones for his school, its large ground-floor room suiting a schoolroom (18/28).

Some of these may be the same house under different names; Tower View and the Clarke cottage look like one building. A.B. firmly rejected the Ivens row, calling it ordinary cottages of James I's or Charles I's reign (18/28). Even Jones's dates are loose. The parish register records his burial as "Parson of Welford" in February 1592, yet the record office catalogue lists a sale of the personal goods of "Philip Jones, parson of Welford" as early as 1589 (17/07, 19/37). The safest statement is that a school was probably held near the church in the 1580s, in a building that the village has never agreed on.

The seventeenth century: horn-books and a Puritan schoolmaster

For the next century the Welford evidence almost disappears, and the village writers fill the gap with general description. Boys walked to school before dawn, school began at six, and they breakfasted on the way. Gray and Ray both quote a Long Marston account of 1646: "Long before daylight on a winter morning, schoolboys would be on their way, breakfasting as they went, on a piece of bread and honeycomb, or a lump of cheese" (05/02, 10/31). Children learned the alphabet from horn-books, wrote on slates or wax tablets because paper was dear, and older pupils cut their own quill pens (10/31). None of this is specific to Welford, and the essay offers it only as background.

One local figure does stand out. John Trapp, born at Croome D'Abitot in 1601 and educated at Christ Church, Oxford, became usher at the grammar school in Stratford in 1622 and its master in 1624. He was vicar of Weston from 1639 and kept the mastership, with a break under the Commonwealth, until his death in 1669 (31/08–09, 51/01, 51/03). When the Royalist rector of Welford, Jenkin Bowen, was ousted, Trapp was "intruded" into Welford as well (19/02, 19/45). Ray asked whether he also acted as Welford's schoolmaster; nothing in the archive answers her (10/31). From Trapp's time until 1841 the vicars of Weston were usually also masters of the Stratford grammar school, and the Davenports who later built Welford's school belonged to that tradition (01/75–89, 51/01).

The Rectory became a small school of a different kind after the house was enlarged in 1705. The Rev. Edward Astley, rector for more than fifty years, taught "sons of gentlepeople" there under his own supervision (05/02, 13/33). That was education for the better-off; the poor boys of the parish had to wait for a charity.

The Rawlins charity

On the outside of the south wall of the chancel is a weathered stone that Gray first saw around 1948 and had copied before it became illegible. It records that Richard Rawlins of Welford, by a will dated 22 October 1727, left three pounds a year charged on his half yardland "for the Maintenance of a Schoolmaster there forever, to teach eight poor boys of the parish to read and write English, to instruct them in the Church Catechism, in the use of figures and to make them ready accountants". It ends with a challenge to "the rich who larger substance have, to increase its fund and to respect his grave" (17/07).

Rawlins lived with his sister Elizabeth at Bragginton, on the Dorsington side of the parish (17/04, 17/07). Gray identified his half yardland with the glebe field called Rawlins or Rawlings Meadow, which the 1948 terrier measures at 6.795 acres (17/07, 19/22). H. M. Woodward, churchwarden for 36 years, told her that Glebe Cottage housed both the schoolmaster and the eight boys (17/07). Gray liked to think that these boys became the constables, fieldsmen and overseers whose neat accounts survive in the parish chest (17/02 to 17/06).

The details shift between sources. The stone says eight boys; Ray and Gray's 1957 article say six, with Bigland giving eight (05/02, 10/31). A printed list of benefactions dates the gift to 1721 rather than 1727 and says "8 poor Boys" (01/68). The 1807 glebe terrier mentions "an endowment of a school to teach six children to read and write", paid from the estate of Jonathan Izod of Stratford (26/10). That may be the Rawlins charge after the land changed hands, or a separate gift.

The charity's end is murky too. Ray says it lasted until 1908 and then passed to the Gloucester County Education Committee (10/31). Gray was told that it "disappeared" when school boards were reorganised in 1903 to 1904. She later found that on 10 May 1908 a question in Parliament had reported it transferred to the Board of Education (17/07, 26/10). The Parish Council asked in 1912 whether the money was being properly used, and no answer was minuted (17/07). Meanwhile Rawlings Meadow went on being let as glebe, at 15 shillings an acre in 1948, and Gray noted drily that "the Rector did instruct the children in the church catechism!" (17/07).

Cooper and Eden: charities beyond the parish

Welford boys could also benefit from a charity based at Long Marston. Here the sources are badly tangled. Gray wrote that William Cooper of Long Marston left £300 in 1634 for a school for 24 poor boys: eight from Long Marston, six from Pebworth, four from Quinton, four from Welford and two from Dorsington (17/07). Ray described a "John Cooper Trust" at Weston in 1643, which gave a house, a close and £300 for a master to teach 22 poor children (10/31). The printed scheme of 1910 says John Cooper's will was dated 27 February 1643 (03/24, in the 03/21–31 scan). A summary of the foundation's later papers gives 21 February 1648 (60/08). The charity founded the grammar school at Long Marston (Marston Sicca),

which old Welford men such as Fred Barratt attended. Born around 1850, Barratt went to school in Welford, at "Mr Guppy's" in Stratford and at Long Marston "Grammar" School, which he left at twelve (20/01).

Thomas Eden's charity of 1773 did not name Welford, but it did name Weston. By a deed of 6 December 1773 Eden gave a 30-acre farm at Mangotsfield and six houses in Redcliffe Street, Bristol, to trustees. The income was to keep charity schools at Pebworth, Weston Subedge, Weston upon Avon, Old Stratford and Newbold. Children could enter at four and had to leave at fourteen. Teachers could take no money or presents from parents, and two books were to be kept, a register and an account book (17/08). Gray noted that John Wesley stayed with the Edens at Broad Marston, and that "John Eden's Charity" still helped Weston church and its young people in her day (17/07).

Apprentices: the other school

For most poor children in the eighteenth century, learning meant an apprenticeship. Ray called it, quoting G. M. Trevelyan, "the school of Englishmen" (10/31). The churchwardens' and overseers' accounts show the parish placing its boys and girls and paying for their clothes and indentures (10/31):

Year Entry from the parish accounts

1707 £1 10s paid to John Smith with Edward Simons his apprentice, plus shoes, breeches, stockings and a waistcoat

1709 Stephen Court indentured to William Loach, glover

1711 William Court bound apprentice; 10d spent on ale at the binding

1747 Sarah Jelfs to William Bennett of Dorsington, with six shifts, four pairs of stockings and six caps

1766 R. Radnall to Thomas Parks of Harborne, "to learn the art and mistery of a nailer"

1788 John Abell to a Birmingham steel toymaker; Will Abell to a Birmingham button caster

1796 Hannah D—, about ten, apprenticed until twenty "to learn needle making in the best manner" at Astwood Bank

The same wardens paid small sums so that children could attend school at all. Gray's 1957 article quotes entries from the last three decades of the eighteenth century: "For cloth for breeches for John Watton to go to ye school 4/2", "For shoes for Emily Gould to go to school 3/6" and "A book for Thomas Hwell 2/-" (05/02). Gray thought most of the pauper apprentices sent to Birmingham could read and write (13/33).

Petty schools and the death of John Sandford

Alongside the charities grew the "petty schools", where a labourer, cobbler, tailor or weaver minded children for a small fee. Gray described working mothers leaving their children with such a teacher, who taught letters from a horn-book or a battledore passed from hand to hand. One carpenter cut the letters on wooden blocks and made up rhymes and prizes (05/02).

Welford's best-known petty school ended in tragedy. William Ingram was a master weaver whose wife Mary travelled the district selling fine linen while he minded the looms and kept school. One day a pupil, John Sandford, the carrier's son, was "very trying". Ingram, who was himself lame, hung the boy on a wall peg by his coat collar. When he turned round the boy was dead (05/02, 17/07). Ingram was tried, Gray says at Warwick Assizes for manslaughter, and imprisoned. He later returned, and his burial is in the register for 1809 (05/02, 17/07). The house stood near the entrance to Pool Close, and Gray's later account puts the weaving sheds and the school where the Shakespeare Inn now stands (17/07). Even this famous story has two dates: the 1790s in the 1957 article and in Ray, and "circa 1805" in Gray's later typescript (05/02, 10/31, 17/07).

Dames, academies and boarding schools

By the early nineteenth century Welford had several private schools kept by women in their own homes. Four are well attested.

Mary Hodgkins "taught school" at Blenheim Cottage, next to The Yews, from about 1800 to 1840. She came of yeoman stock, was lame, and was educated in the late 1790s under Rector John Hunt, who helped her set up her school. A photograph of her taken in the 1850s, in a spotted silk dress and lace cap with a crutch beside her, belonged to H. M. Woodward and was reproduced in the Stratford Herald on 28 August 1936 (17/07, 20/01). Woodward's aunts, the Misses Mills, began their schooling with her before going on to boarding school at Bengeworth (17/07).

The White House school in Chapel Street is where the sources trip over each other. Gray's 1957 article, followed by Ray, says a "Miss Hopkins" kept a select academy there and in 1806 sent out "exquisitely-written accounts" for teaching Miss Rebecca Mills writing (6s) and arithmetic (6s) (05/02, 10/31). In her later typescript Gray says the White House school for young ladies was kept from about 1820 to 1850 by the sister of James Mills of the Hollies and later by his daughter, Miss Rebecca Mills (17/07). Rebecca Mills is the pupil in one version and the teacher in the other. Ray also wondered whether the "Miss Hodgkiss" remembered by the 93-year-old C. J. Woodward in 1931 was really Miss Hopkins (10/31).

The Misses Hancox opened a school around 1840 in their home, now Four Gables on the High Street (17/07). It lasted remarkably long. The 1891 census lists Frances Hancox, 51, and her sister Elizabeth, 48, as "school governess" (48/07). When Woodward arrived in December 1902, "two unmarried sisters" of the family still kept a private school in the house (20/01).

Vine House was a private boarding school in 1851, run by Susannah George with a teacher and a scholar in the household (14/12, 10/31). A Mr R. Harris told Ray that his mother paid 3d a day there for pens, pencil and slate, before finishing her schooling at The Laurels (10/31). Villagers at a Society meeting in 1972 remembered schools at Vine House, The Laurels and the Hollies around 1860, where each child paid threepence a week and was given a slate and slate pencils (24/01). Ray adds that the Hollies school was run by a Mrs Lawrence and later a Mrs Wilson (10/31). A mid-Victorian directory also lists "William Poole's boarding school" in Welford (34/52).

The 1851 census gives a rough count of all this activity. An analysis in the archive finds four schoolmistresses (one at Weston, three in north Welford), one governess and one man described as "weaver and schoolmaster". It also counts 44 children described as scholars, 26 boys and 18 girls, across Welford, Weston, Bickmarsh and Little Dorsington (01/49). At Weston the schoolmistress was Elizabeth Fincher, born at Hampton Lucy, aged 46 in 1851 and still teaching ten years later (48/03, 48/04). For a parish of several hundred people, 44 scholars is a small number, and it shows how much schooling still depended on what parents could pay.

The village school, 1835 to 1902

Weston first

The neighbouring village had a proper school before Welford did. Records at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust show that in 1835 Lady Plymouth consented to the building of a school at Weston. Ray noted in the 1970s that the building had "not long ago" been turned into a house (10/31). Weston's teacher by 1851 was Elizabeth Fincher, and the 1871 census still records a schoolmistress in the village (48/03, 48/04, 48/05). An old Weston man writing around 1981 remembered the children of labouring families from outlying farms such as Knobbs and Locks walking in to Weston school (19/11-19). The building appears on maps of Weston alongside the church, vicarage and farm (46/14).

The curate, the chapel and a quarrel

The Welford school was the work of one man, the Rev. James Davenport. He came from a clerical dynasty. Earlier Davenports had been masters of the Stratford grammar school and vicars of Weston, and his father Charles had been headmaster there. His father Charles became rector of Welford in 1820 (19/02, 51/02). James came down from Oxford in the 1840s and served as his father's curate from about 1847. He succeeded him as rector in 1865 and held the living until he died in 1904 (10/31, 17/07, 46/98). Gray's 1957 article calls him rector already in 1847, but the directory and her own later account make clear he was then the curate (05/02, 17/07, 46/98).

His first idea was not a day school but a Church Sunday school, and it went badly. The Wesleyan Methodists had held meetings in the village since the 1790s and owned a chapel in Chapel Street from 1801 (44/31). They ran their own Sunday school, which began as a

place where adults and children were taught to read before they could be taught scripture. Their superintendent, the shoemaker Henry Hopkins, recalled that when he took charge at nineteen "there was no popular education" (44/31). Until then the Methodists had still attended morning service at the parish church, walking there in procession. Woodward remembered that the Methodist school children sat in the north gallery of St Peter's, with the band and singers in the west gallery (26/10).

Davenport called a meeting in the village room at the Bell to discuss a Church Sunday school. "Another Sunday School? This was too much!" Gray wrote. The Methodists stopped attending church, and "a rift between chapel and church started to appear, and increased as the years went by" (17/07). Colston's thesis, quoted by Ray, says the Anglican school was to put more weight on writing and doctrine (10/31). The Methodist historian Wendy Atkins found that relations between church and chapel were friendly "at all times, except for the period in the 1840's when education was discussed" (44/31). Woodward dated the break to when Davenport "took the living", which would mean 1865, but the other accounts place it in the 1840s (26/10).

Building the school

Undaunted, Davenport turned to a day school under the National Society, founded in 1811 to build Church of England schools. The Society would help, but he had to raise the building money himself. He begged a site from the owners of the Milcote estate, Elizabeth, Countess De La Warr, and her sister the Baroness Buckhurst (17/07). Then he wrote to friends and acquaintances for subscriptions of five shillings, half a guinea or a guinea, in the middle of what Gray called "the HUNGRY FORTIES", with poor harvests, dear bread and the Irish famine (17/07). Some of his letters survived to be quoted. In 1849 he wrote: "Six small girls are desirous of schooling and four boys. I have a schoolmistress and a lodging for her for which I pay personally 8/6 a week" (05/02).

The best-remembered letter concerns the floor. The building was finished except for a wooden floor that the regulations now required, and he could not find the money. "The school is ready. I have a teacher and books, the pupils are eager, but I cannot go ahead because the law now says we must have a redwood floor which will cost £22 and where I can find another £22 I do not know." A friend's reply rescued him: "My sister Annie tells me that the National Society consider a wooden floor a furnishing — they will give you a grant!" (05/02, 10/31).

The story is consistent in outline but not in figures:

- **Opening year.** 1852 in Gray's 1957 article and in Ray (05/02, 10/31); 1851 in Gray's later typescript, in the Society's nineteenth-century history and in a modern talk on the 1901 census (17/07, 40/01, 46/37–95). A 1971 note on The Croft says the school opened in 1863 (11/16). Notes on the Methodist chapel say "1865 Church School

opened" (44/31). The last two look like confusions with Davenport's institution as rector in 1865; the choice lies between 1851 and 1852.

- **The floor.** £22 in the 1957 article and Ray; £16 in Gray's later typescript (05/02, 10/31, 17/07).
- **The cost.** £328 for the building, in Gray's later typescript and the Society's history (17/07, 40/01).
- **The teacher's keep.** 8s 6d a week for a lodging in the 1849 letter; 5s 6d a week paid to the landlady, Mrs Joseph Blundell of The Croft, in Gray's later version and the 1901 talk (05/02, 17/07, 46/37–95).
- **The first pupils.** Six girls and four boys in the 1849 letter; six boys and five girls in Gray's later version (05/02, 17/07).

The first teacher was Miss Frances Edkins, who lodged at The Croft on Headland Road, later home of T. Holman, the Society's first chairman (10/31, 17/07). A guide to Weston church suggests she may be connected with the Adkins family of Milcote, whose memorials are in the chancel there (51/02). The Society's nineteenth-century history spells her name Adkins (40/01).

One room, a gallery and a spring

The building survived into living memory, and Ray told readers it was easy to pick out: "the tallest" part of the Headland Road school. Colston described it from the log books: a room "40ft x 16ft wide with walls 14ft high and a roof 20ft high at the collar beams", two fireplaces, earth closets at the end of the yard, and water "fetched daily from a nearby spring" (10/31). Gray, who knew people taught there, described "one large room with a gallery for the infants" (17/07). The building belonged to the church and stood on church land. The 1948 terrier still lists the school site under the church's property (19/22).



The steep-roofed red-brick building with tall narrow windows, on the left, is identified in a note filed with this undated colour print as the old school (11/56).

From National School to Board School

The Forster Act of 1870 set out to put an elementary school within reach of every child. Where voluntary provision fell short, elected school boards could build and run schools on the rates. Attendance to the age of twelve followed, and fees were abolished for most elementary schools from 1891 (10/31, 05/02). Kelly's Directory of 1897 says Welford's Board School was "formed in 1873" (46/98). Ray describes Welford and Weston as a "United District" under the school board (10/31). The Welford School Board district was wider than the parish. When Binton Bridges were freed of tolls in April 1893, the Snitterfield band led "over 200 children of the Welford School Board district", which covered Welford, Dorsington, Weston, Long Marston and Binton (31/12).

What the change meant for the old church school is not entirely clear from the archive. Later writers still call it the National School or church school, and the building remained church property. Yet the Parish Council held its first meeting on 20 December 1894 "at the Board School" (18/13), and Henry Hopkins, the Methodist superintendent, sat on the School Board (44/31). For a chapel leader to be helping run what had begun as the curate's church school says something about how far the 1840s quarrel had healed.

The teachers

The censuses let us put names to some of the women and men who kept the school between Miss Edkins and the end of the century.

Census	Teacher named	Notes
1861	Mary E. Grocock, 23, "village schoolmistress", born Leicester	Boarding with a labourer's family (48/04)
1881	Agnes Blundell, 22, schoolmistress, born Welford	Living with her mother Harriet (48/06)
1891	Olive Hancox, 23, school teacher; Minnie Blanche Hawkins, 15, pupil teacher	Olive was the decorator's daughter; Minnie the miller's (48/07)
1897	George Wright, master; Miss Hammond, assistant mistress	Room for 100, average attendance 51 (46/98)
1901	George Wright, 45, schoolmaster; Agnes Wright, 49, schoolmistress; Agnes M. Wright, 18, teacher	Living in Chapel Street (48/08)

Agnes Blundell may be the "Verney Blundell" whom a family history describes as a teacher by 1881. She lived round the corner on Headland Road and was teaching at Bishop's Itchington by 1891. In 1892 she married Tom Hawkins of the mill, later a school manager (46/15–36). The two names cannot be reconciled from the archive alone. Miss Hammond, according to an old Weston man, came from the eastern counties and married Albert Walton of Weston Glebe in 1900 (19/11–19).

The most substantial figure is George Thomas Wright. He was born at Newick in Sussex in about 1855, and his son Archie was born in 1884 at the School House at Thursley in Surrey, where George was then schoolmaster (11/37–38, 48/08). Family tradition says he had been private tutor to the young Edwin Lutyens at Thursley (11/54). Ray, by contrast, says Wright trained at Winchester alongside Lutyens; a later summary warns this does not fit Lutyens's known training and is probably family lore (10/31, 15/13). Wright's own memoir says he came to Welford in June 1894; a modern talk says 1895 (15/10, 46/37–95). He ran the Welford school while his wife Agnes, trained at Cheltenham, ran Weston's (10/31, 11/54). A teacher like him earned about £147 a year, against £46 for a farm labourer and £238 for the rector (46/37–95). His grandson Bob Wright later trained as a teacher himself and became deputy head at Bidford (11/54).

Inside the Victorian schoolroom

The Welford school log books, the day-by-day diary each head teacher had to keep from 1862, are not in the Society's archive. What survives are the extracts Joyce Colston copied for her thesis on rural education between 1870 and 1900, as quoted by Ray (10/31). They are second-hand, and the dates attached to them are sometimes vague, but they are the only view inside the classroom before living memory.

Cold, smoke and water

The Welford room began well. On his first visit in 1877 the inspector found it "well lighted and ventilated" and the furniture and apparatus satisfactory. Five years later another inspector found it cold and draughty, and the teacher let the infants stand round the fire several times a day "because of the intense cold" (10/31). The log books return to the temperature again and again. "In spite of two fires in the one room the temperature on cold winter days was sometimes only 30°F." In one bitter winter the room filled with smoke so often that the fires had to be put out, and "teacher and children shiver with cold". One entry simply says: "at the moment of writing it is impossible to see across the room" (10/31).

The infants' gallery became a small battle. In 1882 an inspector recommended building one, a set of raked benches so that small children could all see the teacher. In 1898 his successor complained that "the gallery is very inconvenient for little ones, and I fail to see that it serves any useful purpose". The managers refused to remove it. One of them suggested that the teacher "could reach remote children with a stick sufficiently long"; the teacher noted that he "assured him that we did not teach in this school, in this way" (10/31).

Water, drains and "the offices" were constant worries, as in most village schools. At Weston, villagers had been allowed to use the pump in the school yard until the managers banned it, declaring that "coming on to the premises engenders disrespect for any order, and is a drawback to discipline" (10/31). Weston also had a problem with curiosity. Villagers came to stare in at the windows, blinds fitted in 1877 kept out the light as well as the stares, and in 1884 the managers had the lower panes painted over (10/31).

Attendance

These conditions help explain why attendance stayed low. Children fell ill, and some walked long distances, from Dorsington for example. Many parents assumed that at harvest and pea-picking time their children would be in the fields rather than in school (10/31). Fruit and vegetables were Welford's main trade by the 1890s, so the demand for children's labour came at exactly the times the school wanted them (15/10, 46/98).

Even so, numbers grew. Ray gives Welford's roll rising from 38 to 72 and Weston's from 14 to 35 over the last decades of the century, in a parish of 561 people in 1881 (10/31). Kelly's Directory of 1897 puts the Board School's capacity at 100, with an average attendance of 51 (46/98). That suggests the 72 on Ray's roll did not all appear on any given day. Enforcement fell to an attendance officer. By the 1911 census that was Alfred Davis of Chapel House, a

boot maker and market gardener who also enumerated the census; he held the post until his death on Christmas Day 1930 (46/37–95, 48/09, 42/29).

The 1911 census shows the result in its household schedules. Children of five to fourteen are almost all entered as "School". At least one boy of eleven appears as "School (Half...)", apparently a half-timer, the system that let children work part of the day once they reached a set standard (48/09).



"Welford-on-Avon School Group 1", scratched into the negative. The girls' white pinafores and the boys' wide collars suggest about 1900 to 1914 (41/14).

Teachers and pupil teachers

One teacher, sometimes with a single assistant, might have seventy children aged four to twelve or thirteen in one room. Help came from pupil teachers: teenagers who taught by day, studied in the evenings, and sat examinations in the hope of becoming certificated teachers (10/31). The 1891 census catches one of them, Minnie Blanche Hawkins, aged fifteen, the miller's daughter (48/07). Welford was lucky in the 1890s. George and Agnes Wright were both trained and certificated, and the 1911 census still calls each of them "Trained Certificated Teacher", with their daughter Winifred an assistant teacher for the County Council (48/09). Two young women completed the staff in 1911: Frances May Hancock, living with her parents, and Beatrice Marsh, eighteen, boarding with the Bassons (48/12).

The inspector's visit

Once a year, sometimes twice, an inspector arrived, often a clergyman, and Ray called it "a very daunting occasion for both teacher and pupils" (10/31). He reported on the building and on what each child could do, and the grant depended on his verdict. Under the Revised Code each child was examined at one of six "standards". Ray printed the 1882 table as an appendix; its demands rise steadily (10/31):

Standard Reading

Arithmetic

I	A narrative in monosyllables	Figures up to 20; add and subtract up to 10 orally
II	The next narrative after monosyllables in the school reader	Simple addition or subtraction, and the multiplication table
III	A short paragraph from an elementary reader	Any simple rule as far as short division
IV	A short paragraph from a more advanced reader	Compound rules (money)
V	A few lines of poetry from the first-class reader	Compound rules (weights and measures)
VI	A short paragraph in a newspaper or modern narrative	Practice or bills of parcels

The inspectors' notes mix praise and threat. In 1879 a Weston inspector withheld part of the grant "because singing was not taught". Ray thought that unusual, since both schools normally sang and enjoyed performing for the inspectors. In 1886 Welford earned the "Good merit grant" for the first time. In 1893 the inspector noted that no scholar "had been presented to the science and Art department", and warned that a favourable report was needed the next year to keep the grant (10/31).

Registers were checked closely, and an unnamed Weston teacher of 1877 was repeatedly caught out. The register was found unmarked once, an excuse about a slow clock was accepted, and on another day the afternoon attendance had been marked at 11.15 in the morning. Finally the inspector wrote: "the teacher had not marked the register all the week, but because of the Queen's Jubilee, I do not feel disposed to recommend any penalty, but draw the attention of the Board to this grave dereliction of duty on the part of the mistress" (10/31). Ray does not say which jubilee, 1887 or 1897.

The school in village life

The children were a public presence beyond the classroom. On Sundays the Church school children filled the north gallery of St Peter's (26/10). They marched behind the band to free Binton Bridges in 1893 (31/12). When a new maypole went up in October 1896, the School Board gave a children's treat, with Henry Hopkins helping to entertain (44/31). When Davenport's widow and family left the rectory after his death in 1904, "the school children" joined the choir and parishioners in subscribing for farewell presents, and the Sunday school gave Miss C. Davenport a silver photo frame (23/84-90). The school had become, as Ray put it, "an accepted part of village life" (10/31).

A county school, 1902 to 1960

The 1902 Act and the managers

The Education Act of 1902 abolished the school boards and handed elementary schools to the county councils. Gloucestershire asked parishes how their schools should be managed. On 19 February 1903 Welford Parish Council resolved that the Board Schools of Welford, Weston-on-Avon and Dorsington should be grouped under one body of four managers: two appointed by Welford and one each by Weston and Dorsington (19/23). The miller Tom Hawkins was appointed on 12 March 1903. By November, however, the council recorded that it could not appoint a manager because "no person in the District is willing to take the office under the present circumstances". The minutes do not say what the circumstances were. Hawkins was appointed again in April 1904 (19/23).

H. M. Woodward later copied out the list of Welford's managers, which runs unbroken to 1964 (19/23):

Appointed	Manager
1903, 1904	Tom Hawkins
1907	Thomas William Skinner
1910	Edward Caleb Griffin
1913	Alfred Wincote
1919, 1925	Holtham Mills Woodward
1948	Rev. K. A. Gray (chairman)
1950 to 1952	G. E. Edginton; R. Worrall; Miss K. M. Goodman
1958, 1961, 1964	H. D. Kirk
1963	Leonard Cox

The Parish Council also took up technical education for adults. In 1900 to 1901 it asked Gloucestershire for its schemes, invited Clifford Chambers and Marston Sicca to join in, and arranged orchard lectures by a Mr Iggulden in November 1900, which were well attended. The county also offered twelve scholarships of £15 each (18/20). In 1906 the council called for a joint meeting before Long Marston Grammar School was closed. In 1910 it received the Board of Education's new scheme for John Cooper's Foundation, which turned the old grammar school endowment into a grant-giving charity (18/16, 60/08).

Under the 1910 scheme the Cooper governors paid exhibitions and maintenance grants for secondary or technical schooling, evening-class fees, apprenticeship help and practical training in woodwork, cookery, gardening and agriculture. They also funded a "Higher

Division" for pupils over twelve in a local elementary school, with an agricultural slant and bursaries of up to £2 10s (03/24, 60/08). Welford's representative governors were Edward Hancox (1910), Levi Stanley (1913) and H. M. Woodward from 1916 (18/16). In 1963 the foundation paid £157 in grants to 17 children across its four parishes; Bob Wright was its clerk until the end of 1964 (60/08).

From church school to council school

James Davenport died in 1904, and with him ended, in Gray's words, "the Davenport regime as rectors which had existed since 1820" (17/07). Ray says the school was "one of the first to be passed over to the Local Authority" soon after (10/31). Gray and the parish history give the year as 1906, when Welford became a council school under Gloucestershire, with the rector remaining chairman of the managers (17/07, 19/02). The building stayed church property. Gray says the county was still paying the rector and churchwardens a token rent of ten shillings a year at the end of the 1950s (17/07). In April 1906 the managers received a letter from the Board of Education about the use and letting of the premises (19/23).

In 1931 Welford and Weston moved from Gloucestershire into Warwickshire, so the school changed authorities a second time (60/08). Gray, writing from memory, gives the year as 1930 (17/07).

Three headmistresses

For the first half of the century the archive offers names and impressions rather than records. The old schoolroom was joined by a second classroom, known as "the Medway", with two assistant teachers besides the head (10/31). Ray collected memories of three headmistresses (10/31):

- **Miss Dale**, "ready to experiment", who took the children on nature walks and devised her own reading apparatus;
- **Miss Mawson**, who came from the girls' public school at Badminton and "apparently considered it no demotion" to apply for a village headship. An Alice Emily Mawson witnessed a Welford will in the 1930s (42/29);
- **Miss Bixby**, "the headmistress whom no-one seemed able to forget", a disciplinarian "not only in relation to the pupils, but also, and more frighteningly, to the pupil-teachers".

None of their dates are given. Miss Bixby, at least, can be placed. She was renting a village house on a yearly tenancy expiring in March 1927 (11/30). She organised the schoolchildren's procession and maypole dances at the new pole in 1927 (01/76, 01/77) and the Empire Day ceremony of 24 May 1938 (01/73, 01/74). The 1935 to 1937 jubilee and coronation committees dealt with her over processions, posies and a children's cinema show (57/01). A woman who grew up in the village in the 1930s remembered the many single

women left by the First World War, among them "Miss Bixby the headmistress of the school and her friend Miss Humphreys, known as Bix and Humph" (49/20).

Olive Hancox, the decorator's daughter who appears as a teacher in the 1891 and 1911 censuses, was still teaching at the village school during the First World War. She was engaged to Private Jim Matthews of Virginia Cottage, who died of wounds on 9 August 1917, and she never married (43/03, 48/11). A Mrs Timmis, on the staff at some undated point after the First World War, taught the children maypole dancing and invited Phyllis Eastgate to film it on 16mm (36/01).

War and evacuees

The Second World War brought, in Ray's list, "school milk and school meals, and a few evacuees" (10/31). Bernard Harris remembered Birmingham evacuees sharing the village school and the Memorial Hall with the village children in turns (36/13). The older children were already being sent elsewhere. Bernard Wilkes recalled leaving Welford school for the senior school at Bidford in 1941, just as evacuees arrived and its three classes of forty became five. There the pupils grew all the vegetables for the school dinners, which cost 3d, rising to 4d in 1943 to 1944. They also had twenty half-days off a year for the potato harvest, "so much better than the 3 R's" (36/06). Some went further. Harris recalled walking home from the grammar school in Stratford in the hard winter of 1947 when the buses stopped, "a long walk to Welford, especially up an icy Borden Hill" (52/09).

By this time, Ray says, Weston's pupils had been absorbed into the Welford school (10/31). The archive does not record when Weston's school closed.

Miss Higgs and the post-war school

Miss E. Higgs became headmistress in 1945 and stayed until 1969 (03/24, 10/31). She was also a village figure in her own right. She acted with the Amateur Dramatic Society, sat on the Festival of Britain and Coronation committees, and organised the children's teas and maypole dancing (55/01-03, 52/09, 62/01). Mary Green, at school in the late 1940s, remembered one building with a pointed front, a timber canteen at the side, three classrooms heated by iron stoves and the privy out in the field. Her teachers were Miss Higgs, Miss Smart, Mr Ainsworth and Miss Wilson (48/45).

The best record of the school in these years is the inspectors' report of 14 and 15 June 1955 (03/24). A new hutment with a classroom, indoor cloakroom, toilets and a small staff room had been finished in 1951. The partition in the main building had been moved to equalise the two old classrooms. Since 1951 the roll had risen to 91, and the inspectors found the school overcrowded. Forty-two infants were in the new room, with ten spilling into the staff room, and 25 and 26 juniors were crowded into the two old classrooms. The detached canteen, built for 50, was serving 69 meals a day.

The staff were four women: the headmistress, who taught the top class herself; an infants' teacher appointed in 1936; a teacher in her first year with the lower juniors; and "a capable young unqualified mistress" helping with the infants. The inspectors praised the infants' teaching, the juniors' reading and discussion, their drama, history, geography and nature study, and their manners at dinner. They wanted freer written English, more practical arithmetic, more expressive singing, bolder art in the upper classes and climbing frames for the infants. Their conclusion was that the children were "capable of more enterprising and advanced work than they are now doing". Someone who knew the school wrote on the cover: "A worthy report under Miss Higgs headship" (03/24).

The numbers then fell back for a while. A county planning report of 1962 recorded 74 pupils in a school that held about 90, and 100 after modernisation (06/09). It was already clear that the village was about to grow.

The new school, 1957 to the present

"For at least two hundred children"

In the late 1950s Welford began to grow quickly. Housing permits that had been for single houses, or four or six at most, were now sought for twenty or thirty at a time. A third council estate went up at Headland Rise, and young families filled new houses along the Headland. "The parish which had had no births for three years," Gray wrote, "became aware of babies in perambulators being wheeled through the village" (17/07). The 1962 county report counted a population of about 1,000, up from 787 in 1951, with some 90 new dwellings since 1951. It also noted that there was still no main drainage (06/09).

Gray chaired the Parish Council in 1959 to 1960 and claimed some credit for what followed (57/03, 17/07). After years of talks with the county planners, she persuaded the County Planning Committee to visit Welford "en masse" one summer morning. They went away convinced that the village needed careful planning, and that "a new school should be one of the first requirements". "For at least two hundred children," she told the county education officer, Mr Chevenix Trench (17/07). Her account is the only source for this episode, and she was not a modest narrator.

The county first bought the old church school buildings from the rector and churchwardens for £600. The money was invested for religious education schemes for Welford children (17/07). The Victorian schoolroom was kept, but as kitchen and dining room, where Gray recalled school dinners "with fresh fruit and vegetables" provided "with loving care" (17/07). Ray says the tall old room ended up "used finally only as kitchens" (10/31).

The playing field

The school also needed land. Herbert Shorthouse had given allotment land next to the school in Headland Road around 1940, and his deed already anticipated that part of it might one day become a recreation ground or school playing ground (59/01, 59/10). On 18

September 1957 the Village Trust Fund heard that Warwickshire wanted to buy 1.427 acres of the Bidston (Shorthouse) allotments to extend the school and give it a playing field (60/01). A later Parish Council chairman's letter says the Rural District Council acquired about 1.5 acres in December 1957 (59/10). By December 1959 the trustees were told that 1.515 acres had been sold. A condition of sale was that the school field should also serve as a children's playing field for the village (60/01).

Gray described the result as "a successful co-operative effort with lasting benefits to the village and best of all, with no acrimony" (17/07). The county education committee, the Shorthouse trustees, the Parish Council and the Village Trust divided the ground between them. The far end, by the Headland, became a playground for small children, with swings paid for by the Village Trust and mowing by the county (17/07). A typed set of "heads of licence" spells out the terms for the rest. The Parish Council could use the field from the end of school hours until lighting-up time, and from 9 a.m. on other days, for children up to eleven. It had to provide its own gate, lock it each evening and pay half the insurance (06/03). The field was laid out in 1961 to 1962 (57/03). As late as December 1971 the Village Trust paid £100 towards equipment for it (57/03, 58/08).

11 February 1966

The new buildings went up in the mid-1960s. Facing Headland Road were two classrooms and a staff room; further back were cloakrooms, a head teacher's room and "a fine hall" (10/31). Gray listed the improvements with feeling: well-lit classrooms, an office, an assembly hall that doubled as a gymnasium and a village meeting place, and hot and cold water on tap. There were "larger and smaller w.c.'s to suit juniors and primary children. (What a change from the enamel bowl of water on the top of the old iron parish document safe, which I remember well!)" (17/07).

The programme for the opening survives in Ray's paper. On Friday 11 February 1966, at three o'clock, the Bishop of Gloucester dedicated Welford-on-Avon County School. Miss E. Higgs, the headteacher, welcomed the visitors, and the chairman of the Warwickshire Education Committee formally opened it (10/31, 15/13). Ray names him "Alderman G. E. Steele"; Gray calls him "Alderman G. H. Steele" and names the bishop as Basil Guy (10/31, 17/07). The school was officially the "County Junior and Infants' School" in the licence for the field (06/03), and the "County Primary School" in trust and parish minutes (60/01).

Miss Higgs retired in 1969 and was followed by the school's first headmaster (10/31). The archive does not give his name.

Nursery and numbers

In 1975 a nursery section opened. Ray's paper names the teacher in charge as "Miss Jane Hicks" in one copy and "Miss Jane Nicks", with a query, in another, assisted by Mrs M. Hale (10/31, 15/13). At the time Ray wrote, about 1975 to 1976, the school had 147 pupils

including the nursery classes, five assistant teachers and a secretary (10/31). That was double the 74 of 1962.

The figures that survive for later years suggest the growth did not last. In a film about the village made in September 1990 and shown to the Society, the head, Mr P. Davies, said he had 86 children in four classes with 4.3 teachers (38/01). Two years earlier Bill Muirhead of Chapel Street had warned in the Herald that rising house prices were bringing in older, wealthier residents and families "more private school orientated". Unless the village was careful, he wrote, "the numbers available for the local school will start to diminish to a point where questions will be asked, should the village have its own school?". At that moment "the school is doing well", he admitted, and he hoped "our excellent village school" would continue to prosper (01/26).

By 2006 the picture had flipped again. When South Warwickshire Housing Association proposed new homes off Barton Road, Councillor Peter Barnes argued against them partly because "the school was full" (42/09). These three figures, 147 in 1975, 86 in 1990 and "full" in 2006, are all the archive offers, and they may be measured on different bases. The Society's minutes and cuttings could be searched further, but the school's own admission records are not in the collection.

The school as village hall

From the 1960s the hall became one of Welford's public rooms. The Parish Council met there, the Bridge Club, Brownies, Guides, Cubs and Scouts used it, and Silver Jubilee services in 1977 were held on the playground (03/141, 03/142, 18/09). The Society itself hired the hall in September 1985 for £12.05 (27/01-09). The great village meeting of January 2006, when 300 residents queued outside to oppose the Barton Road houses, was held at the school (42/10). There was a PTA with discos and clothes shows by the late 1980s, and an annual School Gala by 1977 (01/26-33, 03/142).

The children kept up the village's oldest custom. Maypole dancing by the schoolchildren runs through the archive from Miss Bixby's processions of the 1920s and 1930s to Miss Higgs's displays at the river festivals of the 1950s (01/76, 52/09). It continued on 5 July 1991 (11/44) and on 23 May 2012, when the school's dancing opened the Diamond Jubilee programme (53/43). When the Princess Royal opened the Holland Meadow homes in Barton Road, she visited Welford Primary School, received a bouquet from Rebecca Perkins, aged ten, and watched a maypole dance organised by the teacher Annette Haines (29/18). On 30 May 2012 residents who had lived in the two villages throughout the Queen's reign were gathered at the school for a Diamond Jubilee presentation (50/01, 50/02).

In June 2010, at the Society's archive weekend, a pupil, "Master S. Lowe of Welford School", gave a talk on "The History of Welford School" with Peter Deakin (03/142). The text of that talk, if it survives, is not in the archive.

Beyond the day school: Sunday schools, reading room and play school

The chapel Sunday school

For much of the nineteenth century the most successful school in Welford was not the day school at all but the Wesleyan Sunday school in Chapel Street. The chapel was conveyed to nine trustees in 1801, "not much more than a barn" (44/31). In the early years, according to notes filed with the chapel history, it was used "for Reading & Writing lessons + Singing and Sunday School" because there was "no State Education" (44/31). Henry Hopkins, a Chapel Street shoemaker born in 1820, became its superintendent at nineteen and held the post for about sixty years. His obituary in April 1899 recalled that the children "had to be taught the rudiments of education before they could receive the teaching of the School" (44/31).

The Stratford Herald, from 1860, lets us see the Sunday school at its height. In May 1878 the anniversary sermons drew congregations from Stratford, Bidford and beyond, so that "many were unable to get in". The next evening the teachers and scholars gave a service of song, "Eva", from Uncle Tom's Cabin. Winter brought a lecture on volcanoes, complete with a working model, and magic-lantern shows of The Pilgrim's Progress (44/31). At the January treat of 1886, 190 children, teachers and friends sat down to tea at five o'clock. The tables were then re-laid with nuts, figs, oranges and mince pies for 200, and presents were delivered by a mock "postman" (44/31).

The numbers on the books ranged from 18 at the lowest to 112 at the highest. In February 1896 the school reckoned that "since 1846, 50 years, – 800 scholars have passed through this village Sunday School". By 1899 the roll was down to 43, which the chapel historian put down to the falling population (44/31). Three future Methodist ministers came out of the nineteenth-century Sunday school, and one more since (44/31). In 1898 the editor of The Quiver awarded Hopkins a bronze medal for 64 years of Sunday school work (44/31). A tablet to him survives in the chapel (15/05).

The church Sunday school

The Anglican Sunday school that caused so much trouble in the 1840s went on beside the day school. Miss White, who came to Welford in 1889 and died aged 94, taught in it "when Mr Davenport was rector", alongside Miss Olive Hancox and Roland Harris's father (01/90–99). When the Davenports left the rectory in 1904, the teachers and scholars gave Miss C. Davenport a silver photograph frame (23/84–90). Mary Green, growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, remembered Sunday school, choir and fetes at the vicarage under the Rev. Karl Gray (48/45). By 1977 the parish news listed a monthly "Family and Sunday School" service at Welford (03/142). In 2001 the Methodists noted with some regret that the village's two children's groups, "Sunrisers" and "Sunsetters", were led by "a very capable and enthusiastic Anglican lady" (44/31).

Reading room and lectures

Adult learning in the village had fewer institutions. In October 1898 a benefactor, Mr Green, gutted two timber-framed cottages he had bought and restored, and gave the villagers a

single large room as a Reading Room and Gymnasium. It was a place "to learn the news of the day, to improve their minds generally, or to spend a comfortable evening" (08/20–29). The 1911 census lists the Reading Room as one of the village's three public buildings, with the church and the school (48/09). Two years after the gift, the Parish Council's orchard lectures of November 1900 brought county technical education to the village (18/20). The Cooper foundation went on paying evening-school fees and training costs for young people well into the twentieth century (03/24, 60/08).

The Women's Institute, which a holiday visitor remembered village women discussing around 1912, became another source of talks and classes. Miss White was its first secretary (36/01, 01/90–99).

Youth club, play school and playgroup

After the Second World War Welford and Weston had a joint Youth Club, whose minutes and accounts from 1949 to 1988 were deposited with the parish council records at Warwick (50/41). Mary Green became, at eighteen, "the youngest youth club leader in Warwickshire" around 1958 to 1959 (48/45). Brownies, Guides, Cubs and Scouts met in the school hall in the 1970s (03/142).

The youngest children were catered for outside the school before its 1975 nursery opened. In December 1971 the "Play School" held a Christmas party at the Memorial Hall where, the parish magazine reported, Father Christmas's arrival caused "almost a riot" (19/51). A pre-school playgroup was one of the village groups that gave trees in Welford's planting year of 1973 to 1974 (13/09). A later note about a village family mentions a Mary, by then David Smith's wife, who "does play school" (01/35). These scraps are all the archive holds on pre-school provision, and they do not show whether the playgroup and the play school were the same body.

Conclusion

Four hundred years of schooling in Welford fall into three long phases. Until the 1840s, learning depended on whoever was willing to teach and whoever could pay. That meant a chantry priest or rector, a charity worth three pounds a year, a weaver with a room to spare, or a lame gentlewoman in Blenheim Cottage. Children were apprenticed rather than examined, and the churchwardens bought shoes so that a boy could "go to ye school". From 1851 or 1852 to the 1960s, the village had one school in one building, begun by a determined curate against the resistance of his Methodist neighbours. It was cold, smoky and overcrowded, but it became, in Ray's phrase, "an accepted part of village life". It passed from church to board, from board to Gloucestershire and from Gloucestershire to Warwickshire, while the same tall room went on teaching. Since 1966 Welford has had a modern county primary school, built for a village that grew fast in the late 1950s, with its own field, nursery and hall.

Some threads run through all three phases. The church was there at every stage, from the Tewkesbury monks to the Bishop of Gloucester dedicating the new building in 1966, and the rector chaired the managers well into the twentieth century. The chapel played a larger part than the church histories admit. Its Sunday school taught several generations to read, and its quarrel with Davenport shaped how the day school began. Outside money mattered too: Rawlins, Cooper and Eden in the eighteenth century, the Countess De La Warr and the National Society in the nineteenth, and the county and the Shorthouse allotments in the twentieth. And the children were always part of the village's public life, in the church gallery, at the freeing of the bridges, and above all round the maypole.

The weakest part of this history is its reliance on three secondary accounts. Gray wrote with a parish councillor's pride and an eye for a story, and her two versions do not always agree. Ray drew heavily on Colston, whose thesis and the log books it quoted are not in the archive. Recovering the log books, which the school or the county record office may still hold, would do more than anything else to put this history on firmer ground.

Where the sources disagree

Point	One version	Other version(s)
Pre-Reformation school	Tewkesbury monks taught "foure boyes" in the 1530s (05/02, 10/31)	"No record or even tradition" of any monastic school (17/07); both by Gray
Philip Jones's school	Rectory or Church End Lane cottages (05/02)	Ivens cottage, Church End Lane (17/07); Tower View (19/02, 19/45); Box Tree Cottage (47/70); Glebe Cottage (18/28)
Philip Jones's dates	Rector 1581 to his burial in 1592 (17/07)	Sale of his goods as "parson of Welford" in 1589 (19/37)
Rawlins charity	Will of 22 October 1727, eight boys (gravestone, 17/07)	Six boys (05/02, 10/31); dated 1721 (01/68); "six children" from the Izod estate in 1807 (26/10)
End of Rawlins charity	Passed to Gloucester County Education Committee in 1908 (10/31)	"Disappeared" in 1903 to 1904; transferred to the Board of Education by 1908 (17/07)
Cooper's charity	William Cooper, 1634, 24 boys including 4 from Welford (17/07)	John Cooper, Weston, 1643, 22 children (10/31); will of 27 February 1643 (03/24); will of 21 February 1648 (60/08)
Ingram's petty school	1790s (05/02, 10/31)	About 1805 (17/07)

White House school	Miss Hopkins taught Rebecca Mills in 1806 (05/02, 10/31)	Kept about 1820 to 1850 by James Mills's sister, then by Rebecca Mills herself (17/07)
Davenport's role in 1847	Became rector in 1847 (05/02)	Curate from about 1847; rector from 1865 (10/31, 17/07, 46/98)
Opening of Welford school	1852 (05/02, 10/31)	1851 (17/07, 40/01, 46/37–95); 1863 (11/16); 1865 (44/31)
The floor	Cost £22 (05/02, 10/31)	Cost £16 (17/07)
First teacher's keep	8s 6d a week for a lodging (05/02)	5s 6d a week to Mrs Blundell (17/07, 46/37–95)
First teacher's name	Frances Edkins (10/31, 17/07)	Frances Adkins (40/01, 51/02)
When the chapel broke with the church	The 1840s, over the Sunday school (17/07, 44/31)	When Davenport "took the living", i.e. 1865 (26/10)
George Wright's arrival	June 1894 (15/10)	1895 (46/37–95)
George Wright and Lutyens	Private tutor to the young Lutyens at Thursley (11/54)	Fellow student at Winchester (10/31), doubted in 15/13
Transfer to the county	"Soon after" Davenport's death in 1904 (10/31)	1906 (17/07, 19/02)
Move to Warwickshire	1931 (60/08)	1930 (17/07)
Opener in 1966	Alderman G. E. Steele (10/31)	Alderman G. H. Steele (17/07)
Nursery teacher, 1975	Miss Jane Hicks (15/13)	Miss Jane Nicks, queried (10/31)
Teacher in 1881	Agnes Blundell, 22, schoolmistress (48/06)	Verney Blundell, teacher by 1881 (46/15–36)

Thin periods and open questions

- **1592 to 1727.** Apart from Trapp at Stratford and Astley's pupils at the Rectory, the archive has nothing on Welford schooling for over a century.

- **The Victorian log books.** Known only through Colston's thesis as quoted by Ray (10/31). Neither the books nor the thesis is in the archive.
- **Weston's school.** Its opening in 1835 is recorded, but not when it closed or when its pupils moved to Welford.
- **1904 to 1945.** Three headmistresses (Dale, Mawson, Bixby) are remembered, but none of their dates of service is recorded, and there is no inspection report before 1955.
- **After 1969.** The first headmaster is not named. After 1975 the only heads or pupil numbers in the archive are Mr P. Davies and 86 children in 1990 (38/01).
- **The 2010 talk.** "The History of Welford School" by S. Lowe and Peter Deakin (03/142) may hold later material, but its text is not in the collection.

Sources

The main sources are D. Ray, "Education in Welford and Weston", about 1975 to 1976 (10/31; copies 13/32, 15/01, 15/13); Gilda Gray, "Schools in Welford", parish magazine, January 1957 (05/02; summary 13/33); and Gilda Gray, "Schools in Welford", typescript, early 1980s (17/07). Other items are cited in the text by folder and item number. All are in the Welford and Weston Local History Society archive.