



Distinctive and Inclusive The National Society and Church of England Schools 1811–2011

Lois Loudon

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Author's note

I hope that, on reading this book, children in the middle years of schooling will feel inspired to find out more about their own school's history. This they can put into the background provided by this history of the National Society. It provides an account of some of the major changes in education and Church administration which have affected the National Society and church schools. It is quite clear that the pace of change over the 200 years has increased dramatically making it difficult for those in schools to remember what the requirements used to be.

Every author has drawn upon many people and institutions for ideas and support. This history is no exception. I want to offer grateful thanks to the following:

- The National Society for supporting this research.
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Lois M R Loudon
May 2012

Introduction

Church of England schools have been part of the educational landscape in England and Wales for many centuries. Perhaps surprisingly in 2011 they are not only still surviving but flourishing. In the first ten years of this century there was the greatest growth in numbers of children attending church schools since the National Society started building schools.

This history of the National Society has been commissioned to mark the 200th anniversary of its foundation in 1811. The purpose of the Society, as expressed the original title, was 'the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in the Principles and Practices of the Church of England' to be achieved through raising a fund to provide grants for the building of schools. The simple objective of Joshua Watson and his fellow Founders was to establish a Church of England school in every parish in England and Wales.

While that target was never completely reached the achievement of the first 50 years was extraordinary, with, for the first time, a systematic provision of schooling for the poor being established. Not only were 12,000 schools built, staffed and maintained but subsequent state provision of schools was directly influenced and determined by their foundation.

With the foundation of so many schools there was an immediate problem of teacher supply and the initial model of training older pupils to teach the younger children rapidly became inadequate. Teacher training colleges were established, first by the National Society itself and then by dioceses. The Church of England established the first higher education institutions open to women, and the network of church teacher training colleges persisted well into the 1980s. More recent developments have seen a high proportion of those colleges close or become part of another HE institution and to all intents and purposes lost.

Their heirs are the 11 universities or university colleges with a Church of England foundation, still providing teacher education but now in the context of much wider provision. This book cannot tell their story except in the barest outline. They are entirely funded by the state now; some have merged with other institutions and for all there is a real question over how they understand and express the foundation in the daily life of the university.

There has been enormous social change over the 200 years and this history does not attempt to deal with that in detail. Rather it tells the story of what the National Society sought to do and why it sought to do so, using the records of Society itself. There will be other studies to fill out the bigger picture and the vast amount of archival material uncovered will provide the basis for future research.

2011 sees the statutory education system in England¹ undergoing fundamental change as the framework in place since 1944 is taken apart and new expectations and players introduced. Academy status enables individual schools to move away from local authority control to become quasi-independent, and private and commercial groups have grown up to manage and run publicly funded schools. There are clear echoes here of the start of mass education, when schools were started and run by voluntary effort.

The current changes present the Church of England with great challenges in continuing to maintain its school provision. It is the largest provider, with 4,800+ schools educating 1 million children, served by 42 diocesan education teams supporting and resourcing the associated governors, staff and clergy. There are schools in every type of context from tiny rural primary schools to 10 form entry urban secondary schools. The pupil population is similarly mixed with every community and faith represented. There are very high performing schools and those that are vulnerable and struggling. There is a high degree of parental and community confidence in the schools and a strong desire in the school themselves to provide education that is distinctive and explicitly rooted in the Christian foundation.

Nevertheless demands are being placed on the Church's support systems for the schools that will require them to adapt rapidly and confidently and the next 5 years will test whether they can do that. The National Society will be at the heart of those changes, providing, as it has done from the start, the motor enabling forward movement.

A significant feature of the changes taking place in English education is the reworking of the role of central and local government. During the early years of the National Society's work central government played no role in the provision of education, nor of any other form of welfare or social care. The Church of England was not the only church to see education of the poor as an urgent priority. The non-conformist churches were also active in building schools through what became known as the British and Foreign School Society. The government did become involved fairly early on in the 19th century, providing grants to the societies to help with costs of building schools. From that moment there was a tension for the National Society. What strings were attached to government money and how far would the Society's control of its schools be compromised?

As the century progressed, more and more public money was channelled through the Society and with it came increasing government reach into the schools. An early arena of conflict was inspection with the church attempting to resist moves to tie funding to inspection reports.

The 1870 Education Act set up the mechanism for board schools, paid for from public taxation and the balance between the societies and the government began to shift. From a mainly voluntary system with some infill where there weren't enough places a rapid building programme saw board schools becoming established particularly in the towns and cities.

The two systems existed independently but as the board schools grew, funded by local rates, the ability of the National Society church to raise the funds to maintain its schools

diminished. By the end of the century the system was in crisis. The Church was unable to maintain the buildings or pay the going rate for teachers as expectations of standards and training were raised ever higher.

With the formation of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in 1902 there were still three times as many voluntary schools, as board schools but their provision was below standard and there was no capacity to improve. The eventual solution was for all running costs of voluntary schools to be provided from public funds while the voluntary societies retained responsibility for building repairs. Even that outcome, crucial though it was to the survival of church schools, was bitterly contested on both sides. As always for the Church the issue was one of surrendering control and losing the ability to shape the religious dimension. For the opposition it was the use of public funds to support a religious institution. The fears of the National Society and other churches were realised. LEAs withheld funding due to voluntary schools, or, as in Wales, ignored their responsibilities towards them. It was a very uneasy partnership.

This position was cemented in the 1944 Education Act which created two categories of voluntary schools differentiated by the degree of LEA control in exchange for its meeting more of the costs.

The incorporation of church schools into the publicly funded state system of education had to happen. The cost to the state of taking over church schools for its own provision was too great – then as now the ownership of the sites and buildings lies with the provider - and the need for improving standards could not be met by the National Society alone. The Church however fought every step of the way to retain control of its schools, not just for the sake of retaining power, but so that the religious character of the schools was secured and maintained.

The relationship between the voluntary societies and government continued to change in the post war years. Ever increasing expectations of the education system to deliver a new Britain placed the local authorities in the lead with the church schools either ignored or falling to keep up. The state determined everything about education and the church retreated into a narrow concern with RE and worship. The diocesan authorities continued to perform the statutory duties to do with maintaining the buildings and appointing governors but conceded most other functions to the state.

Confidence gradually returned with a significant turning point around the 1988 Education Reform Act. With the relaxation of LEA control over admissions and a greater degree of parental choice helped by the evidence revealed by league tables that church schools were performing well, shifted both community and church attitudes to its schools. Denominational inspection was revamped providing all church schools, especially controlled schools for whom the church connection had dwindled to a quaint leftover, with both more clarity about how to develop the church foundation and the incentive to do so in time for the next inspection.

The 2001 Dearing Report was published at precisely the right time to reinforce and focus this upswing. The preceding debate in General Synod resulted in a positive statement of

the role of church schools in the mission of the church with its encouragement to rebuild relationships with parishes.

To contemporary eyes the most extraordinary feature of the development of education in England and Wales is the central and continuing role of religion. Every major piece of education legislation was characterised by violent and bitter disagreements over the religious instruction and worship required in schools. There was little debate about the rest of the curriculum but huge controversy about religion. The relationships between Christian denominations were acrimonious, encompassing political and social disagreements as well as doctrinal difference.

There was however agreement from the start that education without attention to the spiritual and religious training of the pupils was worthless – even impossible. That meant not only providing lessons but also expecting attendance at worship every day. This was even more important for the children of the poor who had probably been unreached by the churches and therefore needed religious instruction more than anything else. Whatever else the schools were doing they should be forming character through the tenets of the Gospel, to produce moral, God-fearing citizens.

The Church of England was deeply implicated in these debates from the start. As the established church it had a unique role in relation to the country as a whole but that had always co-existed with other denominations maintaining their independence, for much of the time at great cost to themselves. The significant presence in the early 19th century was of the nonconformist churches and the initial conflicts over education were with them, expressed through their own society. It wasn't until later in the century that the Roman Catholic schools began to be built following Catholic emancipation.

The antagonism between the Church of England and nonconformist churches was expressed in opposing views about the content of religious instruction in schools. For the National Society this could only happen through the 'excellent liturgy and catechism' of the Church of England, and so that was what the Church of England schools would provide. Children would be taught the catechism and they would attend worship regularly.

The British and Foreign School Society, reflecting the broader denominational base of the foundation believed religious instruction should be 'undenominational', a more general Christian education not shaped by a single creed.

These were the broad lines of dispute that continued throughout the century, re-ignited with the forming of board schools. What kind of religious instruction and worship would be provided on the rates? The hard won compromise was the famous Cowper-Temple clause, specifying that 'no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the school'.

Written into the English and Welsh systems from the start was the statutory role of religious teaching and worship. While challenged even in 1870 by those who believed religion had no role in schools that expectation has never been repealed and government

support has been restated time and again. Religious education in state funded schools is a different activity in 2011, signalled by the change of name, encompassing the major religious traditions of the world and with expected outcomes that do not include conversion or commitment on the part of the pupils.

It is still however rooted in the curriculum and this is a direct result of the involvement of the churches in the provision of education.

The nature of Religious Education (RE) in Church of England schools has also changed. Commitment to daily worship persists, with visits to church especially on festivals and holy days, but with a clear understanding that pupils are not there as part of the religious community. Understanding worship as an activity promoting the spiritual development of all pupils of whatever faith background or none, is just as evident in Church of England schools as community schools. There is significant involvement of Church of England clergy and members of parish communities, leading worship in church or in school. Their aim is to enable all children to understand something of the nature and impact of worship in the Christian tradition from the inside, and let that help shape their own emergent spirituality.

The aims of RE in Church of England schools look very similar to aims for RE in community schools. The original clear commitment to bringing children up as members of the church of England has shifted as understanding of the educational processes has changed and as the population of the country has changed.

The development of broader, non-confessional aims and resources for RE itself owes much to the input of Church of England. The National Society published resources for schools that were equally applicable in community as Church schools. Teachers and diocesan advisors contribute to the local processes determining RE syllabuses and continuing support for all schools. In fact with the demise of local authority subject advisors Church of England diocesan RE advisors are now providing the bulk of the advisory support for schools.

The commitment to serving all the children who attend Church of England schools and their families, whatever their faith background, has become one of the threads that links contemporary schools with this history. As the national church, the whole nation was its parish and all children were to be the beneficiaries of the school system. Today that determines the distinctive approach to RE: bringing children up in the faith is not the only or necessarily the first purpose. Recognising the needs of other faith communities and of those of no faith also shapes the RE in Church schools.

This is in more or less sharp contrast to the practice in other schools with a religious foundation. While Methodist schools would be even clearer about their purposes in serving all the children living in the neighbourhood, schools with a Roman Catholic, Jewish or Muslim foundation (and indeed the very small numbers of schools with other religious or Christian foundation) have a different history. The place of schools within the self-understanding and perceived needs of the religious communities has meant the retention of a more confessional approach to RE. The school has a much more defined

role in building and sustaining the community, often within a context of public attack and discrimination. RE in those schools is a necessary adjunct to the parental role in bringing children up within the community.

Subsequent reports from the Church of England have recognised this difference from the 1970s on. Anglican Diocesan syllabuses, where they exist, are generally indistinguishable from local authority syllabuses, recommending that pupils learn about the other major faiths as well as Christianity, and rarely offering any specific Anglican teaching.

However, this approach may be under pressure. With anxieties about the quality of RE teaching in Church schools rising, especially in relation to the teaching of Christianity, the National Society intends to commission and publish a new resource. This will provide a scheme of work for Church schools so that all children leave with a sound understanding of the Christian faith filtered through the Anglican perspective. This does not mean a return to confessional RE designed to produce adherents to the faith. It does however recognise that the first component to taking faith seriously is a more than basic understanding of what faith teaches and means.

There is a wide degree of misunderstanding about Church schools, largely fostered by the lobby campaigning to remove their ability to determine for themselves those features that make them distinctive. The Church of England's renewed confidence in its schools leads inevitably to a renewed attack. Some of the grounds are very similar to 1870; some are rooted in a lack of understanding of the Church of England's position and practice. The best form of defence is the practice within those schools, the commitment to every single child, whoever they are and whatever their religious affiliation or lack of it.

The predominant mode of engagement of religious organisations in education systems world-wide is outside state funded systems, running fee paying schools according to their religious convictions. In England and Wales Church of England schools, and the remains of the non-conformist schools², offer a different, unique model: schools provided by the Church, funded from public moneys, for the benefit of all.

At a national level, the National Society has proved adept at reshaping itself to meet new demands and expectations. One challenge, as this history shows, is that of leading change, particularly in the curriculum, rather than being content to follow the most recent (and often secular) initiative. One way of expressing this is to ask how Christian values – for instance, that every child is a child of God and is infinitely precious – should influence educational provision. How would that lead us to challenge the, often unexamined, assumptions which underpin the current curriculum, school organisation and its legislative framework.

The structure, governance and priorities of the National Society have shifted, sometimes very significantly, as the educational landscape evolved. As it stands on the cusp of a new educational era perhaps a new structure is needed to meet the present challenges, one perhaps as plainly intelligible to the outside world as that chosen by our founders. Despite hostility, profound challenges and radical social and societal changes, Joshua

Watson and his colleagues were determined that the poorest, most disadvantaged and marginalised would have the opportunity of an education that did more than fit them to be small cogs in a great a soulless machine but that recognised that they were God's creatures and precious to Him.

It is in that sense of hope and of service which comes across most strongly in this narrative of what the National Society has done and why it has done so in that particular way. It is the Society's determination to continue to provide for the education of the nation which drives its current work – and that of the next 200 years.

Revd Janina Ainsworth
General Secretary, 2007–

NOTES

1. The National Society still encompasses Anglican schools in Wales but Welsh education has taken a different direction since devolution. See the Review of Church in Wales schools published 2009 for a more detailed account of the Welsh context.
2. Most of the schools were transferred to the new state system post 1902 with the exception of some Methodist schools. There are now 32 Methodist schools and a similar number of joint Anglican Methodist schools formed as local schools became unviable and amalgamated.

Chapter 1

The origins and context of the National Society

Summary

The National Society was established to provide universal elementary education for the children of the poor. It was not the first organisation to assert the need for this, but embodied the Anglican church's first large-scale modern engagement with the idea. Its founders recognised the potential of the monitorial system of mutual instruction that was being promoted at the start of the nineteenth century, and sought to ensure a specifically Anglican framework for the project of mass education that it enabled.

1.1 Pre-history

Education in England and Wales was, until about 140 years ago, totally provided by the Christian church so that all could worship God. Initially this meant ensuring a supply of priests to carry out the sacraments; later, with the Protestant Reformation and the publication of the Bible in English, it meant that all had to be able to read God's word. The National Society (Church of England) for Religious Education made a major contribution to this work over the last two hundred years. It is thanks to many of its members and countless others who devoted their time and money to the provision of schools and teachers that this country has an educational system in which religious education plays a significant role.

Why was the National Society necessary? In 1800, England was considered to be a Christian state: in fact, to some, Church and state were but two aspects of the same society. Anglicans believed that an established Church was a necessary constituent of any civilised community. This would ensure that Christianity was taught and mediated to the people, that the state observed Christian principles in its laws and policy and reduced the fear of revolution. But Nonconformists, who were still discriminated against, argued that the state had no God-given right to control the religion of anybody. Consequently, they denied the state the right to perform any duty which might lead to religious control. They were prevented from holding civil and military posts because the Test and Corporation Acts, although not enforced, were still on the statute books; they could not attend university (only Oxford and Cambridge in England); they had to be married and buried by Anglican, Quaker or Jewish rites; and they had to pay rates for the upkeep of the parish church. This division of theology and outlook meant that there were very different views about the teaching of religion. But the Church of England was only just rising from its torpor, and realising that, with declining attendances, many

people had no connection with the Church at all. In part this was due to the legal difficulty in setting up new parishes. The result was that the distribution of parish churches did not match population needs.

With the sharp rise in population, it was clearly becoming more difficult to provide education for all the children of the poor. Sunday schools could not cover the same amount of ground as regular weekday schools. But should the poor be educated? Some opposed any form of education for the poor: there was no need for the working classes to be able to read – such an ability might give them ideas above their station. On the other hand, there were three interwoven motives for providing them with some schooling: religious, intellectual and utilitarian. The French Revolution concentrated minds. Educating the working classes could be seen as a prop to law and order, teaching them to accept their lot in life. This also linked in to the religious reasons: the poor are always with us and always will be, so it was the duty of the rich (and good for them) to help to alleviate the poor's condition and help them to help themselves. Reading was essential for understanding the Bible, and would enable the workers to have a clearer view of middle class values of sobriety, thrift, regular work – in other words improve their morality. It might prevent some of their renowned profligacy and reduce the number in prison. Surveys of those in prison showed that few of them could read: false logic therefore indicated that if people could read then they would be more law abiding.

Clearly at this time, there were schools already in existence, the main types being those founded by the SPCK and Sunday Schools. By 1698, when The Society for the Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was established at the instigation of Rev Dr Thomas Bray and four friends, it has been estimated that there were 460 charity schools. The purpose of the SPCK was to "counteract the growth of vice and immorality", which were caused, they thought by "gross ignorance of the principles of the Christian religion". To do this, they planned to assist Christian teaching both at home and abroad by encouraging charity schools, libraries in deaneries and on plantations, the distribution of pamphlets, and missionaries. At its first meeting on 8 March, they resolved that they would consider how to "further and promote that good design of erecting Catechetical Schools in each parish in and about London." ¹ Founders of schools were expected to give personal attention to them; the only financial support was in the form of insurance so that a parish knew that any deficit in establishing the school would be covered by the SPCK. The purpose of the schools was to teach the children to read the Bible, learn the catechism, be "immunized against the contagion of Popery" and be socially conditioned to their station in life.²

The SPCK described how to go about setting up a school and running it, a model that was later adopted by the National Society. A few local worthies would meet and get together a group of trustees, usually the vicar and churchwardens and representatives of the subscribers; they would then find a suitable building and teachers. The hardest part was to find the funds to keep the school going after the initial rush of enthusiasm; sources were regular subscriptions, legacies, sermons and retiring collections in church – but often it was left to the clergy to put their hands in their own pockets. These same clergy had the responsibility of the religious instruction, in particular, teaching the Catechism, while the teacher dealt with reading and, possibly, writing and arithmetic. Rural children

might be taught useful crafts: spinning, sewing, knitting, ploughing were common. SPCK activity in this work had petered out by about 1730. Clearly, the charity schools could not reach all children; they were particularly scarce in some rural areas and in the growing urban towns.

Wales had very different circumstances from England. There was much more poverty, a huge gap between the landowners and those working on the land, and two languages. Clergy were almost as poor as the workers, bishops were usually Englishmen. Rev Thomas Gouge was expelled from his living in Southwark, and, having some Welsh friends, visited the country, discovering that there was a desperate need for Bibles in Welsh. He founded the Welsh Trust, a group of Englishmen and Welshmen, Anglican and Dissenter; its aims were to provide Welsh literature, particularly the Bible, and found schools so that the people could read their Bibles. After Gouge's death, the movement petered out owing to controversy about which language should be used.

The SPCK, with four of its five founders having Welsh connections, took up the challenge, opening schools in the principality. The next to drive education forward was Rev Griffith Jones, rector of Llanddowror in Carmarthenshire, from about 1730. He developed the notion of circulating schools, operated by a group of teachers who travelled around during the winter months, teaching, in a concentrated way, reading of the Welsh Bible. Books were provided by the SPCK – all in Welsh. Any convenient building was used: church, vicarage, farmhouse; children and adults were equally welcome. Funds were raised in London. Griffith Jones left the system to his friend Madam Bevan, so it continued until her death, but after that there was no leadership to acquire the necessary funds.

Another form of schooling was provided by the Sunday School movement. For centuries, the children of the poor worked on the land or helped their parents in other ways. Population increased and had a tendency to move into towns as the factories developed. The machines in them became such that they could be managed by children. If the children were working long hours in the factories or in the fields, then the only time when they were free was on a Sunday; the only alternative to this was to make the working day shorter and provide schooling in the workplace – which would lead to reduced profits.

Sunday schools existed in England for many years; clergy of various denominations often ran schools, principally for confirmation. However, Robert Raikes has been credited with the development of the idea in 1781 by the publicity he achieved. Meeting on a Sunday had many advantages: the children would not lose any pay, and middle class volunteers were available to teach. They became part of the evangelical revival; initially in small towns many were inter-denominational, provided by the middle classes for the working classes, meeting in their own buildings. In Stockport, with its own large building, the Sunday school met for lessons, then the children were taken to church or chapel, returning later for more lessons. Geographically the spread was patchy across the country.

Co-operation between Church and dissent quickly ceased in most places because of increasing hostility between the two parties. The middle classes often withdrew, and so the committees were taken over by energetic, able working class members of the

congregations. Almost all Sunday schools taught reading; there was a big debate about whether writing and arithmetic should be taught. By the 1820s, they were spread so widely that, outside London, almost every working class child must have attended one for a period.

But by the early nineteenth century, opportunities for schooling in industrialised areas were declining: towns were growing rapidly, Sunday schools only attracted the respectable working classes, factory schools barely existed – and many children did not work in factories. The youngest children often went to dame schools; these were private schools, run for profit, and sometimes little more than a child minding service. Common day schools were also profit making and again of variable quality. There were also schools in parishes, often run by the curate, as well as the charity schools, both SPCK and endowed. Schools of industry were being set up in which the children worked at spinning or straw hat making or something similar and in return for their production they received a little teaching, mainly religious, with some reading.

Parliament recognised some of the concerns, and in 1802 an Act for the Preservation of the Health and Morals of Apprentices and others, employed in Cotton and other Mills, and Cotton and other Factories was passed. The hours of apprentices were limited to twelve hours a day (excluding meal times) and they were not to work between the hours of 9 pm and 6 am. Part of every working day was to be occupied, in a room in the mill or factory, in learning the 3Rs, the teacher being provided by the apprentice master. By using simple child labour rather than apprentices, implementation of the Act was avoided by the mill owners.

1.2 Nineteenth century day schools

In order to provide mass education, it was necessary to have the funds to build or rent school rooms and the necessary furniture and equipment: the real problem was to provide and pay teachers. The Sunday schools overcame this by using, initially middle class people and later "growing their own". But where was the enormous number of teachers for weekday schools to come from? Two men put into practice, in slightly different formats, an idea which had been around since the seventeenth century: use older pupils to teach younger. Those two men, who each thought they "invented" the monitorial system were Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell. Lancaster had opened a school in a shed at his father's house in 1798, using slates for writing; he later read Bell's book, and about a year later, in 1804, the two men met to exchange ideas.

Bell initially developed his ideas while serving in India as superintendent to the Madras Male Orphan Asylum, driven to devise new teaching methods by the incompetence of the existing teachers. On his return home, with a fortune of £27,000, he published an account of his work, *An experiment in education made at the Male Asylum at Madras, suggesting a system by which a family may teach itself under the superintendence of the master or parent*, which was widely circulated. He led the introduction of it into St Botolph's School in Aldgate in 1808, and his ideas were utilised in Kendal by the vicar, Dr Briggs. On taking up the living of Swanage in 1801, Bell started up a number of Sunday schools and day schools, all using his method.

Their two systems of "mutual instruction" used the same basic methods. A large school room – say a barn – would have one master who would teach a group of pupils who would each teach a small group of 12 to 20 of younger pupils. These pupils were grouped not according to age but attainment. The "teachers" – called monitors – had a wide variety of jobs to do besides teaching; they inspected slates, checked to absentees, etc. After a spell of monitoring, they rejoined their own class as a learner. Both systems used tiny steps of learning, provided many rewards, and both stressed the importance of moral training. They taught responsibility by emphasising the mutual obligations of teachers and pupils, provided physical and mental discipline by unremitting drill in the 3Rs, and, by inciting rivalry and emulation, encouraged active participation of children in the work of the school.

The difference between the two men lay in their attitude to religious instruction. Lancaster provided undenominational instruction: a general basis of common Christian belief, based on the Bible. Bell was aiming to make "good scholars, good men, good subjects and good Christians" where "Christian" in Bell's eyes had only one meaning: Anglican. Sadly, the adulation that Lancaster received drove Mrs Sarah Trimmer to intervene between the two men, claiming in her book of 1805 that Bell had invented the system and Lancaster was a mere copycat. Her object was to prove that the work of the Established Church was endangered by the success of Lancaster's nondenominational schools. She said that an education founded on general Christian principles was "ill grounded and mischievous." Not only was the plan of Lancaster, "this Goliath of Schismatics",³ a danger to Christianity, but it was also unnecessary: there were plenty of charity schools in existence. If Lancaster got his way – and he did have a formidable array of supporters – undenominationalism would supplant Anglicanism in all the schools for the poor, and the authority of the Church of England be undermined. As a consequence of Mrs Trimmer's efforts the Church of England and many of the society people, withdrew support from Lancaster's school. Even the King was attacked because he supported Lancaster. A clear division emerged: the majority of Anglicans supported Bell and Nonconformists Lancaster.

Lancaster's methods, promoted by the Royal Lancasterian Society set up in 1808, were taken up in a good many schools.⁴ [Mrs Trimmer was so worried that his undenominational style of teaching was spreading far faster than Anglican teaching, that she dragged a very willing Bell out of comfortable Swanage in order that he might help to establish Anglican opposition. Lord Radstock suggested to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he should found a school in Lambeth for 200 boys and the system was adopted at the Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea. In 1808 Bell published a *Sketch of a National Institution for training up the children of the poor in moral and Religious principles and in habits of useful industry*. Soon many Churchmen were reiterating the view that it was the task of the Established Church to provide for the education of the poor as Church and State were interdependent. This need was highlighted by the 1807 Parliamentary Bill of Samuel Whitbread which provided for the establishment of parochial schools in England and Wales based on Lancaster's system. The Bill was rejected by the House of Lords, the members not yet being ready to accept the need for the poor to be educated, and the Church objecting to any religious instruction of an undenominational character. The Government, concerned about the needs of the new

urban poor for instruction in religious matters, in 1809 gave the first of 11 annual grants of £100,000 to Queen Anne's Bounty to supplement the funds of poor clergy livings.

Bell's system was, however, adopted by various bishops and peers who opened schools using the "Madras system". Among these were Gower's Walk Free School in Whitechapel, opened 1806 (a school of industry which had a thriving printing business), Marylebone and Lambeth. Clergy in Durham formed in 1811 a Society for the education of the children of the poor, according to the system invented by Dr Bell. Bell's friends recognised that the real issue was the teachers: should existing ones be trained (or re-trained) or should new men be brought in and trained in the system in the first place?

1.3 Foundation of the National Society

In 1811 a group of men, known as the "Hackney Phalanx" (or Clapton Sect), got together in order to plan an Anglican counter-attack to Lancaster's system. They were led by Joshua Watson, a wine merchant, Rev Henry Handley Norris, curate of Hackney and Watson's brother-in-law, and John Bowles of Dulwich. All three were High Church Tories; Watson and Norris were also on the committee of the SPCK. Others who were involved were Joshua's brother, Archdeacon John Watson, vicar of Hackney, Dr Christopher Wordsworth, Master of Trinity College and Rev William Van Mildert, later Bishop of Durham. At this time, Dr Herbert Marsh, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, preached a charity school sermon in St Paul's, "The National Religion: the foundation of National Education". This gave both name and slogan to the Anglican effort.

Watson, Norris and Bowles met to plan a society, and with other members of the Phalanx, they approached leaders of Church and State. Then on 16th October 1811, they called a meeting to establish The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, throughout England and Wales. It was agreed that

the National Religion should be made the Foundation of National Education, and should be the first and chief thing taught to the Poor, according to the excellent *Liturgy and Catechism* provided by our Church for that purpose, must be admitted by all friends to the Establishment; for if the great body of the Nation be educated in other principles than those of the Established Church, the natural consequence must be to alienate the minds of the people from it, or render them indifferent to it, which may, in succeeding generations, prove fatal to the Church and to the State itself.

It must indeed be admitted in this country of civil and religious liberty, that every man has a right to pursue the plan of education, that is best adapted to the religion which he himself professes. Whatever religious tenets therefore men of other persuasions may think proper to combine with the mechanism of the new system, whether tenets peculiar to themselves, or tenets of a more general nature, they are free to use the new system so combined, without reproach or interruption from the members of the Establishment. On the other hand, the members of the Establishment are not only warranted, but in duty bound to preserve that system, as originally practised at Madras, in the form of a *Church of England* Education.⁵

Their preparations paid off: the Prince Regent agreed to be patron; the Archbishop of Canterbury as President chaired the meeting; the Archbishop of York and all the diocesan bishops together with ten peers or Privy Councillors were nominated as Vice Presidents. A General Committee to run the Society was set up, consisting of the President, all the Vice Presidents and another 16 members. The Committee was instructed to meet next day to plan the rules and regulations to cover membership and the running of the Society. The first General Committee meeting was held at Bow Church on 21st October with the Archbishop in the chair. Watson was elected Treasurer and ex officio member of the Committee with Rev Henry Norris as temporary secretary. A sub committee was established to organise a central school for training purposes.

The object of the Society was declared to be "to instruct and educate the Poor in suitable learning, works of industry and the principles of the Christian Religion according to the Established Church." ⁶ Competition with the Nonconformists using Lancaster's system of religious education was the Church of England's spur to action over the next sixty or more years. It had the "system", now it had to be disseminated.

NOTES

1. Clarke, WK Lowther, *A history of the SPCK*, SPCK, 1959, p 11.
2. Jones, MG, *The Charity School movement: a study of eighteenth century Puritanism in action*, Frank Cass & Co, 1964, (1st ed Cambridge UP, 1938) p 24.
3. Letter from Trimmer to Bell, 24TH September 1805 quoted in Sturt, Mary, *The education of the people: a history of primary education in England and Wales in the nineteenth century*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, p 23.
4. In 1814, to rescue Lancaster from his debts, the British and Foreign School Society was formed out of the Royal Lancasterian Society, to promote "the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of every Religious Persuasion".
5. National Society, 1st Annual Report, 1812, p 5.
6. National Society, 1st Annual Report, 1812, pp 7.

Chapter 2

Objectives and organisation

1811–1840

Summary

The first activities of the National Society were to generate a supply of teachers to work under the Madras system, and establish funding principles for schools. With elementary education for the poor emerging as a matter of popular concern, government funding began to be offered at the time of the highly contested Great Reform Act of 1832. As the Society's ambitions would always exceed its financial resources, some relationship with government was inevitable. The completion of the first 30 years of the Society's work saw a High Church inspired devolution of responsibilities to dioceses and the emergence of disagreement between Anglicans and Nonconformists over the grant giving ethos.

2.1 Assembling resources

For "The System" to spread in its new Anglican context, the two immediate necessities were trained teachers and the funds to build schools. The Committee put its full energies into the tasks, meeting almost weekly at first with the Archbishop of Canterbury chairing almost every meeting in the first year. The Rev Tindal Thompson Walmsley was appointed secretary, with an office initially at 13 Cliffords Inn, off Fleet Street but later moving to the Central School which was to be at the heart of the Society's work.

An address to the public issued on 29th January 1812 simultaneously asserted the Society's values and made the first funding appeal:

The Committee beg leave previously to observe, that the adoption of the Madras System by the Society has proceeded from the experience, not only of the facility by which this System communicates instruction, but of the influence which hitherto it is found to have on the morals of the Children.¹

The System's ideas were made explicit: the spread of the Madras system would deliver the poorer classes from their impiety, immorality and ignorance of the Gospel. Donations were requested and those who joined the Society would pay an annual subscription of 1 guinea [£1 1s = £1.05, but worth £63 at today's prices]. The money in hand at that point was barely enough to meet the requests from schools in London, so greater funds were needed for wider coverage. The Prince Regent made a donation of 200 guineas; other royalty contributed, and the Universities (Oxford and Cambridge) gave £500 each. Many parochial collections were also made.

A School Sub-Committee was established to oversee all matters relating to the new Central School where teachers would be trained. These would include those who wished to start a teaching career, and teachers sent by diocesan central schools and local school managers so that they might change their practice to conform with the Madras system. The Central School would also send out boys who had almost completed their own education to assist local schools adopt the system. Initially, it was thought that the Westminster Free School in Abbey Orchard Street might be used for the Central School, but it was not big enough for the 1000 children envisaged. Until a suitable site could be found, it was decided to use schools in Lambeth, Mary-le-Bone and Gower's Walk (Whitechapel) for the training of schoolmasters in the system. In order to keep up the momentum, a temporary school was also set up at 45 Holborn Hill, with 100 children. While there was a strong desire to set up the Society's own schools in London, experience began to indicate that the Society should confine itself to one central school for training, leaving the parishes to form their own schools, possibly with assistance. A useful site for the central school was found in Baldwin's Gardens, off Gray's Inn Road and a 24 year lease bought. The Society's surveyor recommended demolishing the existing building and starting afresh, so that a school for 600 boys and 400 girls could be developed. The cost was initially estimated at £2,000.

The School Committee helped Dr Bell in the appointment of masters and mistresses and the selection of trainees. A principal master was also needed to take charge of the school when Bell was away and the Rev Thomas Johnson of Grasmere was appointed. His many duties included taking Sunday services for the children in the schoolroom, since there was no local church large enough.

The funding appeal was also directed towards the aim of establishing a National School in every parish. Funding principles were stringent and were based on Watson's beliefs, which had been discussed and agreed by the Standing Committee. Any grant would only cover a proportion of the cost of building, and would be based on an estimate of the poverty of the parish. Further, the school had to be opened free of debt and a certificate of completion was required before the grant was issued. Thirdly, there were requirements about the tenure of the site. Grants were not given for running costs, and this was repeatedly stressed. This meant that there had to be continual local giving to keep the school going.

Most importantly, a declaration that the school would be "in union" with the Society was required. The "Terms of Union" changed gradually over the years, but initially:

It is required that children received into these schools be, without exception, instructed in the Liturgy and Catechism, and [...] do constantly attend Divine Service in their Parish Church, or other place of worship under the Establishment, wherever the same is practicable on the Lord's Day [...] and that no religious tract be admitted into any school but which are, or shall be contained in the catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.²

This religious instruction was to be superintended by the parish priest and, predictably, all teachers were to be members of the Church of England. Each year the parish clergyman was to make a report to his Diocesan Board of Education or the National Society. Grants for Sunday only schools were rarely given at first, but later the Committee

was sometimes persuaded to do so. Within two years there were 230 schools in union and £4,000 had been awarded in grants for the erection of 30 schools, at a total cost of £22,000. The number of schools in union grew steadily.

In order to spread the word and also produce uniformity of proceedings, it was decided to recommend the formation of National School Societies in dioceses on the same plan as the Society itself. In addition to schools being invited to be in union with the Society, it was agreed that country societies could also join. Dioceses in union were promised a master for a central school when it was first established in order to teach the details of the system. Fourteen diocesan, district and other societies were formed within the first year.

The first annual meeting was held on 3rd June 1812 at Sion College, and the annual report published later in the year. By then, according to the Treasurer, there was £3,288 showing on the balance sheet, mostly invested in the funds. Among the Standing Committee members, four retired and were replaced, one of the new members being Joshua Watson's brother, the vicar of Hackney.

2.2 Early achievements

A fortnight after this AGM, the new Central School in Baldwin's Gardens was opened; its final cost being £4,677 7s 9d! By October 1812, it had 710 boys and 283 girls. Over a hundred children left the school to go to work, several of whom had "had their habits reformed". A visitors' book was kept in order to prove the interest created in the school, and many were the aristocracy and gentlemen who signed it. In the first year, 45 masters sent by local managers had been trained, and returned to their schools. Another 37 were trained, of whom many were kept in the employ of the Society to go to start up new schools. But the unmet demand was still increasing. The East India Company requested the service of two youths to go out to St Helena to establish a school there.

After four years' work, it was reported that the Society had contributed £24,000 to either building or enlarging 122 schools that had cost over £100,000. It had also trained 336 masters and 86 mistresses. The pace had picked up: in the fourth year alone 35 masters and 31 mistresses had been trained in the Central School, most of whom had gone to permanent jobs. School managers had sent 50 masters and 41 mistresses to London to be trained in the system and each had left with a certificate of competence. The majority of dioceses also had their own central schools, training teachers.

In 1817, the Society celebrated its charter of incorporation granted by the Prince Regent, which gave it permanence, keeping the constitutional requirements of President, Vice presidents and Standing Committee members as before. The Society gave an account of its work to date, stressing the "peculiar advantages" of the Madras system in enabling the wide dissemination of education. It also noted its success in raising an initial £20,000 together with annual subscriptions worth £1,500 and the recent appeal which raised another £8,000. It emphasised that the plan of uniting schools to the Society carefully avoided interference in the work of local managers (though it did require that the only books to be used were those of the SPCK and that the children attend church on Sundays)

and described the success of the Central School. In 1820, the Society was pleased to announce that the King was to be its patron; a royal connection that continues to the present day.

The Central School children were examined twice a year, usually by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The school represented perfection in the application of the Madras system's principles. Bell continually visited it when not travelling around the country, and constantly tinkered with the "perfect" system – although no-one else was allowed to change anything. Woe betide any school he visited that had deviated from it. Johnson was allowed to travel during his holidays in order to visit schools, and RW Bamford was appointed as master to allow Johnson the time to concentrate on training teachers and coping with visitors. Among these visitors were the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia. In 1822 Johnson was presented with a diamond ring by the Emperor, for having taught four young Russians in the Central School. A medical adviser was also appointed who could talk to the students about the prevention of infections.

The system spread far beyond the parishes of England and Wales. Colonies such as the Cape of Good Hope, Nova Scotia, Ceylon, Gibraltar as well as Ireland requested trained teachers. Others were sent to Honduras, New Brunswick, France, Russia, Switzerland and Sweden. Two "native Negroes" were trained for Sierra Leone. This spread led to the Bishops of Quebec, Calcutta and Nova Scotia being added to the list of vice presidents. By 1820, the system had spread even further to New Zealand, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and Gold Coast. The Duke of York introduced the system into the military asylum and regimental schools. The Captain of *HMS Tennant* requested a boy to teach the youngest of the ship's company. Other ships and regiments followed suit and the system was adopted in prisons.

Rather than continue to use the Central School for the obligatory Sunday services, the Society, through the further generosity of Joshua Watson, acquired the use of the old Episcopal Chapel in Ely Place and fitted it up for the school to use for divine worship. Bell presented a set of communion plate which had been given to him by the pupils at his Madras School. The children attended twice each Sunday.

Just as the Central School had a problem in accommodating all its children in church, so too did many other schools. The provision of churches lagged behind the needs of a rapidly growing population, adding to the schools' difficulties. This raised the question of the Society's policy in those areas where new parishes were needed; the Society maintaining that it was impossible to instil sound religious principles and habits because the children were unable to attend church.

Bell's worries about teachers making alterations to the system led to the suggestion that diocesan and district societies appoint Visitors. These could give small rewards where the school was operating well and point out defects with advice on rectification. The National Society offered to provide suitable persons and two dioceses – Winchester and Norwich – took up the offer. Their reports showed that this helped to improve the efficiency of the schools. The Standing Committee did not appoint its own inspectors because it did not want to appear to be interfering – and anyway, Bell was out there putting matters to rights.

Parish clergy were to see it as part of their duties to examine and inspect the children at regular intervals. Several dioceses appointed Visitors to inspect schools.

At their suggestion, annual meetings were held for the secretaries of the diocesan and local societies. One early proposal implemented was that an outline of a suitable building be prepared to guide promoters, "so as to unite the greatest possible convenience with the least possible expense". The description noted that "a Barn furnishes no bad model, and a good one may be easily converted into a school." The dimensions allowed for 7 sq ft per child, but allowance could be made for absentees through sickness or otherwise. Detailed suggestions were given for foundations (should be dry), floor, roof, light ("windows should be placed very high and wider than deep"), ventilation, sound, warmth, doors, privies, drains, desks and benches, paint ("worse than useless, except to preserve outside work"), and the separation of sexes. Another suggestion was for a model trust deed.³

2.3 The funding imperative

The steady growth in numbers of schools and the teacher training carried on in the Central School was, however, punctuated by financial crises. It was intended that annual subscriptions should pay the running costs of the school and donations be used for grants for school building. But the expenses of the Central School kept rising, making the subscriptions inadequate. The initial fundraising had contributed £24,000 and a second appeal raised a further £9,000. But by 1818 funds were again exhausted. An appeal raised £6,500 in three months.

Finances were again a worry by 1823 and this time the Standing Committee asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to call on the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, to request government assistance for the National Society. As this was unsuccessful, he asked for a "King's Letter". This meant that a Royal Letter was addressed through the two Archbishops to all their parish clergy directing them to promote collections throughout their parishes in aid of the Society's funds. It was hoped that this would be more effective than a normal public appeal, in particular by drawing the attention of all parish clergy to the successful work of the National Society. The appeal raised over £32,000, money that was used solely for building grants.

The Standing Committee was not the only body to be worried by its financial affairs: many school managers were complaining of a lack of funds, principally to pay teachers, and also to provide heat and slates. It was estimated that a day school cost at least £40 a year to run [£3400 at today's prices], and a Sunday school only £5. Local finances also led to schools failing in some places, even having had grants. In 1830 it was reported that 27 had closed. The next year, another 8 had failed. Where the school had had a grant, the diocesan bishops were asked to encourage the managers to re-establish their schools. It was suggested that if the children paid a small fee, it would help schools' finances and improve attendance.

Only a small proportion of the schools in union had received grants, but those in union were expected to send in returns. Figures for the numbers of children reached tended to

be estimates, but it would appear that the average number of children in a school was between 130–175. The Society sent a questionnaire to every parish in 1831 generating the information that there were 10,965 schools in 9,309 parishes, catering for 740,005 children. There were concerns, however, about the areas without schools at all, in particular, colliery, mining and manufacturing districts where there was no social mix. Grants began to be directed towards Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire in order to meet their needs. The clergy in the poorer areas of Wales were experiencing particular difficulties because many parishes were too poor to be able to raise their part of the building costs.

The National Society carried out an inquiry into the extent of Church school education in 1832. From 8,588 replies it found that there were 6,730 parishes which had a Church school; 6,020 were day and Sunday schools and there were almost 4,000 Sunday schools also. Just over 3,000 of the schools were in union with the National Society. This was an extraordinary achievement in 20 years.

In the meantime, the Central School, the original focus of the Society's efforts, needed to move. Baldwin's Gardens had been chosen because it was in an area with a large poor population. With its lease due to expire by 1836, the Standing Committee looked for a new site. But sites in the east were difficult of access to many of the people whom the Society wished to influence. An offer was made to the Society of the Westminster Free School, which had a site near to St Margaret's Church. The building appeared to be suitable as the replacement for Baldwin's Gardens and it was agreed in 1831 that the property would be transferred to the National Society for its Central School. The move was carried out in the summer of 1833, and the Secretary's office was also transferred, the address becoming The Sanctuary, Westminster.

New arrangements for the Central School were implemented with the move, Dr Bell having died the previous year.⁴ It was decided to have a School master and a School mistress under the control of a clergyman. In a complete change from Bell's philosophy, "it has been determined to distinguish between their instruction in religious knowledge, and in the merely mechanical practices of the Madras System."⁵ The Rev W Johnson was to continue his work in the new school, and was to be entrusted with religious instruction. Thomas Lister, an old boy of the Central School who had organised several National schools and was then third master at Maidstone Proprietary Grammar School, was employed as the master.

Having moved the Central School, the question was what to do with Baldwin's Gardens and Ely Place Chapel. The Rector of Holborn was offered the use of Baldwin's Gardens, rent free, until the end of 1833 but it took another three years to finally dispose of it. Ely Chapel was closed but as ground rent still had to be paid, it was rented out for a number of years to a Welsh Evangelical group.

2.4 Government grants

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the world in which the Church of England could see itself as part of the constitution and an equal partner of the State began to be

challenged on many sides. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 allowed nonconformists to hold public offices; the next year the Catholic Emancipation Act extended this right to Roman Catholics. This meant that Christians (but not Jews) could be town councillors and MPs. Crucially it also meant that the Church of England could no longer assume that all who were part of the legislature were, at least nominally, its members.

Politically, the Tories who held sway in both Commons and Lords were opposed to extending the franchise though there was clear agitation for this. Rioting was threatened because of the difficulty in ensuring the passage of a Bill that would deal with rotten boroughs, and give the rapidly increasing population of the new towns representation through a slight reduction in the property qualification. Only the threat of the creation of a large number of Whig peers forced the Tory party to pass the 1832 Reform Act. The election following the Act produced a new Parliament that had members who sought further reforms. Popular education had come to the fore as a major consideration, leading to petitions for schools. By then, although many considered that there were plenty of opportunities available for education, there was the problem that there were two sets of schools, one of which was open to all children, the other only to those who were prepared to be taught Anglican doctrine. As the former group was smaller in number, there were many places where dissenters could not get their children educated without the Church of England catechism.

Quite suddenly, a motion proposing that a sum of £20,000 be made available to support private subscriptions for the erection of schools "for the education of the poorer classes in Great Britain" was passed in Parliament on 16th August 1833. Not all were in favour: William Cobbett of Oldham said that the only effect would be "to increase the number of schoolmasters and school mistresses – that new race of idlers." ⁶ But although Parliament might vote money for building schoolhouses it did not have a system for distributing such largesse, even just one-off grants. The first application for a grant came ten days after funds were voted, but clearly the work was beyond what the Treasury could carry out. Rules for allocating the grant were quickly drawn up, and published in a Minute of 30th August 1833. The grant was only to be spent on schoolhouses; the site had to be legally secured; at least half the cost had to be raised by subscriptions; no grant would be issued until all the local subscriptions had been spent and accounted for; and the accounts were to be subject to audit. Preference was to be given to schools for large towns and cities and a check was to be made that there were no charitable funds already available. In these requirements, the Treasury was following the model of the National Society. The checking of the applications was to be carried out both by the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society. Interestingly, there were no requirements about the school buildings themselves.

Schools were required to be in union with the Society in order for their applications to go through to the Treasury and the Standing Committee met monthly to approve these. It was stressed that the Society was concerned chiefly with the religious character of the school. Grants were extended to infant schools as long as they were also used for Sunday school. Soon a clerk had to be employed to cope with all the additional business. Arrangements were made for a sub-group to send in the lists of grant applications to the

Treasury in order to bring the total up to the full £20,000. Within a year, the National Society had acquired grants worth £7,200. Both the Society and the Treasury then assumed that this original grant would be followed by similar amounts each year: the Treasury went so far as to award grants before knowing that they could definitely be funded.

Most of the early applications were from rural areas, so in order to achieve the desired ends of supporting the towns, the Treasury first said that preference would be given to schools for at least 400 in an area with a population of 5,000, and then, a year later, because of the numbers of applications, allocated a maximum cost of 10s [50p] per place. By 1835, 72% of the grants through the National Society were for places with populations of under 3,000, indicating that the intention to target large towns was not fulfilled. Often the Treasury grant was less than the amount requested by the local managers, and in each case the National Society considered whether it could increase its own grant and asked the managers whether they were still interested in what was on offer.

The National Society, as it intended, obtained the lion's share of the grants. While the British and Foreign submitted claims for its assumed "share" of £10,000, the Anglican claims totalled the full £20,000. By July 1834 the Treasury had received applications for £44,238. The National Society protested to the Treasury about the limited amount of the sum appropriated to cases it had recommended and the non-observance by the Treasury of the proportionate claims of the Society according to the number and amount of the applications submitted. Because the Treasury gave the grants through two Societies, it had no real control over where the money went, and inevitably there were times when two competing schools were opened in an area.

In 24 years the Society had distributed £105,000 of its own funds. With the existence of Treasury grants, it had been able to reduce the amount of its own grants from an annual average of £7,000 to between £2,000 and £3,000, but even so, by 1836, it had only got a little over £2,000 left from the King's Letter. Virtually all the applicants for grants voluntarily signed the terms of union. However, in 1836, when the Secretary checked the lists of Treasury grants, he found that there were 155 places claiming to be National Schools that were not in union! By 1837 it was necessary to ask the Queen for a Royal Letter, which resulted in nearly £25,000 being raised from 10,190 parishes by 1839. The benefit of this method of fundraising was that it increased awareness of religious education, while also leading to more applications for grants.

As the acceptance of education grew, older schools became too small and managers sought grants for extensions. Clergy were in particularly difficult situations, as was acknowledged in 1838:

The Committee have repeatedly had occasion to notice that almost every grant which is made towards building a school-room involves a sequel of struggles and exertions on the part of the parish Clergyman, who not only undertakes the laborious and perhaps ungracious office of soliciting funds for its erection but often, in the course of the work, at a heavy pecuniary sacrifice, becomes answerable to its completion, as well as its subsequent support and management. Such exertion and responsibility he is seldom enabled to undertake more than

once, and the necessary consequence is, according to the plan now pursued, that he fails in providing the number of School rooms required for the multitudes who are entrusted to his ministerial care.⁷

All these new schools led to a need for more teachers. In addition to the Central School in the Sanctuary, dioceses had established their own central schools. By 1834 the Society claimed to have trained 653 masters and 451 mistresses who had come to the Central School to be trained at their own request, and retrained a further 634 masters and 301 mistresses sent by their managers: a total of 2,039 adults. The former group had to support themselves during the 5 months training; the latter stayed for varying lengths of time. All had been "trained in the mechanical practices of the Madras System and at the same time subjected to a course of religious instruction."⁸ The role of the Central School in training teachers was seen as increasingly important, and by 1835 it was estimated that there were 43 such schools, training over 2,000 students in dioceses and districts. With infant schools being eligible for Parliamentary grants, attention was drawn for the need of trained teachers for them. A new infant school had been built in Tufton Street, Westminster under the auspices of the rectors of St Margaret's and St John's and this was offered to the Society to act as a central school for training. Concern about the welfare of, in particular, the mistresses training at the central schools, led to the decision to create a large boarding and training institution. This was managed by a clergyman, Rev George Moody, and the central schools were used for teaching practice, the whole being under the superintendence of Rev W Johnson. A house was leased in Smith Square to accommodate the trainees.

Grants for schools through the two Societies were not the only way that the education of the poor was to be provided. The 1833 Factory Act was a real attempt to protect children and was applied to all textile manufactories except silk. Hours for young people aged 13 to 18 were limited; children above the age of 9 were to be limited to 48 hours a week and required to have 2 hours a day education each week while those under 9 years were not to be employed. Factory Inspectors were appointed to check, but found that the education clauses were either evaded or useless. Occasionally the "teacher" of a factory could only make his mark on the certificate of attendance!

The Poor Law was also amended to allow for the education of children in workhouses. Poor Law Commissioners encouraged local Poor Law Unions to provide education for their pauper children, but, even where there were enough children in one district, the teaching was often done by one of the inmates. Dr James Kay, an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner became interested in education, and visited David Stow in Glasgow who had new ideas on education. Stow stressed understanding rather than rote learning; classified children by age and attainment; and used "simultaneous instruction" whereby one teacher stood in front of a large class, who, in order to see him the better, were in serried ranks in a gallery. Classrooms were needed for some lessons with smaller groups and a playground was provided. In this model, every child had access to an adult teacher rather than only a monitor a year or two older. A model school was established in Norwood by Kay and EC Tufnell, another Assistant Commissioner, who had a particular interest in industrial training and workhouse schools. They hired teachers from Stow and, copying Dutch practice, offered an apprenticeship system of pupil teachers as a means of developing their own staff.⁹

2.5 Reappraising principles

Once the system of Treasury grants for school building was well established and the National Society was getting the majority of the available funds, Committee members had settled into some complacency.

But the Society was shaken out of lethargy by a group, known by the older members as the "Young Gentlemen", who were inspired by the Oxford Movement and the Tracts. The Young Gentlemen were led by Gladstone who wanted to ensure that public funds did not support either non-sectarian or secular education. About half of the group were involved with the Standing Committee but there were no bishops in it. They talked to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the Bishop of London, getting their support. In May 1838, through Gladstone's initial suggestions, this ginger group produced proposals for improving and extending National Education through the agency of the National Society. It stated that the Society was the most suitable organ for the improvement, extension and development of popular education because of its constitution and extensive connections. The Standing Committee accepted the recommendations and encouraged the developments detailed.

The Central School Committee gained much practical information about possible improvements to school instruction and it was decided to introduce "such improvements into the Central School at Westminster as to render it fully adequate to all the purposes of a model school" A new head master was to be appointed to work alongside Moody. Furthermore, it was decided to found a large boarding and training institution that would be under the superintendence of a clergyman. Much stress was laid on the importance of teacher training:

the moral and intellectual improvement of the teachers of schools was a principal object requiring attention; [...] that the minds and characters of the teachers must be carefully prepared and formed for the important office they were to fulfil; and that nothing could compensate for imperfect and defective education in those who were themselves to be the guides and instructors of the young.¹⁰

An appeal was launched to fund such an institution.

The Annual Report for 1839 had a very different style from previous ones, an indication of the impact being made by the Young Gentlemen. It spelt out the purpose and methods of the Society as being to encourage the formation of diocesan and district societies to carry out the work; to assist in building and enlarging school rooms; and to maintain a central school in London for training teachers. The importance of Sunday schools was re-asserted. This great step-change in the vision of the Society resulted from the young gentlemen following new High Church principles, which were more concerned with the Church of God rather than the legally established Church. They were not at the extreme of the Tractarians but were willing to work with others such as evangelical Lord Ashley. But, in common with the Tractarians, they insisted that the Established Church must control all education in order to ensure that the doctrines of the Church of England were taught to all.

A public meeting, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, was held on 28th May 1839 in Willis' Rooms. It was agreed that all education be based on Christian religious instruction, under the superintendence of the clergy and in conformity with the doctrines of the Church of England. It was further stated that the National Society had given a great service to the country and should be encouraged to continue to implement its principles in extending education yet further. Diocesan and Local Boards of Education in connection with the National Society should be established and they should set up schools for the middle classes upon the usual principles. It was also asserted that teachers should be better educated and that the National Society should carry out its proposal to establish a training institution, and concluded that there was a great need for increased funds, which the Committee of Enquiry and Correspondence should organise.

After the upheavals of the 1828–1832 period, these years had been a period of quiet growth, stimulated by government financial support for school building and not requiring great efforts from the Society. State acknowledgement of some financial responsibility for the education of children had dulled the initiative of the Standing Committee, still composed of many of the initial members. But governments do not long dispense money without imposing controls over the outcomes and it was clear that sooner or later there would be a reckoning. Gladstone's colleagues in the ginger group helped the Society to open its eyes to the work that needed doing to extend its educational provision, particularly to the lower–middle classes. Revising the terms of union led to the dropping of the requirement that all the religious books in school had to be in the SPCK catalogue, and the parish clergyman was given more control over religious instruction. Inspection was discussed, but the Society did not have the funds for it, and so was unable to forestall the State's entry into the life of schools.

2.6 The Committee of the [Privy] Council on Education

While some people in the 1830s remained opposed to the education of the working class, opinion was hardening that the system was inadequate. A Select Committee reported in 1838 that the education was of poor quality, that it did not reach more than a small proportion of those for whom it was intended and that the Government must take action. Yet the only real proposition emerging from the committee was to increase the grant through the two societies.

A simple extension of Treasury grants did not satisfy the Nonconformists who saw the Anglicans getting the majority of the annual grants, nor the Catholics who got nothing, nor the secularists who thought that religion should not enter schools, nor the many squires, farmers, manufacturers who objected to any extension of education. Many Churchmen, who recognised the need for state involvement, were alarmed at the National Society's claim, (spurred on by the High Church Young Gentlemen), that it was the only body that should be responsible for the education of the people. Each school, it asserted, should be under the control of the parish clergy and accountable to the diocesan bishop. The lack of accountability other than what the two societies could offer, concerned Lord Russell, the Home Secretary, who, in February 1839, wrote to Lord Lansdowne, Lord President of the [Privy] Council suggesting that a Committee of the Privy Council on Education be set up: a typical way of starting a new government

department. The Council was to superintend the allocation of the grant, run a normal school to train teachers, and appoint inspectors. An Order in Council was issued to set up the Committee to superintend any Sums voted by Parliament. It consisted of four politicians – all laymen, thereby excluding the religious element: the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Home Secretary.

The first requirement was to obtain a Secretary and Dr James Philips Kay, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, was appointed. (On his marriage in 1842 he took the name Kay–Shuttleworth). The Committee of Council proceeded to impose its vision of education by the use of "Minutes" which set out conditions for government support. It was the content of these minutes that precipitated numerous differences of opinion between the National Society and the government in the succeeding decades

NOTES

1. National Society, 1st Annual Report, 1812, appendix 2.
2. Ibid, pp 27–28.
3. National Society, 5th Annual Report, 1816, appendix IV.
4. The portrait of Dr Bell which had hung in Baldwin's Gardens was presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury to be hung in Lambeth Palace. National Society, General Committee minutes 1st May 1833.
5. National Society, 22nd Annual Report, 1833, pp 9–10.
6. Hansard, 11th series, XX, 16th August 1833, column 735.
7. National Society, 27th Annual Report, 1838, p 14.
8. National Society, 23rd Annual Report, 1834, p 17.
9. Selleck, RJW, *James Kay–Shuttleworth: Journey of an outsider*, Woburn Press, 1994, pp 133–139.
10. National Society, 28th Annual Report, 1839, p 10.

Chapter 3

Expanding challenges

1840–1870

Summary

The work of the National Society over the next thirty years was characterised by degrees of resistance to increasing government involvement in elementary education and teacher training in England and Wales. The Society's conviction of its right to autonomy was, however, at odds with its increasing need for funding. It experienced pressures from government over inspection and school management, and also existed uncomfortably at the junction of opposing views held by the Society's Tractarians, the Broad Church and the Nonconformists. But this was also a time when the Society responded energetically to the challenges of developing schools in areas of industrial poverty, and in evolving schoolroom practice and teacher education.

3.1 Powers of inspection

The question of school inspection was one such area of struggle, between accountability to government on the one hand and Church insistence on its own standards of appraisal on the other. The new Committee of Council stipulated in June 1839 that only schools whose promoters agreed to inspection would receive building grants. The National Society insisted that only the Church could inspect Church schools because the religious instruction and ethos of those schools were fundamentals. Such an inspector should, therefore, be appointed by the Church and report to the Church, though he could also report to the State. Furthermore, the Society maintained, in that a very small contribution had been made by the public purse to the schools, there was no reason for the public to expect to hear the results. The Society's response was as uncooperative as it had been the previous year when, offered £500 to inspect and report on the schools that had received a government grant, it refused, because its fee was no greater than that offered to the British and Foreign Society.

The Committee, however, went ahead to make appointments to the new Inspectorate. As part of its opposition, the Society refused to forward any grant applications, blaming the Committee for the deprivation that would be suffered by local promoters. Schools that were awarded grants but rejected them because of the inspection requirement were offered loans to cover what they would have received from the Treasury: a policy that led to even greater demands on the Society's finances. Perhaps understandably, the Society was very annoyed to find the Committee of Council was awarding grants to Church of England schools that had not applied through the Society's route.

A flurry of correspondence ensued. The Committee pointed out that it too wanted religious instruction in schools to be taught with integrity and was therefore seeking to promote the same principles as the Society. Parliament, however, would only accept men who were under the direction of the Crown. By leaving all inspection of religious instruction to the Society, the Committee was showing its confidence, hence its surprise at the furious objections from the Society. The controversy stirred the Society into setting up its own inspection system, proposing diocesan inspection systems in which clergy and officers of the Society would inspect schools every three years.

An agreement with the Government, known as the Concordat, was eventually hammered out. The Archbishops would be consulted before any HMI was appointed for Church schools, and could also suggest names. None would be appointed without their consent. In consequence, applications for government building grants were again forwarded. At schools managers' requests, however, HMIs also visited schools that had not received government grants. A total volte face was complete by 1844, the National Society's Standing Committee commenting that there were beneficial results from inspection. Further, "It certainly appears not unfitting that wherever public money has been given to assist, in however small a proportion, the establishment of a school, there should be persons acting under the state to inspect and see that every attempt is made to fulfil the conditions upon which that money was allotted." ¹

3.2 Training Institutions

The other initial action of the Committee of Council was the issue of a minute proposing to establish a "normal school" with accompanying "model school", ie a teacher training school with opportunities for teaching practice. This proposal and particularly the religious instruction described, was attacked very strongly, particularly by the National Society, to such an extent that it had to be withdrawn. But this did leave open the question of training enough teachers and inspired the Society to think further about its needs in this respect. Keen to get its hands on some funds that had been voted in 1835 for normal schools but not yet allocated, it asked the Committee of Council what conditions would be imposed on the grant. The response from Kay-Shuttleworth included the stipulation that the terms would be the same as for other schools: it would be inspected by inspectors appointed by the Committee. This condition was judged unacceptable by the Society.

Yet the Society's need for training places continued. With the appointment of a new headmaster, the Central School began to change its approach. He appointed a well-qualified assistant master and some youngsters as apprentices who went on to become assistant masters. A boarding house was opened for schoolmistresses in Tufton Street, parallel to the one for masters. A larger site was needed, but the Society was unable to find one in Westminster.

Meanwhile a site was sought for a new London training institution and by May 1840 Stanley Grove, an 11 acre site on the King's Road in Chelsea, was bought for £9,077. Plans were drawn up for a dormitory for 56, a chapel for 400 and a model school. The intention was to take youngsters of about 15 years and mould their characters as well as

training them to teach. There was a charge of £25 a year [equivalent to £1,900 today] while they were in college. Additionally, the students had a physically hard life within the college, having to carry out "industrial occupations" in house, field or garden for over 4 hours a day. The pattern soon settled down to a course of between 2 and 3 years, teaching on probation for 3 months and a continual apprenticeship until the age of 21 years. In this way it was possible to "have continual and vigilant regard to the humble sphere of labour for which the candidate is designed." ² Eventually, the government grant of £5,000 contributed to the buildings which had cost £29,000 in total, with inspection on the same terms as the Concordat. There was also a generous donation of £5,000 from the SPCK.

Almost immediately after plans for Chelsea were underway, the Society's Standing Committee began to talk about an equivalent training institution for women. It was considered that women needed a longer course than that offered by the central school: a year would be of more use than the present six months. A house, called Whitelands, was found on the King's Road close to Chelsea Hospital. The eight rooms on the second floor would accommodate 50 boarders and give 2 rooms for servants. On the first floor there was sleeping room for 5 double beds, a school room and an apartment for the head of the establishment. The ground floor would accommodate a committee room, a dining room and all domestic offices. The charge for the women students was £15 a year [equivalent to £1100 today]. The object was "to provide a class of schoolmistresses higher in attainments than have hitherto been frequent among female teachers of the poor," ³ and there was a similar stress on religious and intellectual cultivation and works of female industry.

In 1843, the Society was offered the Training Institution at Battersea, which had been established by Dr Kay-Shuttleworth in 1840 when it was acknowledged that there would not be a government normal school. The training course included the new simultaneous method of class teaching (see 3.3), Anglican religious instruction and parish church on Sundays. Again, the students were required to do all the domestic and outdoor work. The financing of the institution was always precarious, however, and by 1842, there was a deficit of £2,000. In offering the college to the National Society, Kay-Shuttleworth stipulated that the current staff and methods of instruction, praised by HMI, were given a fair trial. A committee was set up to manage the college for the Society, and a grant awarded with the condition of regular inspection. Battersea became the training institution for more mature men who were to be sent to the rougher manufacturing and mining districts.

In addition to these four London training institutions – Westminster, Chelsea, Whitelands and Battersea – diocesan boards of education were encouraged to set up their own, which were sometimes based on their earlier central school. In 1840, the Annual Report listed Chester and a joint one for Gloucester and Bristol. By 1846 there were 12 men's institutions (often attached to central schools) with student accommodation ranging from 2 or 3 to 70. There were 7 women's colleges, with a range from 6 to 40 students. These formed the basis of the later training colleges.

3.3 Evolution in teacher training

Teaching in the schools, outside the core concern of instruction in religion, also began to be scrutinised and pedagogical approaches appraised. Bearing in mind the short school career of most children, the ideal for a National School was that it should encourage in the pupil "a desire and a capacity for improvement" through self instruction, rather than giving him "a certain definite amount of knowledge, which he may carry away from school and consider his education at an end." From 1844 onwards, the Standing Committee began calling attention to the deficiencies of the monitorial system:

the system of instruction pursued in a school was of little moment compared with the importance of having a really good master; but that the mutual or monitorial system seemed peculiarly to require the presence of a good master, inasmuch as monitors, however capable of transmitting intellectual knowledge, could not impart moral training or inspire religious principle. At that time your Committee thus endeavoured to warn persons against entertaining high expectations of any mere machinery or system of instruction, and especially to caution the too zealous admirers of monitors in schools.⁴

The Society argued that it was only through necessity – the shortage of trained teachers – that it had supported the monitorial system. Monitors kept all the children occupied (they "perform a great amount of very useful school drudgery") enabling a single master to teach, on average, 150 pupils. The Society looked to an evolution of the scheme, anticipating that many of the more able would gain a taste for teaching and become the schoolmasters of the future.⁵ In addition to a small payment, monitors would receive additional instruction from the master. In this way, the more able went on to become assistant masters in other schools. From 1836 in some central schools, monitors were replaced by pupil teacher apprentices. These youngsters were aged 14 years and above and carried out roles in school which were more akin to that of assistant teachers.

The National Society thus encouraged a scheme that predated the Committee of Council's Pupil Teacher system of 1844. Two years later, a letter was sent to all secretaries of Diocesan Education Boards recommending the examination of candidates who wished to be teachers, with a view to giving them certificates of competency and merit. Such Diocesan Certificates could be obtained either by training at one of the training institutions of the National Society or dioceses, or by examination: these examinations to be available twice a year. As might be expected, the syllabus included "Knowledge of Holy Scripture, with an outline of Sacred History and Sacred Geography; The Liturgy, Catechism and Articles of the Church of England with an outline of Church History." ⁶

Kay-Shuttleworth was convinced of the need for properly trained teachers for elementary schools if the education they provided was to be improved. While the Church of England had opened a number of colleges, courses varied in length between about 6 months as "desirable" and 3 years. Equally the quality of those entering as students varied greatly. While the buildings had been assisted by government grant, there were no such funds for running costs, so colleges were dependent on local subscriptions, a little help from the National Society and student fees; and this latter limited the type of person who would apply. Most of the students came from the elementary school sector, few schools providing for youngsters over the age of 12 or 13, which generated a gap until the

colleges would accept them. Furthermore there were few attractions to the teaching profession, with low pay and the need to work with school managers.

These requirements were all addressed by the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education in 1846. Paid apprenticeships for pupil teachers to fill the gap between ages 13 and 18 would be offered to those youngsters who passed a preliminary examination, taught an acceptable lesson in front of HMI, and, in Anglican schools, were examined by HMI and parish clergyman together. (HMI would be one approved by an Archbishop.) The following five years' work would follow the National Society's model. Each year the students would be examined; in their last year the examination being for the Queen's Scholarship, which entitled the student to admission to training college. In order for a teacher to be assisted by pupil teachers and receive additional payment, the school had to be approved by HMI. Teachers were qualified to have pupil teachers if they had a teaching certificate, which could be obtained by either training in a College or by passing an examination. Certification brought more than the help of a pupil teacher: every year that HMI gave a satisfactory report on the school, the teacher was entitled to have an addition to his or her salary, and a pension on retirement. In this way the ablest in the elementary schools were able to progress through pupil teacher-dom to college and back into the schools as a certificated teacher.

For teachers to gain a certificate through their college course, such a college also had to be open to inspection, and this brought government funding to the colleges for every one of their students who passed the government examination. The Society welcomed the 1846 Minutes stating that they were clearly based on the current system used by the Church of England, and that the new Minutes would not create an "unnatural and unreal division of knowledge into religious and secular which mars the full efficacy of both." ⁷

One of the implications of the new pupil teacher system was the change to school buildings. The single barn-like structure for a school had to be modified in order to provide classrooms so that different groups of children could be taught separately. Infants began to be taught in "galleries": stepped rows of desks, designed so that all children focused on the teacher at the front. This led to the demand for more building grants, particularly for classrooms. The octagonal practising school at St Mark's College was built in 1844 with a gallery and classrooms. Teachers' houses, enlargements, walling in of playgrounds were also planned in many places.

Comments were made at the Annual General Meeting of 1847 to the effect that, after all the difficulties of establishing the concordat for inspections, the Society (with its schools and colleges) was now working well with the government and HMIs. However, it recognised that as the government spent more money on education, so Parliament would become still more interested in accountability.

3.4 School management

Battles with government over inspection and funds for training colleges having been won, the Society assumed that it could continue its work undisturbed. But resistance to government interference was not over: battles over management clauses and the "conscience clause" (see 3.5) remained to be fought.

The National Society's terms of union assumed that every school would have a committee of managers with all religious instruction under the supervision of the vicar. This, however, was not enforced. In fact, as Rev William Kennedy, a secretary to the Society later admitted, until the Committee of Council was formed, there had been no concern with school trust deeds, which had led to a few disasters. Typically, managers had to give their consent to periodical inspection by persons appointed by the Bishop or their Diocesan Board of Education or the National Society and if the managers disagreed with their clergyman, then appeal could be made to the bishop. However, in many places the clergyman was the sole manager and trustee, and, as noted, provided much of the financial support for the school out his own pocket. The managers, sole or committee, were responsible for the appointment and dismissal of the teachers. On his appointment in 1843 Kennedy demanded to see copies of the draft trust deeds before a National Society grant was awarded. He used this as a means of making suggestions before the deed went to the Committee of Council. Kay-Shuttleworth, however, was concerned about the use of public money when the sole manager was the vicar, suspecting that some might put far too great a stress on the imparting of Anglican doctrine and refuse to allow for dissenting consciences. Both he and Kennedy preferred schools to have committees of lay and clerical managers. A trust deed stating that the school was held solely for the education of the poor gave security of continuance and provided for the appointment of future trustees.

The government's attempt from 1846 to standardise Church of England trust deeds around four possible models, all providing for management committees and based on the National Society's own drafts, created many years of antagonism. Although the agreement of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, who recognised the importance of these clauses, had been obtained by Kay-Shuttleworth, a group of Tractarians attacked them vociferously. Basing their argument on the impossibility of separating secular and religious instruction, they held that the clergy should have total control of the schools. For six years the issue was regularly discussed in the Standing Committee, and annual meeting after annual meeting was dominated by resolutions from, in particular, Archdeacon Denison, denouncing state interference. He went to the extent of writing to HMI, "My dear Bellairs, I love you very much; but if you ever come here again to inspect, I will lock the door of the school, and tell the boys to put you in the pond." ⁸

In December 1849, the National Society decided to end the correspondence, regretting the Committee of Council's insistence on management clauses as a prerequisite for a government grant. It announced that it would allow promoters to decide whether or not to accept a management clause, but said that in any case, the National Society would continue with its own grants on its original terms. In 1851, the Standing Committee attempted to head off "the dissonances which have taken place for the last three years at the Annual Meeting," by proposing a motion to the effect that it was important to "preserve harmonious co-operation between the National Society and the Committee of Council on Education". It regretted the latter's refusal of building grants to promoters who rejected one of the model trust deeds.⁹ It was clear that many Anglicans, including most of the Standing Committee considered that the Committee of Council was being reasonable. The result of Denison's efforts was simply to prevent the Society from co-operating with the government for a period.

3.5 The conscience clause

Almost immediately after the National Society withdrew from discussions with the Committee of Council about management clauses, another row flared up, this time about the imposition of a conscience clause. The original Terms of Union required that all children received dogmatic religious instruction and attended their parish church on Sundays. Whether these instructions were actually followed at a local level depended on many matters, such as the proportion of nonconformist children in the area and the attitude of the particular incumbent and subscribers. Furthermore the Terms of Union changed over the years. The National Society did not have any means of checking whether all the children were taught the catechism and attended their local church, and the matter was not discussed in the Standing Committee.

This laissez-faire attitude changed with the rise of the Oxford movement. Its stress on Church doctrine led to questions from the Tractarians involved in the Society about the terms of union and their enforcement. They had already been thwarted by the Nonconformists over the 1843 Factory Bill [see 3.6], and this served to strengthen their demands for Anglican doctrine to be taught in all National Schools. Nonconformists and Catholics had begun to build schools, but these tended to be in towns where there was a sufficient congregation gathered, leaving the rural areas, with the exception of a few villages, to be provided for by the Established Church. "Single school areas" began to play a part in antagonism to the Church of England when the incumbent insisted that all children learnt the catechism and attended the parish church. While High Churchmen claimed that they had every right to make whatever stipulations about religious education they liked in schools they had provided, Nonconformists pointed out that the schools were now provided with the help of Government money paid for by the taxes of all.

Clearly, following the disputes over inspection and the management clauses, the Committee of Council was wary of imposing conscience clauses. But there was some support within the National Society from those who recognised that there were many nonconformist children in the National Schools, and who were concerned about the imposition of beliefs contrary to those of their parents. The suggestion was made that all children learned the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and Duty from the shorter Catechism, and that only Church children learned about the sacraments. But the Tractarians and Denison continued to argue that the government should not interfere in Church schools; that it was not possible to separate religious instruction from secular instruction; and that a conscience clause would mean that religious instruction had to be timetabled which would limit opportunities. Again, annual meetings and the Standing Committee were dominated by Denison's resolutions. It was pointed out that the Terms of Union had been changed over the years from "all children without exception" to "all children" and then to "children" to be instructed in the Church Catechism. The Standing Committee eventually agreed that they were not prepared to put interpretations on the Society's Terms of Union, and that they left all management issues to the local groups, trusting that they implemented the terms. The dispute rumbled on within the National Society and between it and the government for the next twenty years.

3.6 Factory schools

Despite the expenditure of its energies in such disputes, the Society continued to work hard expanding the provision of elementary education. Finance was a continual matter of concern. Queen's Letters were issued in 1839 and 1843 to enable building grants to be made to schools and colleges. More was always voted for grants than was actually claimed within the year, which was just as well, as the fund would frequently have been in the red had all the allocation been taken up. The Committee justified this by saying that it was vitally important for the Church so to occupy the ground with her own schools as to prevent the possibility of any attempt being made to wrest the education of her children out of her hands, or to place the general education of the country on a wrong basis." ¹⁰

The needs of children in manufacturing areas were clearly an increasing priority. Meeting these needs, however, was not altogether straightforward. As manufacturers began to set up schools following the 1833 Factory Acts, the question of religious education became contentious. For several months, the Standing Committee delayed responding to a complaint from Halifax that because of compulsory education in factories, nonconformist children were being obliged to learn the Anglican catechism. Eventually the Committee decided that the schools were not allowed to operate a conscience clause, i.e., children were not allowed to be withdrawn from any religious instruction their parents disagreed with.

In 1840, it was decided to set up a model factory school for the Society. Manchester Road, Bradford, in a district of great poverty, was chosen and a large grant awarded. An organising master with male and female assistants was sent to set up the school. By 1844 it was so successful that it had to be extended. Other schools were also organised in Leeds, Lees (Oldham) and Heywood (Rochdale) and good reports were delivered by the factory inspectors. The National Society set up a special fund to serve manufacturing and mining areas on the back of disturbances in 1842 and raised £132,000. This was used for building grants and an annual grant to Battersea College, leaving the funds in the Queen's Letter account for use in agricultural, commercial and maritime places.

Religious instruction was one of the questions that the Factory Bill of 1843 brought forward by Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, set out to answer. The Bill was intended to cover all children in woollen, flax, silk and cotton factories. New schools would be built with the aid of government loans and supported from local rates. Management of the schools and the religious instruction provided became a major issue however. The proposed arrangements clearly suited the National Society – apart from the conscience clause – but appalled the Nonconformists. The Bill was withdrawn and in 1844 the Factory Act abandoned any support to schools and became solely concerned with the children's hours of work and certificates from schools stating attendance in the previous week. This was one battle that the Society lost.

3.7 Education and training in Wales

Just as the Society paid attention to the needs of manufacturing areas in England, so it acknowledged the particular situation of elementary education in Wales. A statistical survey carried out in 1846 – 7 showed that resources throughout the country were wholly inadequate; many schools languishing because there were neither enough qualified teachers nor the means to pay them. Later digests of the information showed that south Wales had a smaller proportion of children in schools than north Wales. The south had seen spectacular industrial development (faster than that in England) leading to an even more rapid population increase. Officials saw widespread ignorance as one of the causes of social unrest. One difficulty for the Society was the strength of Nonconformity, which had led some to consider whether Welsh education should be purely secular. Other issues included bilingualism, and an unthinking assumption that there was no Welsh culture.

The Standing Committee decided that it was up to those men who lived or owned property in Wales to take the responsibility for Welsh education. It established a Welsh Education Committee in May 1846, with the remit of considering the improvement of elementary education in Wales and the provision of sufficient "native" teachers. A Welsh Education Fund was established to try to overcome the poverty of the Church's endowments, especially in south Wales. The priorities were school buildings, a supply of teachers, and funds to pay teachers and obtain apparatus and books. The Committee was to raise funds, help set up diocesan boards of education, and communicate with the Committee of Council on Education about Welsh matters. Initially £1,000 was transferred from the Society's Special Fund to the Welsh Fund, which created scholarships for Welsh speaking men and women to attend English training institutions. These were taken up by 13 men and 11 women. The Committee also planned Welsh training institutions on the grounds that teachers should be trained in Wales, "especially in those habits of self-denial so valuable in teachers of the poor" which could best be done in their own country.¹¹

The Welsh Committee planned for a college of 60 students in Carmarthen, and funds were sought. The Committee of Council on Education awarded a grant of £3,000 towards an estimated cost of £8,000. Other funding for the total, which rose to £9,000 for 45 students, came from the National Society (£4,500) and the rest from fund raising. The foundation stone of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Training Institution at Carmarthen was laid on 16th July 1847 by the Bishop of St David's. A Welsh speaking principal, Rev William Reed, then principal of the York Institution, was appointed, and the college opened at Michaelmas 1848 with 22 men students. A model school for teaching practice was opened in the town the next summer. Students, officially at least 17 years old, paid £21 a year, which covered board, lodging, laundry and instruction. All had to be members of the Church of England and required a baptismal certificate and a clergy reference. Although the college was to meet Welsh needs, about a third of students were English. Like the other training colleges, Carmarthen began by being managed by the National Society, with a local council taking over in 1855. This was a triumph for those who thought Wales needed more than just secular education. There was, however, always concern about the difficulty of keeping Carmarthen open and maintaining the supply of teachers.

3.8 Funding and the Revised Code

How elementary schools should be funded became a major issue during the 1850s. Government expenditure increased as more and more grants were made available to schools. This concern about central government costs was one of the factors which had led to a Royal Commission to look at elementary education. It recommended that teachers' pay should be dependent on their results because this would raise standards.

Robert Lowe, the Vice President of the Education Department, had already collected all the different rules about payments to elementary schools together into "The Code" of 1860. He concentrated on what he considered to be the two major defects of elementary education: irregular attendance and inadequate teaching. Grants on the basis of attendance and examination had the attraction of being simple from the administrative point of view. In the Revised Code of 1862 he proposed that schools would "earn" their grants by the examination of those pupils in classes formed by age, who had achieved a set number of attendances. When, later he was questioned about the limitation of the curriculum to the "3Rs", he commented that if there had been means of examining other subjects, they could have been included.

The National Society's first concern was that the new inspection regime would impact on the Concordat of 1840, but it received a terse reassurance from the Committee of Council that the Concordat was in no way affected by the new Code. The Society was also concerned that the teaching would concentrate on the examination subjects to the detriment of religious instruction.

Protests about the Code came from all over the country, and in a wide range of publications. Many of the predictions about the impact of the Code came true: there was a reduction in public expenditure on school maintenance, the Parliamentary grant per pupil in average attendance dropped by about a quarter. As anticipated the curriculum narrowed to mainly the "3Rs", even religious instruction tending to be neglected. The Society's depository reported that there was an increased demand for reading books linked to the standards, copy books and slates, while requests for history, geography and other subject material had declined. Pupils were trained for the examinations, the number of pupil teachers declined. In many cases, teachers were paid a sum equal to the school pence together with a proportion of the government grant earned. Over the years, the Code was modified to include more subjects, but it has gone down in teacher folklore as "Payment by Results".

3.9 The Society's first 50 years

After over 30 years of service to the National Society, its initial inspirer, Joshua Watson, resigned as Treasurer in 1842. With age and the death of his wife and daughter, he had become more conservative and set in his ways and was disinclined to accept any state control over his beloved National Schools. In a fulsome tribute, to him, the Standing Committee said that it had

enjoyed the benefit of his enlightened counsel and unwearied application; and it is with deep gratitude, as well as affectionate concern, that they acknowledge the validity of his plea, when, full of years and honours, he solicits leave to retire. " 12

Watson died in 1855 and was buried in the family tomb in Hackney St John's. Fulsome tributes were paid to him, Bishop Lloyd of Oxford saying, "I look upon Joshua Watson as the best layman in England." 13

The Society's fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in October 1861. The annual report contained a long retrospective about the work that had been achieved during the period. A steady attachment had been kept to the basic aim "That the National Religion should be made the foundation of National Education." Almost every diocese had a Board of Education, almost 12,000 schools were in union, and assistance had been given building 9,122 school rooms and 2,138 teachers' houses. 23 training schools had been built in the country, and 8,761 teachers trained solely in the Society's own colleges. Numerous schools had been organised, diocesan inspection encouraged, a central depository and branch depots for the sale of school requisites established, and enquiries carried out into the state and progress of the Church's schools. Information and advice had been provided to clergy and managers. A total of three-quarters of a million pounds had been distributed. Much had been achieved, the report asserted, in particular that the government was now involved in promoting education and expected such education to include definite religious teaching.

Yet the Standing Committee was surprised to realise, as late as the mid 1860s, that so many neighbourhoods still needed schools. In 1866, the usual decennial inquiry into the statistics of Church of England education was carried out. It was hoped that those parishes which had not got an Anglican school could be identified, and the reasons explored. Listing the previous surveys, from 1803 onwards, it reported the way in which education had been extended across the population. In 1803, the proportion of pupils to population was 5.71%, and in 1858 12.99% in a population of 19 million. This was considered highly satisfactory and a spur to continued action.

NOTES

1. National Society 33rd Annual Report, 1844, p 18.
2. National Society, 31st Annual Report 1842, p 9–10.
3. *ibid*, p 10.
4. National Society, 35th Annual Report, 1846, p 20.
5. *ibid*, p 22.
6. *ibid*, appendix IV.
7. National Society, 36th Annual Report, 1847, p 44.
8. quoted in Smith, Frank, *The life and work of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth*, John Murray, 1923 [Chivers, 1974], p 188.
9. General Committee minutes, 28th May 1851.
10. National Society, 36th Annual Report, 1847, p 27.
11. National Society, 51st Annual Report, 1862, p ix.
12. National Society, 32nd Annual Report, 1843, pp 14–15.
13. quoted by Canon Charles Smyth, *150th Anniversary Lecture [of the National Society]*, 12th October 1961.

Chapter 4

Encounters with Government

1870–1900

Summary

The emergence of compulsory elementary education via the dual system of voluntary schools alongside locally controlled schools embedded complex debates over religious education in the national system. The dual system was innately competitive and generated increasing funding problems for voluntary schools. Raising the possibility of free education for all through rate aid, it also generated worries that the Church would lose its right to appoint teachers and parents would lose rights to have their children taught in an Anglican context. Financial pressures also served to raise the spectre of a secular national system.

4.1 Creation of the dual system

The Standing Committee was not the only group to be concerned that the whole country did not have access to elementary schools. Other churches, secular groups and politicians shared these worries. The solution was sought through the mechanisms introduced by the Elementary Education Act, 1870, which created the Dual System of voluntary schools alongside locally controlled schools known as "board schools".

The education of the working classes became ever more implicated in political events. The British labour movement supported the victorious North and its vision of democracy in the American Civil War. Garibaldi's visit to England in 1864 fuelled an enthusiasm for reform. A recession in 1866 and riots in Hyde Park illustrated the potential power of the working classes. The Second Reform Act of 1867 extended the franchise, and led to the Vice-President of the Education Department, Robert Lowe, to make a famous speech in the Commons on his changing view of education:

It appears to me that before we had intrusted the masses – the great bulk of whom are uneducated – with the whole power of this country we should have taught them a little more how to use it, and not having done so, this rash and abrupt measure having been forced upon them, the only thing we can do is as far as possible to remedy the evil by the most universal measures of education that can be devised. I believe it will be absolutely necessary that you should prevail on our future masters to learn their letters. ... This question is no longer a religious question, it has become a political one.¹

The immediate outcome of the Reform Act election was a change of government in 1868, bringing the Liberals into power.

The provision of school places was much debated. Were there enough? That depended on what age group was to be provided for; counts of places used a variety of age ranges from 3 to 15 years and from 5 to 12. What were the minimum requirements for defining a "school"? Did it have to be inspected? Were there other limitations on quality? Were schools in places where children needed them? With the growth of cities, there were great central areas into which the poor had flocked but the churches were not reaching and which were totally without schools. Even in rural areas, there were hamlets without easy access to schools, and most of the existing ones were run by Church of England clergy, who, despite the National Society's statements, were not inclined to operate the conscience clause.

Aside from the National Society's concern for the status and future of its own schools, it saw two problems generated by the prospect of a separate set of schools developed alongside voluntary ones. The major problem was that while there was a desire for local administration and finance for education, there was only an embryo local government system in place. How, then, could funding be generated? Rate aid was objected to because it would impact on voluntary fundraising: a voluntary system could not compete on equal terms with a rate aided one, for – having paid rates – not many people would also make voluntary contributions. Further, ratepayers would be forced to contribute to a system of which they might not approve, and the supporters of the Society would also have to pay rates and yet their schools would not benefit from them. This would interfere with the parochial system, weakening the Church's influence over the poor.

Hence the second issue: if schools were provided out of the rates, then ratepayers, with varying religious views, would expect to have an involvement in the management of the schools. How, then, would the question of religious instruction be settled? In the opinion of the Standing Committee, the result was likely to be either general religious instruction such as that provided in the British and Foreign School Society's schools, which the National Society abhorred, or a secular system, avoiding all religious issues. The Society stressed the values of the present voluntary system, crucially that it implied "definite" religious teaching.

A group was set up in Birmingham, which, on investigating its local area, found that there were insufficient school places and that many parents were unable to pay school pence for their children's education. Eventually, some of the leaders of this group set up the National Education League, with the objective of providing education for all children. This was to be achieved by rate aided, locally managed, unsectarian, free schools with compulsory attendance. The leaders clearly recognised the difficulties that "unsectarian" religious instruction brought, but considered that the public was not ready to adopt secular schools. The League quickly spread to other towns.

Churchmen were alarmed at the League's success. The National Society attacked the NEL on the grounds that its scheme, calling for unsectarian schools, really intended secular schools which "would change the character of all elementary schools and offend the religious feeling of nearly the whole country by their proposal to banish the Bible from the schoolroom." It denied there were religious difficulties of a denominational nature.²

The National Education Union was set up in Manchester, in opposition to the NEL; its object being "To counteract the efforts of the Birmingham League, and others advocating secular training only, and the secularisation of our national institutions."³ Aiming to secure the extension and development of the existing voluntary system, it advocated rate aid for schools, but would rather do without this than suffer local authority control. Denominational religious instruction was to be given in all schools, though a conscience clause was reluctantly accepted. Schools were to be free only for paupers and vagrants. Being realistic, the Union opposed compulsory education, as its members knew that the churches were a long way from being able to provide enough places.

In February 1870, the long expected Elementary Education Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by WE Forster, the Vice President of the Committee of Council. By the time it became an Act in August, it had undergone much debate and many changes. Forster, trying to steer a course between the many factions, identified a shortage of places as the key issue, and claimed that he was seeking to cover the country with good schools. We must take care not to destroy the existing system in introducing a new one. In solving this problem there must be [...] the least possible expenditure of public money, the utmost endeavour not to injure existing and efficient schools, and the most careful absence of all encouragement to parents to neglect their children. [...] our object is to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps, sparing the public money where it can be done without, procuring as much as we can the assistance of the parents, and welcoming as much as we rightly can the co-operation and aid of those benevolent men who desire to assist their neighbours.⁴

By the time that the Bill became an Act in August, it was very different in some respects from the original proposal. Surveys were proposed to find out where there were deficiencies in the number of school places. In these cases, the churches had until the end of 1870 to plan new schools and apply for building grants – the "period of grace". If they could not meet the need in an area, then a school board was to be formed. A board would consist of between five and fifteen members, according to population (except London which had 49). Board members were to be elected by ratepayers in a secret ballot, thus allowing women to vote, which did not happen in Parliamentary elections until 1872. Each ratepayer had as many votes as there were board members to be elected, and he could either "plump" them all on one person, spread them over two or three, or give single votes. In this way, minorities, if well organised could secure representation. Board schools would get their money from rates, fees and government grants; voluntary schools, as before, from subscriptions, fees, and government grants. School fees were limited to 9d a week: a substantial amount. School boards could make byelaws to compel attendance of children between the ages of 5 and 13 years, but there was no mechanism for other areas.

The major parliamentary debate had been on religious instruction clauses. Forster had acknowledged that schools would be expected to provide religious instruction: I would say that it belongs to all religious men to teach religion, and the master of the school, we trust, will be a religious man. To no religious man can we say leave religion alone. [...] The English people cling to the Bible and no measure will be more unpopular than that which declares by Act of Parliament that the Bible shall be excluded from the school.⁵

To meet this, Forster planned for religious instruction in board schools to be undenominational, comparable with the British and Foreign School Society's model. All schools receiving government grants had to operate a conscience clause. Unfortunately for Forster, Gladstone – a high church Anglican – did not agree with undenominational religious instruction. If it couldn't be "definite" (ie denominational) then it was better to have a secular education than dispense half-baked truths. Part of the solution, applied to all schools, was to have a timetable conscience clause through which all religious instruction and observance would take place at the beginning and/or the end of a school session. Following approval by HMIs, who were not to inspect any religious instruction, a timetable showing this was to be prominently displayed in the classroom.

No one in the debate was able to propose a satisfactory definition of undenominational religious instruction. Cowper–Temple, the Anglican chairman of the National Education Union, proposed his famous clause for board schools: "No religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the school." This clause was intended to allow for denominational instruction by allowing the teaching of, for example, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments which were agreed by most churches, and explanations of doctrine. Later, Forster asked Gladstone whether the Cowper–Temple clause allowed for the teaching of the creeds. He replied that he did not expect the Nicene or Athanasian creeds nor the Thirty nine articles to be taught in schools, but

with respect to the Apostles' Creed, it appears to me not to be a distinctive formulary in the sense of the Act. Besides the fact that it is acknowledged by the great bulk of all Christendom, it is denied or rejected by no portion of the Christian community; and, further, it is not controversial in its form but sets forth in the simplest shape a series of the leading facts on which Christianity, the least abstract of all religions, is based.⁶

The Apostles' Creed and the content of the catechism could therefore be taught and the Bible explained theologically. Although later writers have interpreted the clause as requiring undenominational religious instruction, at the time, all were clear that it allowed denominational teaching.

In a commentary on the Act, the Society remarked on the new era for education, in which secular education would take pride of place over religious instruction. The main changes affecting National schools were to do with the timetabling of religious instruction. But the whole principle of rate aid introduced by the Act was of far greater importance, making education a state function rather than being provided through private benevolence or religious conviction.

4.2 Implementing the 1870 Elementary Education Act

Even though the new school boards were to provide schools to "supplement not supplant" the existing voluntary schools, it was clear that many more school places would be needed. The gloom-mongers thought that the Act would lead to the demise of the Church schools. Bishop Jackson of London wrote to Canon Gregory, "In seven years, you will not have a school [i.e., a Church school] left," while Lord Shaftesbury wrote

memorably in his diary, "Everything for the flesh and nothing for the soul: everything for time and nothing for eternity." ⁷

Immediately after the Bill received Royal Assent, the Society launched a special appeal for funds to meet its anticipated needs, while at the same time urging local church people to put in an early claim for a building grant during the short period of grace. It was pointed out that putting in an application for a grant did not mean that the school had to be built immediately, but only when the number of children made it necessary. The appeal quickly raised £13,000. The total promised in grants by mid-1871 was £71,359, towards which the Society had only £37,939 in hand. Fortunately the Department moved slowly in approving grants, meaning that the whole sum would not be required immediately. Even so, grant-making had to be suspended for a time, though the SPCK was very generous, donating £10,000 for buildings. By 1881, when the last government grant was paid for a project approved in 1870, the Church had added 935,993 school places, while the Boards had created 1,082,634 from scratch.

So many new schools were built and existing ones extended as a result of the work of the National Society, that the need for a school board was often averted, particularly in rural areas. By 1873 the Society was pleased at the success of the Act in stimulating local effort to supply the necessary schools, though some managers had needed persuading to accept the conscience clause. Without this there would be no recognition of the school as a public elementary school. In a private letter to Archbishop Tait in 1876, Sir Francis Sandford, Secretary to the Education Department, pointed out that in many districts the school supply was sufficient, but solely provided by the Church of England. The schools operated the timetable conscience clause but for Nonconformist parents there was a problem in that the typical weekly pattern of religious instruction was three lessons of Bible teaching, the other two being catechism and prayer book. Those for whom the National School was the only local school complained that while they were pleased for their children to have the Bible lessons, they didn't approve of the others. For some managers, however, it was a case of all or nothing, which made the school secular in Nonconformist eyes and led to campaigns for other schools to provide for their children. Sandford suggested that the National Society recommend to managers that they had a partial opt out from the religious instruction of their schools. Many managers were unpersuaded.

A major problem for the Society was that the Standing Committee held the view that dogmatic religious instruction was the only way in which children could be taught: "all true education must be based on religion; that without religion, though it may be possible to instruct, it is not possible thoroughly to educate; and, further, that religious teaching, to be effectual, must be definite in character." ⁸ But the wider Church of England was rather more divided, many considering that good religious instruction in the board schools, though incomplete, was a bonus.

The Act removed the inspection of religious instruction from the work of HMIs which meant that they no longer had to be appointed in co-operation with the churches. But it also meant that an alternative system of inspection of RE was required by the Church of England. National Society funds being concentrated on buildings, it decided that this was a responsibility for dioceses to organise, and, as a means of encouragement, offered

grants. The new inspections were to cover not just schools but also pupil teachers and Sunday Schools. Again, financial aid was provided by the SPCK.

Despite its pleasure at the success of the Act in stimulating the supply of schools, the Society was soon worried about managers transferring their schools to the new school boards because they had lost the will to generate the necessary financial support. The Society argued that transfer would imperil denominational religious instruction and was incompatible with the managers' responsibilities under the trust deed. Where possible the Society's Organising Secretary visited managers to try to persuade them not to transfer their schools. However, sometimes the Society did not know about a transfer until after the Education Department had approved it – a cause of many protests. The worry about transfers was continual.

4.3 The emergence of compulsory education

The 1870 Act led to a change in the work of the Society. Once the effort had been made to meet the school building crisis, the Society, in the main, settled down to a maintenance function, with very few members of the Standing Committee attending meetings. Now there was a need for consolidation and development in aspects such as building design and religious instruction, while more and more the Society was providing legal advice for managers and acting as the Church's voice in educational questions to the government. Correspondence to the Society almost doubled over six years.

Whether England and Wales should have compulsory education was hotly debated. As a pragmatic measure, in 1870, the Liberals had not made it universal because there were not enough school places available, but had given school boards (where they existed) the power to make bye-laws requiring compulsory attendance at ages they chose between 5 and 13 years. Few school boards exercised their right, and where they did try, it was difficult to enforce, because magistrates often refused to fine the parents.

The Standing Committee had argued against compulsory attendance, which it considered impracticable. It imagined what might be considered to be a police state, with a daily examination of the registers, police rounding up absentees, and checking whether the reasons for absence were valid or not! But the desperate need for funds meant that compulsion had become attractive to voluntary schools because it increased the average attendance and thus the annual grant. The 1876 Elementary Education Act made it possible, in non-school board areas, for School Attendance Committees to be set up that could make bye laws for compulsory attendance. However, it was to be achieved partly by indirect means: children could not be employed under the age of 10 years, and required a certificate of attainment or attendance to work between the ages of 10 and 14.

A number of School Attendance Committees were created and imposed attendance bye-laws. However, for many children the enforcement of attendance was only through poorly applied Factory Acts. In 1878 the Factory Act raised the half-time age from 8 to 10 in all factories, and the educational certificate was defined as Standard IV (Year 6) of the Code or 250 attendances. The 1880 Elementary Education Act required by-laws to

be passed in all areas, thus making education compulsory. Standard V (Year 7) was now the minimum level for exemption and the "dunce's" certificate based on attendance was only available for 13 year olds who still had to attend half time for another year. Thus from 1880, the effective age range of compulsion was 5 to 11 years.

4.4 Rate aid and the impact of competition

All the difficulties that were expected when rate-aided schools were established alongside denominational schools were realised in the Society's eyes. As early as 1875, competition with the board schools was sometimes ruthless, leading to increasing financial problems for the voluntary schools. The real issue was funding: whatever the boards needed, they raised from the rates, whereas the voluntary schools had to seek subscriptions or hold fundraising bazaars or fairs. Boards might have lower fees, but they paid higher salaries, poaching teachers from Church schools. Further, the demands of the Education Department for building alterations were increasing, while the payment of rates by Church people reduced their ability to subscribe. The Society started a campaign for the remission of school board rates for subscribers to voluntary schools equal to the amount contributed. When it was pointed out that Parliament had abolished the Church rate on the grounds that such payment was a burden on the consciences of nonconformists, the Society argued that the converse was true: those who objected to the form of religious instruction in board schools should not be required to pay rates for that purpose.

The Society's difficulties became increasingly acute during the 1880s. The cost of education was increasing without a corresponding improvement in quality, despite the efforts of the managers to put the Church schools in a strong position. From 1880 onwards, school boards were to add many more places than the Church. They were also able to spend more on their schools than the voluntary agencies were able to do. Their new buildings were better designed and more convenient, their teachers on higher salary scales. Opportunities in major urban board schools were also much wider: there were specialist instructors in science, woodwork, cookery and laundry work, and libraries and museums were provided. Older, abler children were gathered together in higher grade schools, which consequently began to attract more middle- class parents. Denominationalists saw all these new initiatives as extravagance. In the rural areas, however, there was little to choose between the schools of the two sectors and transfers continued to be a worry.

New Codes of Regulations appeared that detailed what schools had to do to earn the annual grant, always making this more complicated. By the mid 1880s there was considerable worry about "over-pressure": there were many allegations that the pressure of satisfying HMI at the annual examination affected the health of both children and teachers. The same standards of attainment were expected in all schools, whether urban or rural, well-to-do districts or poor districts, even though smaller schools had a lower income. The Society considered that the Government should increase grant aid, shifting the balance to attendance rather than examination, and insist on a decrease in the rates, which would spread the financial burden more fairly. In addition, it asserted "an effective restraint should be applied to the uncontrolled and excessive expenditure of School

Boards is an absolute necessity, apart even from its bearing on the fair treatment of Voluntary Schools." ⁹

The efficient management of schools was also defined; managers had to take an active and personal interest not only in the fabric of the building and the appointment of the teachers, but also in the way the teachers worked and their methods. Fees were fixed as high as parents could reasonably be expected to pay, regular attendance was demanded and "organising masters" (the forerunners of advisers) provided expert advice.

4.5 Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts

The government needed to keep the whole situation of elementary education under review, as alterations since 1870 had been made piecemeal. The Tories were clear that voluntary schools needed support, but if that support were to come from the local rates, would increased public control be necessary? Compulsory education having arrived, the next step would be free education. How might this be financially accommodated? In response to their general election promises, the Tories set up a Royal Commission, to be chaired by Lord Cross, a former Home Secretary. It had a great number of voluntary school supporters among its 23 members: six members of the Society's Standing Committee served on it, among them the Bishop of London, (F. Temple) and the Treasurer Canon Robert Gregory. Eight members, however, were supporters of the school board system. The composition was greeted with delight by the Society.

Evidence took two years to gather. Various members of the National Society contributed. Because of the divided loyalties of the Commissioners, no clear, totally agreed report was written. The denominationalists wrote the majority report, while eight commissioners wrote a minority report, each having dissentients within its group. Both majority and minority groups agreed on the need for a relaxation of payment by results, with an eventual abolition.

The Commission's majority reported that the demand for accommodation had been met, and recommended higher standards for buildings including calculating accommodation on the basis of 10 sq ft per child, rather than the then current 8 sq ft. The report was scathing about the impact of the rules about transfer of voluntary schools to school boards, which:

set aside almost entirely the influence of the trustees and founders of the school and place[d] its fate at any given moment in the hands of the Managers for the time being, who are an uncertain and changing body and may never have contributed towards the erection of the schools.¹⁰

The majority was split over the question of whether voluntary schools should receive rate aid without the imposition of the Cowper–Temple clause, which limited the content of religious instruction.

The National Society, after sending a synopsis of the report to dioceses, held a two day Conference in November 1888. The issue of rate aid, which took the whole of the first

day, showed up the dissent among the ranks. While Temple, Gregory and Sandford spoke in favour of it, even they had differing perspectives. Archbishop Benson was known to be opposed to rate aid, and a number of other senior Churchmen spoke out, calling it "inexpedient". At the end of the day, a resolution rejecting rate aid was clearly passed.

The Conference was followed by a commentary from the Standing Committee. It was pleased that the Commission was "convinced, by 'the absence of any substantiated case of complaint, and by the general drift of the evidence' taken by them, 'that the Conscience Clause is carefully observed both by teachers and managers'." ¹¹ It noted with approval that the Commissioners found their witnesses almost unanimous in believing that religious education was wanted by parents, and suggested that HMI should stress to managers, teachers and children the importance of moral training. It was also pleased that the Commission did not recommend free education, because it was worried about schools' income. Missing from this commentary on the Report was any mention of rate aid: the Society, following the conference decision, decided not to press for rate aid because it would mean greater local control, and the likelihood of religious strife which could be created by the necessary legislation.

The government recognised that it had to do something about financial assistance, otherwise the voluntary schools would claim they had been betrayed. Some of the recommendations of the Commission were incorporated in the draft Code published early in 1889. It was met with protest from all the voluntary agencies, because it still provided them with no real financial assistance. A revised Code was quietly introduced in 1890, with a simpler method of calculating grant and an increased fixed grant.

4.6 "Free" education is assisted education

Once a minimum of education had become compulsory, there began to be calls for it to be free. Many considered it was unfair on poor parents to make their children go to school and have to pay for it. The Cross Commission majority, however, had rejected free education on the grounds that parents' responsibility would be weakened if the state paid. In any case, there were provisions for the children of poor parents to have their fees paid for them. The National Society's Standing Committee was totally against free education because it would impose a burden on public funds:

the whole community would have to be taxed to provide for a section of the population an education which by far the greater number can very well provide for themselves. The majority of the working-classes are undoubtedly both able and willing to pay the usual fee for the schooling of their children.¹²

It claimed that when parents had to pay a fee, the value of schooling rose in their eyes, and led them to insist on better attendance by their children. Any cases of exceptional poverty could be dealt with.

Public concerns were expressed about the cost of free education to voluntary schools, and by 1885 the National Society was getting requests for leaflets to confront the arguments in favour of it. Some denominationalists were publishing attacks on free

education, claiming it would result in school boards (that wasted the rates) everywhere, and that those who did not have children of their own would be paying for those who had. It could lead to a secular system with no Church schools. In the end, the Society produced a set of leaflets making the case against free education.

But the issue continued to be considered. The Liberals became convinced that free schools, and with this the popular control of all schools, was the way forward. The churches, however, were desperate to protect their voluntary schools from popular control. But by 1890 the National Society had accepted free education as inevitable even though a good number of the Standing Committee continued to object, calling for legislation to recognise voluntary schools as a permanent part of the national elementary education system before any discussion of free education.

In 1891 the Tory government published a Bill for Assisted Education, which the Society viewed as a genuine attempt to establish a new system without harming the voluntary schools. From the government's point of view, the Bill would be approved by the working classes and would help the poorer voluntary schools, which had the lowest fees and the most difficulty in collecting them. The government's problem was that fees ranged from about 1d a week to 9d a week, with an average of about 3d. Schools with high fees wanted to keep that income, but the need for real free education was undeniable. The compromise developed was that there would be a capitation grant of 10s [50p] per child in average attendance (i.e., 3d a week) regardless of the school's fees. Where a school had a higher fee, then it could charge the difference. However, after the Act had been in force for a year, parents had the right to demand totally free places, which would prompt an investigation by the Education Department. It could then demand either that existing schools abolished all fees or that a new free school be provided by a school board.

The Act was thought to be helpful: there was more certainty of income, and less time would be taken in collecting fees. By 1893, it was being reported that attendances had improved. However, it was discovered that pressure groups, such as the National Education Association (a successor to the National Education League), were sending people into areas where the voluntary schools charged fees in order to incite parents to demand free education. If the schools did not provide this, the campaigners stirred up local opinion to press for a school board.

4.7 Pressure for funding improvements

While the Conservative government may have wanted to help voluntary schools, it had difficulty in coming to any decision because there were differences of opinion between the churches and within the Church of England. Archbishop Benson was against rate aid and so bishops had to work around his position in what they advocated.

The municipal school boards set the pace of higher standards, better buildings and equipment. A consequence of this was that the Education Department now demanded that school buildings should be brought more up-to-date, even though they had met earlier standards. Schools were "warned" that unless they made improvements, they would not be considered "efficient", which would mean loss of grant. Given that

Anglicans had spent more than £37 million on schools and training colleges in the years since the National Society was founded, this "additional" pressure on the schools from the Education Department was considered to be "inopportune, hasty, and in some cases, excessive," not least because of the depression in all trades, shrinkage of incomes, and increased taxation, both Imperial and parochial.¹³ Although there did not seem to be enough time for managers to get the work done, the annual grant was not paid until the improvements had been made, and so they had to rush. This undermined managers' morale, sometimes making them consider transfer. The Standing Committee was ready to assist in meeting reasonable demands and resisting unreasonable ones. The lists of schools requiring improvements were issued quarterly by the Education Department, and the Secretary immediately wrote to managers offering to help them.

Schools were encouraged to work together, and were helped by their dioceses to develop Church Day Schools Associations which employed organising masters and set up central classes for pupil teachers. The Society supported these associations. Dioceses developed their inspectorates, and buildings and apparatus were improved. Teacher supply was identified as a problem, particularly for country schools and to meet the quickly increasing numbers of pupils in the country as a whole. New pupil teacher regulations reduced teaching time for them to half the week, with the other half expected to be spent in a pupil teacher centre. As a serious issue for rural pupil teachers was the inaccessibility of central classes, correspondence courses were published in the *School Guardian* and organising masters did what they could to help.

The Standing Committee investigated the financial aspects of Anglican schools in school board areas and found that 1892 had been a very difficult year for all voluntary schools, mainly because the fee grant was a quarter in arrears, leading to an overdraft for two months. Despite this, most appeared to be holding their own. Throughout 1894, the Society itself was running up a deficit each month. By 1895, there were many requests for advice and funds, meaning very heavy financial demands on the Society. Frequently it was felt that the Society had to make a contribution, otherwise a school board would be formed. In July 1895 an appeal for funds was launched, stating that in the last 2 years about £1 million had been spent on Church schools, of which the Society had promised £30,000. At a special meeting of the Standing Committee, the educational policy for Church schools was agreed.

Financial difficulties for the schools increased during the 1890s, despite help from the fee grant. The Archbishops issued advice on the current situation and made suggestions for change. However, they still distrusted rate aid: there were no conditions under which the Church would surrender the right to appoint all teachers subject only to the approval of the Education Department. Parents had the right to have their children taught according to the trust deed. The return of a Unionist government to power in June 1895 raised hopes. Various supportive statements had been made, Balfour himself having stressed the need to preserve the voluntary schools and treat them "tenderly, lovingly as a most important part of the great division of education".¹⁴ At the National Society's AGM in June, Lord Salisbury, attacking the Cowper-Temple clause for its banishing of the teaching of religious catechisms or religious formularies in board schools, said that parents should have the right to the type of religious instruction they wanted at public expense.

4.8 Voluntary School Associations

The Standing Committee set up a subcommittee to consider the possibility of suggesting a scheme that would reconcile divergent views within the Church. It agreed that the way forward was to set up federations of schools, and conferences were held in 1896 in an effort to secure the support of Churchmen from across the country. The Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London (designate Archbishop of Canterbury) were asked to present these proposals to the government.

The government decided to proceed in stages, after a resounding failure with a Bill in 1896 that was intended to aid voluntary schools. The Bill of 1897 concentrated on the elementary sector. Voluntary schools were offered an aid grant, to be paid to associations. Managers were given three months to set up the associations, the constitution of which required Education Department approval. The Voluntary Schools Act, 1897 was quickly passed. Once more, the National Society provided the necessary advice to Diocesan Boards of Education, sending out suggestions for a scheme for a Voluntary Schools Association and giving details of how to constitute the governing body. The Standing Committee agreed to provide all necessary forms for those associations having the approval of their bishop; to send experts to meetings of associations when invited; to advise, and where necessary, obtain legal advice free to the association; and to make grants for the salary of the secretary of the Governing body of an association. Matching grants to dioceses were also offered to help with the expenses of running the associations, as none of the aid grant could be used for this purpose.

The 1897 Act was very helpful to the voluntary schools. Protection for the managers of the schools was built in so that their organisation was not interfered with. The grants were used for raising salaries, additional teachers, furniture and apparatus, and HMI reports indicated that the additional funding was having a clear impact. The money was shared out by the governing body to the most needy schools. Only 100 Anglican schools in England and 3 in Wales did not join their association.

Again, after the abortive Bill of 1896, the government decided that it would be simpler to re-organise the central authorities for education before tackling local ones. The result was the Board of Education Act, 1899, which combined the Elementary Education Department with the Science and Art Department and the parts of the Charity Commission that dealt with education. It also provided for a President of the Board as the senior politician for education, although not necessarily with a seat in the Cabinet.

As always, the additional funding through the Voluntary Schools Associations made a difference for a couple of years, but an agricultural depression had reduced subscriptions, and school board rates went up. Schools still did not have financial security, particularly once the Education Department discovered that the indebtedness of the voluntary schools was equal to the total aid grant and so demanded increased subscriptions. In 1901, the Society carried out a survey of how the special aid grant had helped to meet the difficulties of schools and found that very little of the grant had replaced subscriptions. "There is an absolute and bitter and universal resentment against the Government owing to the way in which increased subscriptions are being enforced."¹⁵

Weariness was setting in among many Churchmen. The Bishop of Winchester wrote to Archbishop Temple that it was time to give up hope of increasing subscriptions sufficiently to prevent catastrophe. A few dioceses might manage but he had reached the stage of believing that he could not continue to press clergy or laity to support a system that would end up providing an inferior education.

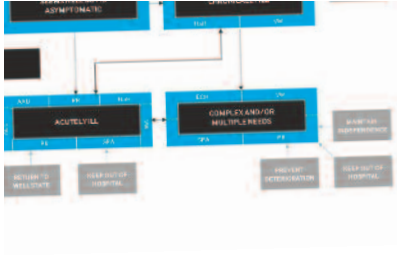
One of Temple's advisers, Rev JJ Scott of Salford, responded to this dispirited statement commenting that the people now believed, as a result of all the legislation, that education should be provided by the state not the church, and it was only the fear of higher rates that kept the voluntary schools in business. He noted that towns had an increasing population and suburbs were being created, so that the price of land for school building was too high for voluntary agencies. It was important to avoid any great increase in the rates that could be laid at the door of the Church so, as the Nonconformist conscience had to be respected, denominational religious instruction could not be paid for out of the rates. Additionally the settlement must ensure that no future Commons with an anti-Church majority could prohibit religious instruction without upsetting the whole of the elementary education system. In a later letter, telling Temple that his demands did not go far enough to meet the needs of town schools in particular, he wondered whether "the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Commandments are not enough church Teaching for children of 13. The rest of the catechism can be relegated to the Sunday schools and confirmation classes."¹⁶

The Standing Committee's views were revised in 1901 to require the denomination to pay for definite religious instruction, with all other teaching paid for by the state. Denominations were to have access to all public elementary schools to provide religious instruction at their own expense, and the appointment and dismissal of teachers was to be in accordance with the trust deed. Hoping to influence the new government as it prepared much-needed legislation favourable to Church schools, the Standing Committee held further meetings in 1901 and 1902 to frame further resolutions.

NOTES

1. Hansard 15th July 1867, quoted in Sylvester, DW, *Robert Lowe and Education*, Cambridge University Press, 1974 pp 118–119.
2. National Society, 59th Annual Report, 1870, p 9–10.
3. Adams, Francis, *History of the Elementary School Contest in England*, Chapman & Hall, 1882 [Cedric Chivers, 1970], p 207.
4. quoted in Maclure, J Stuart, *Educational documents, England & Wales, 1816–1967*, Methuen, 2nd ed 1968, p 99.
5. Wemyss–Reid, T, *Life of the Rt Hon WE Forster*, Chapman & Hall, 1888 [Adams & Dart, 1970], pp 489–91.
6. Morley, J, *The struggle for national education*, Chapman & Hall, 1873 [reprint Harvester, 1972], pp 306–8.
7. Both quoted in Burgess HJ and Welsby, PA, *A short history of the National Society, 1811–1961*, National Society, 1961, p 36.
8. National Society, 69th Annual Report, 1880, p 9.

9. National Society, 72nd Annual Report, 1883, p 75–76.
10. Gordon, Peter, *The Victorian School manager: a study in the management of education 1800–1902*, Woburn Press, 1974, p 69.
11. National Society Standing Committee, 29th November 1888.
12. National Society, 75th Annual Report, 1886, p 15.
13. National Society, 83rd Annual Report, 1894, p 11.
14. Gregory, Robert, *Elementary education: some account of its rise and progress in England*, National Society's Depository, 1905, p 167.
15. Lambeth papers, F.Temple 53, paper#280, no date.
16. Lambeth papers, F.Temple 49, paper #295, 6th January 1901, Rev JJ Scott, St Clement's rectory, Salford to Temple.



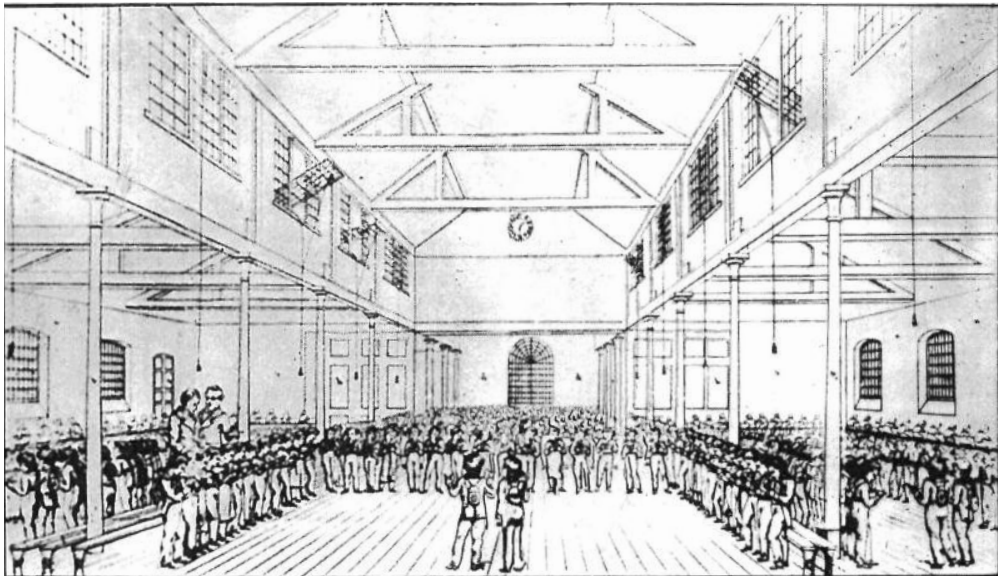
Bell's memorial in Westminster Abbey, 1753–1832. His monument by Behnes was installed in the abbey in 1838. Its incorrect inscription states: "Sacred to the memory of Andrew Bell, D.D. L.L.D. Prebendary of this Collegiate Church: the eminent founder of the Madras System of education, who discovered and reduced to successful

practice the plan of mutual instruction; founded upon the multiplication of power; and the division of labour, in the moral and intellectual world, which has been adopted within the British Empire, as the national system of education of the children of the poor. In the principles of the established Church Dr Bell was born in the city of St Andrew's N.B. 27th of March 1753. Appointed minister of St Mary's Church Madras 1789, Master of Sherburn Hospital 1809, Prebendary of Westminster 1810. Died 27th of January 1832".

NB means North Britain, ie Scotland, and the canonry was conferred in 1819.

Joshua Watson, 1771–1855, founder of the National Society.

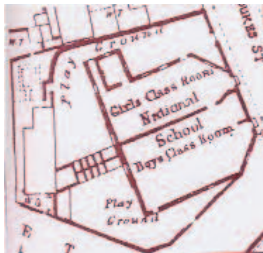
© Reproduced by permission of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey.



THE SCHOOL IN BALDWIN'S GARDENS, ORGANISED ON THE MADRAS PLAN.

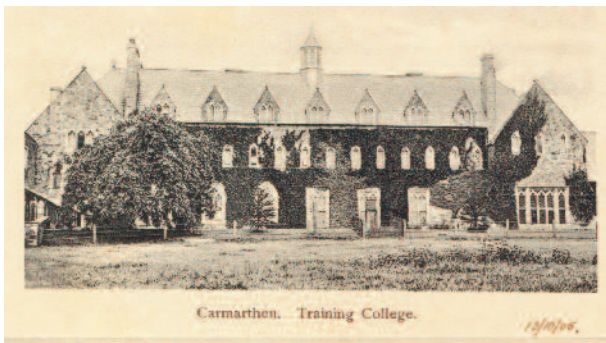
Monitorial system in operation in Baldwin's Gardens school. See how crowded the schoolroom is, with the monitors and their classes.

© National Society.



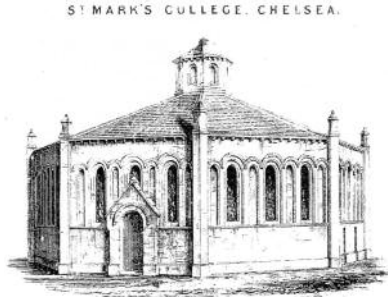
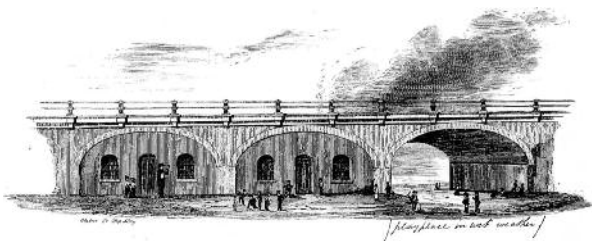
Macclesfield, Duke Street National School. Built 1813; closed 1960 to make way for inner ring road. A very early example of a National School, showing separate boys' and girls' classrooms and "offices" (ie. Toilets).

Plan © Courtesy of the Macclesfield Museums Trust.

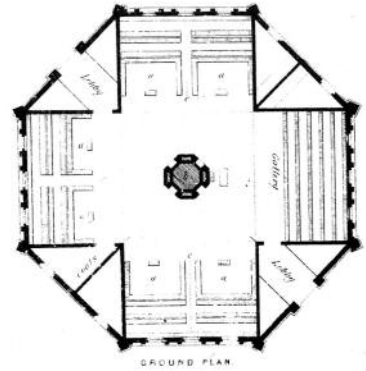


South Wales and Monmouthshire Training College, founded 1847. The College became known as Trinity College, Carmarthen, and is now constituent part of University of Wales Trinity St David.

© Courtesy of the University of Wales Trinity St David.



THE PRACTISING SCHOOL.



St Mark's College, Stanley Grove, King's Road, Chelsea. Octagonal Practising School, with the plan showing the gallery. The College merged with St John's Battersea in 1923 and moved to Plymouth in 1973 and is now University College Plymouth St Mark and St John.

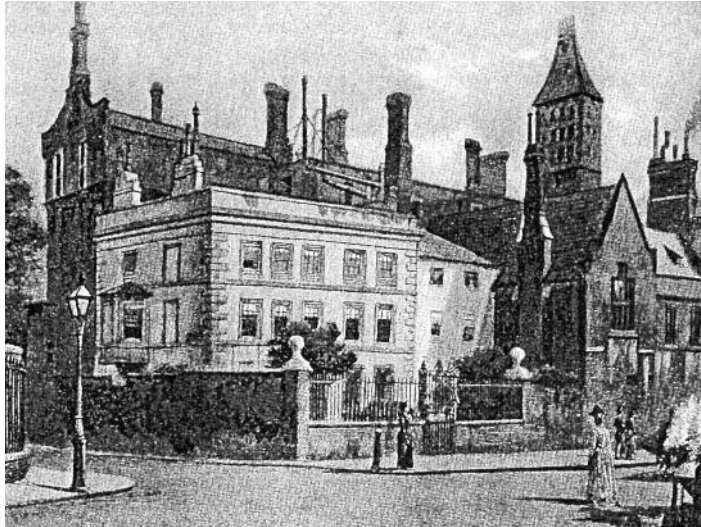
© National Society.

St George's in the East Infant and Sunday School under the Arches of the Blackwall Railway. The area under the right hand arch is shown as "play place in wet weather". An illustration of the difficulty of finding sites in urban areas.

© National Society.

Whitelands College showing the original house in King's Road surrounded by later additions. This first women's college moved from this congested site to Putney in 1929 and then to Roehampton where it is now a constituent part of Roehampton University.

© *Whitelands College*



St Christopher's College, Blackheath. The College, founded in 1909, belonged to the Church of England Sunday School Institute and trained women for work in the Church. It was transferred to the National Society in the merger of 1934 and closed in 1962. The buildings are now used by Blackheath Girls' High School. The spire is of the local parish church.

© *National Society.*

Swansea National School.
An early Welsh National School.

© *National Society.*





War damage, St Paul's CofE School, Great Portwood Street, Stockport. An example of the work needing doing after World War II.

Picture courtesy and © of Manchester Evening News for Stockport Advertiser.



Classroom St Augustine's, Pendlebury, Manchester. February 1962: note the old stove – typical of Victorian times, behind the teacher providing the heat.

Picture courtesy and © Manchester Evening News.

Princess Margaret at the formal opening of Brinscall St John's C of E/Methodist Primary School, on 26th March 1969. This school which opened in 1967 was the first Joint Voluntary Aided school in the country.

Picture courtesy and © Lancashire Evening Post.



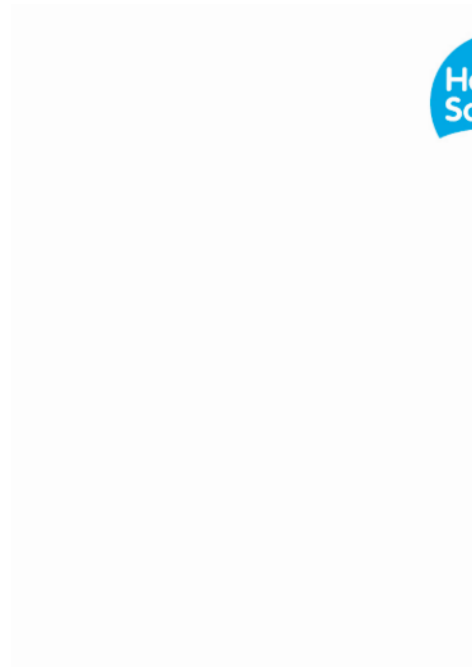
Hanbury near Droitwich. Extension opened 1960. This shows a common type of addition to a school to cope with growing numbers.

Picture courtesy and © of the Worcester News.

Hartest C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary school, Bury St Edmunds, opened 1973. This is an example of anew style of architecture for schools.

© Picture courtesy of Anglia Newspapers Limited.





National Society Logos and 175th anniversary medallion.

© National Society.

Chapter 5

Rescue for the voluntary schools 1900–1945

Summary

Fierce debate persisted on the funding of voluntary and local authority schools and the type of religious instruction to be provided in each. The 1902 Act made voluntary schools part of a national system locally administered, and funded them accordingly but generated huge acrimony in the process, not least within sections of the Church of England. Under the hostile environment of the succeeding Liberal government and in the period following World War I, the Society attempted to look for greater common ground on the question of denominational religious education in schools and training colleges. Work focused on improving school buildings and enhancing the importance of religious education.

5.1 The 1902 Education Act

In 1902, there were 14,275 voluntary schools with a total attendance of 3.1 million children compared with 5,878 Board schools with an attendance of 2.3 million. Of these schools, 11,804 were founded by the Church of England. The average funding for a child in a voluntary school was only 75% that of a child in a board school, as voluntary contributions were lower than the rate aided support in board schools. At the start of the twentieth century the situation for voluntary schools was dire: not only did they run on lower funding but many of their buildings were inappropriate for current educational practice and in need of much improvement. In effect, elementary schools dragged the whole educational system down because the denominations were incapable of making necessary improvements. However, there could be no extra Treasury money for voluntary schools because of the increasing cost of the second Boer War.

For central government, there was the key question of whether church schools had a part to play in the national education system. There were questions concerning the provision of secondary schools and administrative muddle between different local authorities responsible for education over their power to levy rates. There was also the need to improve opportunities for teacher training. Of the possible options, the Conservative government chose to abolish school boards and replace them by county and county borough council authorities, responsible for both elementary and secondary education. This had the major advantage of enabling continuity of provision and supporting the voluntary schools.

There was great relief within the Standing Committee when the Conservative party was returned to power in the "Khaki" election of 1900. Lord Salisbury, a keen Churchman, was the prime minister and his nephew, Arthur Balfour, the leader of the party in the Commons. Balfour became prime minister when Salisbury retired in July 1902. At a meeting of the four Houses of Convocation held in London in the summer of 1901, the Church of England's view was that all voluntary schools should receive public funding for running costs (either through taxation or local rates) without any restriction on the form of religious instruction. In return they were prepared to accept that all capital expenditure and necessary extensions and structural alterations be funded by the appropriate voluntary body and also to allow for one-third of the managers to be appointed by the local authority. They wanted all parents (wherever there was a reasonable number) to have the opportunity to request denominational religious instruction for their children, whether in a voluntary school or a provided school, at no cost to the local authority.

The more radical Nonconformists wanted an end to all voluntary schools, particularly those in single school areas, and the provision of Cowper-Temple religious instruction, (interpreted as non-denominational) which they regarded as their safeguard, in every school. They were roused by Dr John Clifford, the Baptist minister, with the cry of "Rome on the Rates", although it was the Church of England that would gain far more than the Catholic church! Their complaint that thousands of headships were closed to them, and that they were paying rates towards the religious instruction they conscientiously objected to was countered by the Church of England pointing out that its members were paying rates towards religious instruction in the board schools to which they objected. But the cost of the religious teaching provided in the Church's schools was far less than the cost of paying an economic rent for the schools' use.

The Conservative Bill was presented in Parliament in 1902, and while it protected the position of voluntary schools, some amendments were considered necessary for the Church of England. The Standing Committee met and considered that, on the whole, the Bill provided "an equitable settlement of the education question."¹ A major issue for the National Society while the Bill was going through Parliament was the amendment proposed by Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, at the request of Balfour, as a concession to the Nonconformists. The fiercest attacks on Anglican schools were prompted by cases in which vicars had introduced "Ritualist doctrines" to their schools. The intention of the clause was to abolish the power of one man, by giving the control of religious instruction to the managers as a whole: a reflection of the position over the management clauses in the 1850s. The denominational position was protected by the fact that the foundation managers formed the majority group on the managing body, and that instruction had to be in accordance with the trust deed. The announcement of the amendment attracted the wrath of the High Church wing who claimed it was unfair to penalise all 11,000 parishes for the activities of a few extremists. The Standing Committee was summoned and considered that the clause seriously affected the trust deeds of schools in union with the Society:

The Committee earnestly protest against the amendment recently introduced in the Education Bill on the motion of Col. Kenyon-Slaney, and strongly hope that Churchmen will use their best endeavour to secure an alteration before the Bill becomes law.²

Despite these protests, the clause remained in the Act, though the Lords incorporated the right of appeal to the bishop on issues of denominational religious instruction. The final settlement was not all that the Society wanted, but the Committee considered that it was such that the best could be made of it. It had left neither wing of the Church satisfied: High Church members thought the Church was not getting enough consideration, while the Liberal wing considered that the settlement was too generous. Through the Act, however, the majority of those responsible for voluntary schools were satisfied to have become a definite part of the national education system and to have guaranteed funding for their running costs, which would automatically rise as costs rose and which would be applied to all new schools. But the conflict had been extremely bitter, and this memory lived on for many years.

The Act abolished school boards and set up new Local Education Authorities [LEAs] for elementary and secondary education based on county and county borough councils. The LEAs were to maintain all public elementary schools, having control of the secular education in all of them. Voluntary schools were to have a body of four foundation managers appointed according to the trust deed and two representatives of the LEA. The managers were to appoint the teachers and run the school subject to any directions by the LEA about secular education, which typically concerned the number and qualifications of teachers. These directions were not to interfere with religious instruction that, under the Kenyon–Slaney clause, was to be agreed by all the managers and be in accordance with the trust deed. The LEA was also responsible for funding "fair wear and tear" of the premises and the proportion of heating, lighting and cleaning costs due to the operation as a school. This left the managers to find the funds for keeping the structure in good repair, making such alterations and improvements as might reasonably be required by the LEA and the costs of use of the buildings out of school hours.

With the Act passed, the Society's officers began to assist schools with implementation. All managers and owners of Anglican schools were advised to continue as voluntary schools, and the difficulties of transfer to a LEA described. In one area there was a suggestion that all the Anglican schools give up their denominational religious instruction and simply provide non-denominational instruction according to the London School Board's syllabus. The Standing Committee found the Kenyon–Slaney clause helpful (for once) because "it has the effect of making it obligatory on managers to maintain the character of the religious instruction as defined by the trust deed."³ On the other hand, one clergyman held that the Kenyon–Slaney clause was "the greatest betrayal since the crucifixion."⁴ In 1903, staff dealt with 25,000 letters asking for advice!

Various groups made noisy protests against the 1902 Act. Many Nonconformist churches railed against it. "A disgraceful sectarian plot, eventuating in a most discreditable and malicious attack on the best part of our educational system ... The passing of the Education Act, 1902, marks a dark day in our national life," was the Primitive Methodists' comment at their 1903 Annual Conference.⁵ One form of protest was carried out by individual people who took up "passive resistance", refusing to pay all or part of their rates because some of the money would go to voluntary schools where a creed in which they didn't believe was taught.

The West Riding of Yorkshire tried in various ways to penalise Church schools. In 1907 it refused to confirm the appointment of a master and it also attempted to reduce by 10% the salaries it paid to teachers giving denominational religious instruction. The Appeal Court allowed this deduction but eventually the Board of Education went to the House of Lords, which reversed the decision and required the County Council to give the teachers the back pay it owed them. The National Society helped with support and funding.

These cases were, in effect, small scale sniping compared with the major form of protest by LEAs in Wales (dominated by nonconformists) which had various tactics in regard to the funding of voluntary schools. In Carmarthenshire, it was decided that the LEA would make no effort to control the voluntary schools, nor to put representative managers on them. All that the LEA did was to pass on the government grant "earned" by the school, and then it ignored them, leaving them in the same position as they had been before the 1902 Act. The Board of Education told the LEA that it could not pick and choose which bits of legislation it would administer and that it must fund the schools.

The attacks changed to the "starvation policy" adopted by several other LEAs whereby voluntary schools received some rate aid but not as much as the provided schools. This was on the basis that the Act did not say that the two sets of schools had to be funded equally. In the end, Parliament had to pass the Local Authorities (Default) Act in 1904, which enabled the Board of Education to fund the schools with the equivalent amount being deducted for the authorities' grants. Various cases were supported by the National Society as they went through the courts.

The National Society co-operated with the Board of Education over the change of name of National schools in 1906; the Board argued that "National" meant belonging to the nation, not specifically Anglican. All National schools were advised to change their name to "Church of England". At the same time, British schools all took their denomination's name, becoming Primitive Methodist or Congregational, etc.

5.2 Education and the Liberal government

In January 1906 the Liberals were swept into power with a large majority on election pledges that suited their Nonconformist members exactly: all voluntary schools were to be transferred to Local Authority control with no religious tests for teachers and no teacher being required to teach religious education. This result came despite the National Society's efforts to correct many misleading statements issued by the Liberal party about the voluntary sector. During the next three years, there were three Presidents of the Board of Education and between them they endeavoured to get four Bills through Parliament, all with the intention of curbing the Church of England's schools.

After these abortive attempts to rewrite the 1902 Act, the government abandoned any more attempts for the time being. All were scuppered by the Established Church, organised by its official voice, the National Society, even at the cost of disagreeing with the Archbishop of Canterbury, its President. While the Society supported the resolution of Nonconformist grievances and those of Jews, Catholics or Anglicans, the stumbling

block always lay in its understanding of the trust deeds' requirement for education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England without separating the secular education from the religious. This required Church teachers appointed by Church managers. The High Church element – in the majority of the National Society – thought that undenominational religious education as implemented under the Cowper–Temple clause conveyed a mish–mash of opinions to young minds. Others in the Society were more prepared to accept that gaining some basic religious education for all children was a better bargain than denominational education for some. The line taken by the Society in demanding a settlement based on "the principles of justice, religious equality, and parental right" satisfied the former group to a greater extent. Reviewing the situation in 1909, the Society began to look for a constructive policy on which all Churchmen could unite.

While battles were still being fought over voluntary schools, the Liberal government opened another front over the denominational training colleges, by insisting that, from 1908, they had operate a conscience clause to make it easier for nonconformist students to get places. It had been hoped that the new LEAs with their power to open and run training colleges would have provided this option, but they were very slow getting off the ground. The Board of Education saw no reason why the state should continue to maintain training colleges for church purposes, but could not withdraw the grants because this would cause colleges to close and then there would be a dire shortage of teachers. A storm of protest erupted from both Anglicans and Catholics at what was perceived to be an attempt by the Board to destroy the character of the colleges. The National Society's Inspector of Training Colleges found no evidence of a large number of students being unable to get into a college because of reasons of conscience, commenting that far more called themselves Anglicans in order to get trained. He went on to say that the Church could not be expected to train atheists to become teachers – in fact such people should not be allowed in front of a class!

A *modus vivendi* was eventually agreed with the Archbishop for 1908 onwards: colleges must admit a maximum of 50% of students without enquiry about their religious beliefs and nonconforming candidates could be in hostels. By 1913, there was such a shortage of applicants that colleges were glad to admit nonconformists as residents. Even so, there were only 168 such students – many at Carmarthen in Wales.

The Liberal government's battles over education lasted the first decade of the new century. The Free Churches were continuing to demand the end of public support for denominational schools and the Prime Minister, Asquith, still hoped to overturn the 1902 Act. As late as 1913, some Welsh LEAs were paying lower salaries to teachers in Church schools and the Society was supporting the managers in adding to salaries and fighting court cases. However, there were indications that ministers and the free churches had moved away from trying to confiscate all voluntary schools, even those in single school areas.

The Society was concerned about "unfriendly legislation", and began to work with the Free Churches over the issue of religious instruction. The Standing Committee, while stating that it could not accept any scheme that discriminated against Anglican parents

wanting denominational religious instruction when it was provided for nonconformist parents, even managed to state that "it must [...] remain a vitally important duty [...] to secure as complete justice to Nonconformist parents as to those belonging to the Church of England, [...]" ⁶ This was a very different line. There was a view that in single school areas, alternative forms of religious instruction should be offered to those parents wanting it, and Diocesan Education Authorities were asked to advise managers. Even though this appeared to go against the trust deeds, it was imperative that Nonconformists were convinced that religious teaching suitable to their consciences was available in schools to which they were compelled to send their children. The Standing Committee began presenting this stance to the wider public, as a defence against further attacks on the dual system. At the same time, it stated that it was the duty of all Churchmen to make sacrifices in support of the work of the National Society in assistance to schools.

An initial blacklist of inadequate school buildings was issued in 1909 by the Board of Education, alongside a re-calculation of accommodation at a rate of 10 square feet per child instead of 8. This led to a reduced number of places in Church schools and more children going to council schools. While the demands on classroom space could not be considered unreasonable, some concerns were expressed about the way they were being enforced. Unfortunately the Board of Education was targeting one area at a time, which meant that neighbouring parishes were too occupied with their own needs to help their neighbours. Next, the Board put a limit on size of classes of 40 for older children and 48 for infants, meaning a further reduction in accommodation.

5.3 100 years of the National Society

At a meeting held at the Mansion House on 23rd March 1911, the Archbishop of Canterbury gave an historical review of the National Society and the services it had rendered the Church. A resolution supported by Balfour was passed, "That the Society's principle of definite religious instruction as an integral part of education is of vital consequence to the national welfare." ⁷ The Annual meeting was held at St Mark's College, though the Archbishop was worried that he might be required for rehearsals for George V's coronation! Events were concentrated in October 1911, with a meeting in the Central Hall of Church House at which the Archbishop presided and spoke. A representative of the SPCK brought greetings from the "Mother Society". War time conditions precluded a celebration of the charter's centenary in 1917.

The National Society had seen an opening for Sunday School publications, so Miss Hetty Lee was appointed in 1909 to organise and run training courses and produce material. Her work was soon so successful that an assistant had to be appointed. Not all those involved in Sunday Schools approved of the new methods of teaching, but as the more old-fashioned material continued to be available these complaints were not taken too seriously. A letter was received in 1912 from the Archbishop's Sunday School Council suggesting that the two organisations met to discuss proposals for the centralisation of Sunday School work. The Society argued that it could not distinguish between its day and Sunday school work in religious instruction, and the same publications were used in both for elementary and secondary schools. It pointed to the links between elementary and secondary schools, training colleges and the work on Sundays, indicating that the National Society was the body best placed to develop all these.

5.4 World War I and after

War time brought great anxiety about finance, with reductions in all forms of income and the value of securities. Building requirements were relaxed and expenditure restricted. Army chaplains found great ignorance of the basics of religion, some considering that the men might as well have been brought up in a heathen land. On the other hand, war time led to co-operation between Christians of many shades of belief.

The National Society saw it as young men's duty to God and country to volunteer for the forces. This, and later conscription, led to an emptying of the men's colleges. Holland, the Assistant Secretary, worked very closely with the Board of Education on a scheme of "concentration" for the men students, and to ensure that the colleges would be covered for financial loss and repairs afterwards. All the training colleges except St Katharine's, Tottenham (SPCK) and Cheltenham (which refused to have religious knowledge examinations because "they ruin souls") were very dependent on the Society for funding over and above fees and government grants.

Before the War it was apparent that the colleges had entered a period of competition, and that many were likely to succumb. Holland realised that their future depended on some form of central direction and in 1916 a Board of Supervision was set up. In 1918, the National Society agreed that it would make grants direct to its own colleges (Battersea, St Mark's, Whitelands and Carmarthen) and to the others through the Board of Supervision, and accepted the invitation to provide the administrative support. After the War, increased costs made the colleges a great drain on the Society's funds. From this time, the Church's Central Board of Finance pledged support for the colleges, sharing the financial burden.

The War reinforced a recognition by the public of the need for improved education, and the National Society began to talk about a partnership between Church and state. Many people and organisations wrote to the Society about possible means of improvement, including the provision of better quality religious education in all schools. Some suggested that a syllabus should be agreed by the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society and through them with other major denominations.

The Education Act of 1918 left the religious settlement of 1902 undisturbed so that the main thrust of the Act, to raise the leaving age to 14 and provide more opportunities for older pupils, would not be compromised. Fees in elementary schools and the half time system were both abolished. LEAs sought ways to implement the requirements for senior pupils in their areas. The National Society welcomed these reforms as a major contribution to improving the quality and scope of the education given in the elementary schools, but recognised that a large building fund was required in order to improve school buildings and provide for Church senior schools.

But schools were being transferred or closed at the rate of about 100 a year, and the demands of the 1918 Act were expected to lead to more being squeezed out as children were drawn away from poorly equipped Church schools, thereby reducing the influence of the Church authorities. The real concern was that there was no adequate safeguard

for denominational instruction in a transferred school. The realisation that it was better to make terms while there were still school buildings to bargain with led the National Society to indicate that it would consider transferring children from Church schools to council senior schools, on condition that they received religious instruction in accordance with the wishes of their parents and provided by suitable teachers. This would mean that, without schools to support, the National Society's funds could be used to train teachers so that there were sufficient well qualified people who could influence the lives of children.

At a meeting in July 1919 with H A L Fisher, who was the President of the Board of Education, and a deputation from the Free Churches, Archbishop Davidson stated,

I would say the fundamentals of our position are these: we regard religious teaching as an essential element in right education; next we regard it as essential that that religious teaching, if it is to be worth having, should be given by competent men, and given genuinely by men who do it both because they are properly qualified and because they can do it conscientiously. Thirdly, it is in our view almost axiomatic that if religious teaching is to be effective it cannot rest content with indefiniteness, but must have some specific statement of doctrine, especially as the children grow a little older.⁸

These three principles of the Archbishop were accepted by this group. At the National Society AGM in May 1923, Davidson spoke in support of the official resolution that the National Society should continue to adhere to his three 1921 principles and was willing to consider any proposals which would effect them. But an amendment calling on the Church authorities to abandon the policy of negotiating about "the surrender of Church schools", which totally contradicted the official proposal, was carried.

The economic situation, however, meant a total revision of government policy as the "Geddes Axe" took effect. The Geddes Committee in its final report of February 1922 concluded that the state spent too much on education, that the cost per pupil had increased unreasonably and total spending should be reduced by one-third. LEAs were to be told to spend less and secondary education was to be confined to abler children. Building programmes were held up and there was a curtailment of many of the projects needed to implement the 1918 Act. The next year, teachers' salaries were cut by 5%, class sizes increased to reduce the number of teachers and there was encouragement to employ cheaper unqualified teachers.

5.5 Buildings, senior schools and the syllabus

Early in 1924, the new Labour government under Ramsey MacDonald reversed the previous government's policy of economy. Trevelyan, the new President of the Board of Education, was determined to improve education: class sizes were to be reduced in elementary schools to under 60, with a later reduction to under 50, and the number of supplementary and uncertificated teachers was to be cut.

This enabled the Government in 1924–25 to make another attempt to improve the stock of school buildings. As before, the problem was one of obsolescence, with schools built in accordance with earlier central government advice no longer suitable for changed

educational conditions. Progress on the 1909 review was, however, so slow that a third review was made in 1924–25. On this occasion, in order to ensure that seriously defective buildings were clearly identified, the worst schools were classified. Blacklisted schools were put into one of three categories, A (incapable of improvement), B (large expenditure required for smaller numbers) and C (might be suitable for lower numbers).

Nationally, 303 Anglican schools were put on List A and 1,006 on List B. The National Society saw the issue of these lists as a challenge, and assumed that more detailed investigation would show some of the schools to be less unsatisfactory than thought at first sight. It encouraged dioceses to look at all schools in their areas and decide on priorities based on those schools where the work was most immediately necessary and those that it was most desirable to keep. In November 1926 the Archbishop of Canterbury launched a special appeal to raise funds for school buildings. The appeal reached £15,000 but there were so many applications for aid that most grants were for 5% of total costs rather than the previous 10%. By the end of 1928 the Society estimated that about a quarter of Anglican schools had been removed from the blacklist and another quarter were in the process of being dealt with.

At the same time as the blacklists were published, there was increasing pressure to provide senior schools, added to by the report of the Board of Education's Consultative Committee chaired by Sir Henry Hadow. *The education of the adolescent* was published in 1926. Within the Church of England, there was concern that through government pressure LEAs would set up central or senior schools or classes before the voluntary bodies and would attract older and abler children from voluntary schools. The voluntary schools would be "decapitated", catering only for younger children, thus diminishing their status.

Enhanced building regulations were announced in 1924 and from then on the Board of Education began to force the pace of reorganisation, which was carried out in part by demands for three year development plans from LEAs. The Board pointed out quite forcibly that reorganisation, whether of provided or voluntary schools, led to financial savings. All the churches were having difficulty in meeting their financial obligations and were clearly holding up progress. On the other hand, the general public had ceased to hold strong views about the religious issue: the Liberal party had faded away and the developing Labour party steered clear of such controversy. The churches' views were becoming less important to governments, and they realised that co-operation between them, the teachers and LEAs was essential if progress was to happen.

One solution adopted by some of the LEAs that were keen to work with the churches was to develop with church representatives a syllabus of religious instruction for use in council and transferred schools. Cambridgeshire was the first to reach agreement in 1924, and other LEAs copied this. By 1930 eight counties had their own "agreed syllabus" which quickly led to improved standards of teaching. As this became obvious, Church school managers became more willing to transfer their schools to the LEA. The West Riding tactic was to make a concordat with the local dioceses whereby managers could transfer their schools to the LEA but were allowed to keep two periods a week for definite religious instruction, an agreed syllabus being used on the other days. All of these efforts

served to enhance the importance of religious education as a subject for all children, whatever their denomination.

5.6 A new National Society charter

Church structures were also reorganised to give the greater autonomy necessary now that Parliament was not exclusively Anglican. In 1919 Parliament agreed to the formation of a National Church Assembly, with the Convocations of Canterbury and York continuing to function. In 1919 an Advisory Committee on Education of the Central Board of Finance was set up, with concern for Anglican hostels at modern universities. In 1922 the Assembly set up an Advisory Committee on Education. The question then became who spoke for the Church on education? Was it the National Society or the Assembly's Committee? The National Society maintained the assumption that it was the main educational body of the Church.

This became particularly important in 1926. Some LEAs, including Lancashire where the great majority of schools were voluntary schools, raised the question of aid for improving buildings of church schools. The Association of County Councils asked for an Enabling Bill to help them to make local agreements. This captured the interest of the Standing Committee. However, the Church Assembly, seeking to reinforce the Archbishop's three principles yet recognising that there was a growing number of Anglican children in council schools, demanded the right of entry of clergy into new council senior schools. It further demanded the establishment of local religious instruction committees to supervise and inspect the subject in council schools and the provision by LEAs of new voluntary schools. Given Davidson's negotiations with the Free Churches, this was a backward looking report but it became official Church policy, and brought to a close all attempts by LEAs to get an enabling bill.

The Church Assembly set up a Committee in 1926 to consider all aspects of religious education within the Church. It reported in 1929, recommending that there be a Central Council of the Church for Religious Education, with administrative powers to cover the whole spectrum of religious education and to be the voice of the Church on these. If the National Society were willing, it was to be asked to extend its operations and petition for a new Charter, and new name, to facilitate this new role. The choice of the National Society rather than the establishment of a new body was dictated by the fact that the Society was by far the largest educational administrative body within the Church and so it would be easy to add to its responsibilities. The Society would be required to change its system of governance so that the Standing Committee, which was unrepresentative of the Church as a whole, was replaced by a new body which would include representatives appointed by the Church Assembly. This was eventually agreed, and the remit was to continue to cover Wales if the newly disestablished Church in Wales so wished. The Privy Council granted the supplemental charter on 14th April 1934. The new charter changed the name to "The National Society for Promoting Religious Education in accordance with the Principles of the Church of England", operating in both England and Wales. The purpose included the promotion, encouragement and support of religious education, irrespective of age and degree. The words "Central Council of the Church of England for Religious Education" were soon dropped from their initial position

of subtitle to "The National Society" and the work continued under the sole name of the National Society.

The new remit meant a reorganisation of ways of working. The Standing Committee continued as the governing body and had various subcommittees reporting to it: Finance and General Purposes, Elementary Education, Sunday Education and Higher Education. This last included secondary schools, training colleges, universities, adult education and theological colleges. The Sunday committee was given the task of negotiating with the Church of England Sunday School Institute. The Sunday School Institute AGM of 27th June, 1935 finally adopted a resolution to amalgamate with the Church of England Central Council for Religious Education.⁹ A greatly increased role required more staff, yet the Church Assembly did not provide any funds for these new activities. Not surprisingly, the Society soon found itself in financial trouble. It took until 1939 for the Church Assembly's Central Board of Finance to agree to support the additional burdens taken on by the National Society on behalf of the whole Church.

5.7 The 1936 Education Act

In the light of the economic situation of the 1930s, various educational measures were attempted by successive governments but failed. Managers' struggle against adverse circumstances and financial stringency continued. Schools were closed, either because managers lost heart or the number of children in the village dropped below the critical figure of 30. On the other hand, there were places where new voluntary schools were built and extensions completed. At the February 1935 Standing Committee meeting, some members were echoing the Catholic demand for state grants for voluntary school buildings without conditions. Later in the month, the Archbishop and Holland saw Lord Halifax, President of the Board of Education, and told him that there was a danger of allowing the reorganisation to drift without any indication of assistance to enable voluntary schools to take part. Halifax promised that the government would initiate discussions.

To ensure that reorganisation could be completed the government had again begun exploring ways and means to help churches with the necessary building work. For a three year period only, the plans allowed local education authorities to provide for the churches between 50 and 75 per cent of the costs of buildings specifically for senior pupils. These buildings could form either a new school or extensions to an existing school. These "special agreement" schools, as they became known, were under tighter LEA control than the voluntary elementary schools in that all staff were appointed by the LEA. The only modification to this was the "reserved teacher" – one who was competent to give religious instruction according to the trust deed – whose appointment could be vetoed by the managers. The proportion of teachers to be in the "reserved" category was negotiated for each school as part of the special agreement between managers and the LEA. This compromise gave a level of satisfaction to each of the main parties.

The 1936 Act required proposals for senior schools had to be presented by 1st March 1938. According to the Board of Education, there were 230 from the Church of England (out of a total of 519), though this figure was an underestimate. The Act was the first

break with the 1902 settlement, and indicated a lessening of the old hostilities between the churches.

5.8 Developments in RE

The new Director of Religious Education responsible for working with secondary schools, boarding schools and the Church Tutorial Classes Association, soon expanded the work of the National Society. Questions were asked of the universities about theological training, the training of teachers, and opportunities for students in religious study, worship and service. This led to a meeting of Anglicans and Free Churchmen with the University Vice-Chancellors to discuss divinity courses. Notes on Adult Religious Education were published for the guidance of dioceses and parishes. A joint committee was also formed with the Central Youth Council to assist in the formation of youth fellowships in the dioceses for those aged between 15 and 25 years.

Sunday school work was greatly enhanced by the merger of the two societies, the Church of England Sunday School Institute and the National Society, and was led by a group of women who became well known in the Sunday school world: Hetty Lee Holland, Florence Taylor, Doris and Phyllis Dent and Eleanor Martin. Between them they produced teaching materials and books, and covered the country with their lecturing activities. In particular, they visited theological colleges, training colleges (not only Church of England ones), and diocesan training days. Such work was considered more important because of the decline in the numbers of children in Anglican day schools. Much work concentrated on the children over the age of 11 years.

Under the 1936 Act, children could be withdrawn from school for distinctive religious instruction. Work was begun on planning a syllabus for use on one day a week. This would complement the main agreed syllabuses (some of which included doctrine that was common to all the mainstream Christian churches) so that children were taught in a coherent way. Meetings were held with the Free Churches about improving religious education throughout the country; these meetings recommended the preparation of an outline syllabus covering various stages of a child's life from primary to secondary schools to which other syllabuses could be related. Other recommendations included how to work with teachers to improve teaching methods.

The first part of the twentieth century life of the National Society was dominated by the work of Richard Holland who became an assistant secretary in 1903 and from then on played a major role in relationships with the government's Board of Education, particularly in relation to the Church's training colleges. He, and his wife, retired in 1936 when he was 77 years old. With his departure, and the promotion of his assistant, EJ Hussey to replace him, it was decided to bring elementary education under the remit of the Director of Religious Education. In 1939 a Publications Committee was formed and agreement was reached with the SPCK for a joint imprint.

The National Society was also engaged from early 1937 in an unofficial conference with the Evangelical Free Churches, set up to discuss the present position of religious instruction and ways in which it might be improved. This unofficial group was later

recognised by the National Society and by the Free Church Federal Council and its recommendations accepted. These included religious knowledge being an optional subject for the teachers' certificate, and divinity being taught throughout the pupils' life in secondary schools by teachers who had specialised in the subject. Religious instruction in elementary schools should be inspected by HMI and LEAs should appoint teachers who were able and willing to teach the subject. Finally, timetables should be amended to allow for an opening act of worship every day.

NOTES

1. National Society, 91st Annual Report, 1902, p 9.
2. National Society, 92nd Annual Report, 1903, p 9.
3. *ibid*, p12.
4. Quoted in Cruickshank M, *Church and state in English education 1870 to present day*, Macmillan, 1967, p 93.
5. Report of the Connexional Education Committee to the Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Church, 1903 minutes, p 194–5.
6. National Society, 100th Annual report, 1911, p 54.
7. National Society, 100th Annual report, 1911, p 55.
8. Bell GKA, *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, Oxford UP, 2nd ed, 1938, p 1127.
9. Not the National Society! Letter of 1st May 1954 from Canon SCL Miller a member of the SSI Standing Committee, to Stopford, saying that if it had been realised that it was really the National Society that was taking over the Institute, then the SSI wouldn't have agreed to it.

Chapter 6

The National Society in a post–War world 1945–1986

Summary

The 1944 overhaul of the education system was part of a national movement to look to the future. The Society had to engage with a newly ecumenical educational environment in reappraising its ideals, but Temple, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, strongly opposed the wholesale transfer of Church schools. With the churches unable to afford the cost of the post–War educational reconstruction proposed, compromises emerged for the voluntary schools through which they became controlled or aided by the LEAs. Dioceses became newly significant in the period of post–War planning, setting up their own Educational Committees. Religious education was re–emphasised as a focus of the Church’s witness and work.

6.1 The Society and the 1944 Education Act

The effects of the rescue provided by the 1902 Act diminished over the early decades of the twentieth century, and by the start of the second World War the voluntary schools were again in a parlous state. As before, war led to a reconsideration of society and its educational needs. The school leaving age was still 14, with the dual system determining the lot of many children. Most of the voluntary schools were in inadequate buildings. Of the 753 schools remaining on the Board of Education’s Black List of schools with defective premises (now very out of date), 541 were voluntary schools; which, for the Church of England, represented almost 1 in 20. Voluntary schools were small: there were almost the same number of provided and non–provided schools, but only 30% of the total child population was in a voluntary school. Reorganisation was held up by the dual system. In March 1939, 62% of children in council schools aged 11 and over were in senior schools, while in the voluntary sector only 16% were. As pupils could not, without agreement, be taken out of voluntary all–age schools and put in council senior schools, this proportion was unlikely to change. Although these figures were attributed by the Board of Education to managers’ lack of funds for buildings, no–one doubted that the education system had to be radically overhauled.

In July 1940 the Standing Committee decided that the Society needed to explore ideas for the future with others, and look for wide acceptance of its stance. There was some recognition that, over time, opinion within the Church had become fragmented. In 1902

it had been united in defence of its schools but now, recognising that it would only be able to hold on to a minority of these, many churchmen were more interested in ensuring that all children, in whatever type of school, got a good Christian education. They wanted Agreed Syllabus Religious instruction, with the Church putting its money into teacher training, because it was through teachers that children would most be influenced, rather than through a limited number of schools. Others, however, believed that children needed to be taught in an atmosphere of religion, where school and Church were closely associated and children could be trained to be members of a worshipping community. A third group, many of whom were members of the National Society, wanted to retain all schools, build more and have facilities for denominational instruction in all schools.

The Standing Committee, discussing a paper presented by some members, stated the responsibility of the churches to work alongside other agencies. Indignant about the scandals revealed by children's evacuation from the cities, it emphasised the importance of a Christian education:

which includes the teaching of the Christian faith, with its historical foundation in Scripture, instruction and training in the practice of worship as an introduction to full membership of the Christian society and, as the normal outcome of these, a grounding in the principles of the Christian ethic both for the life of the individual and for the community.¹

The first step towards achieving this was to co-operate with teachers, implementing the new spirit generated by the ecumenical movement. The second step consisted of specific proposals for reform. The paper recognised the obstacles to progress in attitudes from the past to the Church and its schools and also of apathy amongst the public. It recommended that steps be taken to awaken public opinion and to educate Anglicans, Free Churchmen and LEAs to these ideas.

Meanwhile, negotiations with the Free Churches had continued, with a fair amount of agreement. All wanted an increase in the importance of Christianity to the nation and for religious instruction to have a more central place in all schools. The Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales had together drawn up what they considered to be fundamental requirements for religious instruction (based on Davidson's three points from 1919) with which the Nonconformists were generally in agreement. Incorporating some of the ideas being discussed in the Standing Committee, they became known as the Archbishops' five points, and were published as a statement issued from Lambeth Palace in *The Times* on 13th February 1941:

1. that a Christian education be given to children in all schools (council and voluntary)
2. that religious instruction should become a full "optional" subject in the training colleges
3. that the existing statutory restriction that religious instruction should only be given as the first or last lesson of the day should be abolished
4. that religious teaching should be inspected by HM inspectors
5. that all schools should start the day with an act of worship.²

The churches' leaders were agreed that:

the approach to that subject [Christian Education] should be along the lines of a fuller appreciation of the ultimate aim of all education – the development of the spirit as well as of the mind and the body. This renewed interest in the subject and this new co-operation of Christian people must now be followed up by efforts to arouse the public opinion of the Country.³

Board of Education officials, having organised the evacuation, had time to plan for the future. RA Butler became President of the Board of Education of the Coalition Government in July 1941, just after the publication of its first set of proposals. After initial meetings with Lang and then a joint delegation from the Church of England and the Free Church Federal Council which pressed the Archbishops' five points, Butler came up against the reality of the Catholic hierarchy's views which were very much more demanding of government finance. Many further meetings to discuss various proposals were held by Butler and his officials with Churchmen.

After his initial discussions with Butler, Temple, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, wanted to co-operate but had to reconcile this with the views of some of his Churchmen. At the National Society's AGM in June 1942, Temple gave a presidential address, *Our trust and our task* in which he mounted a strong defence of Church schools. He challenged the Society: "We must say what it is about the dual system that we believe in: and why the thing we believe in can be secured by the dual system and in no other way." ⁴ For him, the Archbishops' five points were designed to strengthen religious instruction in all schools, and did not mean that the church would have to lose all control in those schools which it had built. He was resolutely opposed to the wholesale surrender or transfer of Church schools, seeing their existence as a protection against a possible totalitarian state.

He invited the Standing Committee to inquire afresh how far the Society's principles could be expressed in the current world and whether a modification of policy was required. Much of this speech was, of course, music to the ears of some diehards. But Temple had sound reasons for taking this line, trying to prevent a breakaway faction of the Church and yet keep the majority of the National Society on side. His speech impressed the Secretary of the Congregational Union who considered that Temple had presented very balanced views.

In a further meeting with Temple, Butler said that he genuinely welcomed the Church's real contribution to the discussions. He had three main points: raise the school leaving age to 15; create a clear division between primary and secondary schools and ensure all buildings were of the same standard as council schools. This would mean very large expenditure – more than the Church could afford. Butler suggested two sets of possibilities. The first was that schools could remain as voluntary schools, with the LEA doing all repairs. There would be compulsory agreed syllabus religious instruction with provision for denominational teaching on two days a week where parents requested this. The LEA would appoint all teachers and head teachers, but would consult over reserved teachers. This became the voluntary controlled version. The second, which became the aided version, was the current system unaltered except that it provided for 50% grants for buildings. Temple considered this a generous offer from government but it would

mean very heavy expenditure for the Church. He thought that very few dioceses would be able to keep more than a third of their schools. "I am bound to say that this is better than anything I had hoped for." ⁵ Consultations were needed with all other denominations, including the Catholics.

Many more months of discussions within the Church Assembly and between Church and Board took place but the line agreed by Temple was held. Butler published the White Paper *Educational Reconstruction* in July 1943 and it was clearly recognised that the proposals formed a compromise which had slowly been stitched together over a two year period. All churches had to make sacrifices from their ideal, but it was hoped that gains and losses for each would balance out.

Each of the church groups had its traditionalist members who kept backing away from the delicate compromise required and demanding far more than was ever possible. The Catholics wanted 100% funding for all existing and new atmosphere (voluntary aided) schools. The Free Churches wanted an end to all denominational teaching, particularly in single school areas, being quite happy with the agreed syllabus arrangement, and thought 50% grants were too high. The Anglicans, in addition to better funding for the aided schools, wanted access for denominational instruction in provided schools. Very few amendments to the eventual Bill were accepted by the government but fears that church interests might wreck it were not realised: Butler's real problem was a proposal for equal pay for men and women teachers.

The 1944 Education Act provided for a clear break between primary and secondary education at around the age of 11 years and put schools into four main categories. Council or provided schools became county schools run by the LEAs. There were two possibilities for the voluntary schools. They could either become a voluntary school controlled by the LEA or a voluntary school aided by the LEA according to the amount of public money put into them. The amount of public control was therefore settled. Finally, there were a few special agreement schools already in existence (others having been halted by the Second World War) and the option was re-opened. However, this led to very few more schools.

Through the negotiations required in the evolution of the Act, the Society was increasingly acknowledging that many decisions in the future would have to be delegated to dioceses. The Diocesan Education (Church Schools) Committees Measure was introduced to Church Assembly in February 1942 and approved. Its aims were to secure greater unity in England in the administration of Church schools; combine the resources within each diocese and strengthen the position of managers in relation to LEAs when post war planning was carried out. Each Diocese was therefore to set up an Education Committee, and the appointment of a full-time Diocesan Director of Religious Education was also recommended. Schools would no longer operate as single entities and there would be a measure of co-operation between diocese and schools. The Measure meant that trustees, owners and managers must consult with their Diocesan Education Committee before making any agreements covering restoration, discontinuance, closing, sale, lease or amalgamation of schools with the Board of Education, Charity Commission or LEA.

6.2 Implementing the 1944 Act

It has been generally recognised that the glorious visions driven by the Education Act, 1944, ran straight into the problems of post war austerity. In the context of a devastated Europe with its millions of refugees and displaced persons, the British too were weary: the forces had experienced hard fighting and civilians had endured bombing and food shortages. No one would imagine that rationing would continue until 1954. Industrial plant was either obsolete or damaged, but investment had to compete with demands for housing, hospitals and schools. There was great competition for scarce resources. Massive borrowing and devaluation of the pound were a consequence of economic decline. The Marshall Plan gave immediate help, but the debt took many years to repay.

In addition to these national issues facing the new Labour government in 1945, there was the implementation of the 1944 Education Act. Top priority of the new Ministry of Education in its role of promoter of national policy was the raising of the school leaving age to 15; delayed once but implemented in 1947. There was, however, a drastic shortage of teachers for these additional pupil numbers as many were away in the forces and a proportion would not return to teaching. The shortfall was partially addressed by the removal of the marriage bar for women and many men were encouraged to continue beyond retirement age. The new LEAs had to devise development plans to show what accommodation was going to be needed immediately and in the future, which schools would be retained, which closed, which moved to new sites and where new schools would be needed. Plans had to stipulate whether a school was primary or secondary, voluntary or county. All-age schools had to be phased out: classes were already too large, new housing estates needed schools, and there was the 1946 – 47 bulge of births.

There was continuing contact between National Society officials and those at the Ministry of Education as the implications of the 1944 Act were worked out in practice. LEAs had to construct an agreed syllabus for religious education and ensure that all schools provided a daily act of collective worship. Consultations also had to be held with the managers and governors of all voluntary schools within each area. Very soon after authorities started work on their plans, grave concerns were raised that, in the name of progress, many rural schools would be closed. This was a particular concern as a large proportion of such schools were Anglican.

The new building regulations loomed large in school managers' eyes as the demands arising from them were far greater than had been expected when the Church had agreed to bring its buildings up to standard. Although considered to be quite reasonable for new schools, they were "staggering in their demands upon existing schools".⁶ The National Society did not agree that they could be applied to most existing county or voluntary schools. The Ministry issued circular 90 concerning village schools in 1946, stating that it was prepared to consider a modification of the building regulations for very small schools. Once the Minister of Education had approved the whole of an authority's development plan, then managers and governors were given six months to decide whether, in the light of the LEA's estimate of essential building costs, they wished their school to be aided or controlled. Until a school's status was determined, managers did not have access to the 50% Ministry grant for building work. This led a number of schools

to take immediate controlled status as they couldn't wait to get their buildings improved.

All the new requirements became still more difficult to meet during the period of Churchill's government in the first half of the 1950s when, after a boom and spiral of inflation, cuts were imposed and the construction of schools, hospitals and other public buildings faltered. There was even a suggestion of a reduction in years of schooling. However, more funding for education became available once the Treasury had been convinced that it was investment in the nation, and technical education was developed. Affluence began to lead to longer education, as well as to an increase in population, more working women, more varieties of media and new investment in housing.

By 1953, most voluntary schools knew whether they were to have a long term future as an aided or controlled school, or were likely to be closed in the distant future. At the start of a period of expansion, the Ministry demanded immediate action to reorganise in rural areas, so that there were no more all-age schools. It also demanded improvement of existing primary schools within 7 or 8 years. Additionally, continued new building was needed to accommodate the increase in rolls and the movement of families to new housing areas. Many new housing estates were being created to cope with slum clearance. This was seen as a major challenge, creating formidable financial problems for dioceses that had expected to have 20 years for this work. At a National Society organised meeting of Diocesan Directors the Minister himself addressed them. It was agreed that they should take the initiative in talking to LEAs about the order in which new Church secondary schools in rural areas would be built; which schools now "aided pending closure" could become permanently aided by a reconsideration of the development plan; and what needed to be done to bring the decapitated rural schools up to standard.

This challenge meant that the Church of England needed about £5 million for its schools. While there were considerable assets in the shape of closed schools and annual contributions into "Barchester schemes", there was a gap between these and this early expenditure. That year, the Church Assembly received a paper from the Schools Council, *The Church and the Schools*, which celebrated how many schools had been able to achieve voluntary aided status, but pointed out that the next 20 years would be financially very difficult, with the hardest part in the middle of the 50 year plan! If there were only a small number of aided schools left and their buildings were substandard, then the Church wouldn't be taken seriously and would be unable to use the schools as a great evangelistic opportunity.

A joint report of the Church Commissioners, the Central Board of Finance and the Schools Council to the Church Assembly on *The future of Church Schools* [May 1956] followed. It asked the Church Assembly to note with approval the number of aided schools achieved as a result of the policies adopted by the dioceses, and requested the Church Commissioners to prepare a measure to allow for funds at £40,000 per annum for up to 25 years in loans to primary schools and grants to secondary ones. The result was The Church Schools (Assistance by Church Commissioners) Measure which received Royal Assent in 1958. The Society was very pleased when the Church Commissioners produced £1 million for building work. The Church Assembly agreed that the Church

Commissioners would set aside money towards the provision of Church buildings and the Standing Committee suggested that this could be used to build school halls in which worship could be provided.

The Education Act of 1959 raised the level of grant for existing aided schools from 50% to 75%. The Church of England had worked closely with both the Roman Catholic Church and with the Free Churches, ostensibly reaching agreement. But while Catholics had been raising the question of the level of grant for several years, the Free Churches were concerned about an increase in the number of Catholic schools and Anglican single school areas. Two years' of meetings between the National Society and the Free Churches Federal Council led to greater understanding on both sides, and a growing trust between them. While the FCFC, driven by the old guard, officially condemned the raising of the level of grant as an extension of the Dual System, there was thankfulness for the conciliatory approach to these questions by the Church of England and a recognition by its younger members that, perhaps, they could and should begin to cooperate more closely. For the Free Churches the main sticking point (even before single school areas) was the demand of the Catholics for a 75% building grant for new schools as well as existing schools; the fact that the Anglicans were only asking for the new grant to apply to existing schools and pupils was the key to the eventual settlement. It was agreed by the Church Assembly that the Church should do all it could to enable Free Church children to get agreed syllabus teaching, rather than the denominational RE, where parents wanted it. It was also agreed that it should be possible for one of the foundation managers to be a representative of the local Free Churches. At the request of the Minister of Education who wanted one body he could talk to, these negotiations led to the formation of the Central Joint Education Policy Committee, of the Church of England, Church in Wales and Free Churches. The group was later joined by the Roman Catholic Church.

From the Anglican side, there was great joy that the Act had been passed in Parliament without division. This meant that the Church should be able to maintain all schools which were then permanently aided and be able to build new secondary schools to take the children in CE primary schools. This was an indication that relations at national level between the churches had greatly improved: in the past they had often been better at local level than national posturing had led people to believe.

In 1958 the first joint voluntary controlled school was provided by Lincolnshire County Council to replace the Anglican and Methodist primary schools in Caistor. The 1960s brought more improvements in ecumenical arrangements and an acceptance of a shared purpose in education, leading to the first joint Church of England/Methodist Voluntary Aided school at Brinscall in Lancashire in substitution for three Anglican aided and three Methodist controlled schools. Both churches hoped that this school, and its predecessor at Caistor, would open the door for more such co-operation.

6.3 Restructuring the National Society

Despite the impact of the 1944 Education Act on the National Society's life, other matters had still to be dealt with. In particular, the Standing Committee continued in its old ways, concentrating on its traditional work and ignoring to a large extent its much wider responsibilities. The National Society's responsibility for Welsh education did not sit easily with its role under the 1934 Charter as the Central Council of the Church of England.

Three different solutions were tried over the years; the last in 1954 when the Church Assembly established four Boards: Education, Social Responsibility, Church Relations and Ministry (ordained and lay). The Board of Education proposed to operate with four councils: Schools, Children's work, Further Education (Youth and adult) and Church Training Colleges. It was decided that representatives of the Church in Wales would be retained as well as diocesan representatives, as these were valued by the Ministry of Education which continued to cover Wales. Close liaison was needed between the Board, its Schools Council and the National Society and this was to be promoted by having the Society's General Secretary as Secretary to the Schools Council. The Board of Education and Schools Council were to be the voice of the Church and responsible to the Church Assembly.

This change of structure was intended to free the National Society to concentrate on the promotion of *Church of England* RE. The importance that it gave to RE was highlighted in an address given by the Archbishop of York at a public meeting. He viewed it as vital that RE was delivered by Christians and not separated from the life of the worshipping community which started at Baptism, and only ended with death. These views infused the commitment to aided schools, with their opportunity for providing "atmosphere" and for proving the earnestness of the Church's intentions through necessary sacrificial giving. Such schools, said the Archbishop, provide:

a bulwark against the secularisation of education. ... It is in no small part due to the Church's pioneering work in education that we do not have a secular system now. ... The continuation of its Christian background may well depend upon our keeping our schools today.⁷

The centenary of the death of Joshua Watson was celebrated in 1955 with a new biography by Rev A B Webster. The contrast between Watson's opposition to the claims of civil powers to control education with the then current partnership of Church and State was noted. But his fund-raising ability – by 1842 he had raised almost £1 million for National Schools [£76m in today's money] – was needed again as the Ministry accelerated the building programme.

6.4 Religious Education

While Diocesan Education Councils were revising their own RE syllabuses, they were also involved in the creation of the new Local Authority Agreed Syllabuses. On every Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), the Church of England formed one of four committees, and had the opportunity to use its influence effectively.

The National Society commented that SACREs:

recognise that "doctrinal" teaching and "denominational" teaching are not synonymous terms. While the latter, involving the teaching of religious formularies distinctive of a particular religious denomination is not permitted in a County school, the former is not forbidden. The Creed, Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments are not formularies distinctive of any particular religious denomination but are the common heritage of the whole Christian Church. It is impossible to isolate the "ethic of the Gospels" from its religious setting, and to teach it as something quite detached from the faith and doctrine which inspire it.⁸

These early Agreed Syllabuses showed remarkable uniformity, having the aim of inspiring Christian belief and adherence to the Christian church. According to the Durham report, "they tended to be more subject-centred than pupil-related, drawn up more to satisfy scholars and churchmen than to meet the needs of the pupils."⁹ A leaflet was prepared for parents of children in controlled schools which included a form enabling them to request denominational RE. It was also suggested that parents of Anglican children attending county schools should be encouraged to request withdrawal for Church teaching, and grants would be provided for parishes to buy books and apparatus.

6.5 Secondary education

The Post-primary work of the National Society was renamed the Secondary and Further Education Section, with the purpose of considering policy for all of secondary education. Its particular focus would be on providing guidance and assistance in strengthening Christian teaching in general, and Anglican in particular.

Although our primary responsibility is and must be for Church of England schools and colleges, yet the Society fully recognises that over large parts of the field any work done for the advancement of Christian education would have to be on interdenominational lines and in co-operation with other Churches – and it welcomes the opportunity of co-operation thereby offered.¹⁰

The Society knew where it stood in relation to the secondary grammar schools in which Christian education had always been a force. But the new types of school – technical and secondary modern – opened up a field of work that was much wider than in primary schools and training colleges. A large number of technical schools, with which the Church had no experience, was anticipated. A list of all secondary schools that might be considered to have an Anglican foundation and tradition was drawn up.

6.6 Training Colleges

After the War, the Church's Teacher Training Colleges sought to return to their own premises as soon as damage could be repaired. Small colleges, however, had difficulties in providing appropriate courses and many were ill housed, being among the oldest of such establishments. The colleges had to plan for expansion because the raising of the school leaving age in 1947 meant that many extra teachers would be needed, in addition to those required to replace all unqualified teachers. There was also the need to ensure that the new compulsory religious instruction could be delivered. In the light of these

demands, there were three courses open to the Church: to abandon teacher training altogether, to concentrate on a few colleges, or to improve all. The third course was chosen. In line with voluntary aided schools, voluntary bodies negotiated a new arrangement with the Ministry of Education whereby they received 50% grants for buildings and equipment.

The Archbishops agreed that the title of "Board of Supervision" be changed to Council for the Church Training Colleges. In 1945, the Council published *The Key to Christian Education*, in which it identified three functions for the Colleges. They would deepen and train the religious life of those who entered as Church members; make wise and sympathetic provision for the religious life of those of other communions; and exercise a missionary ministry to those who might have had little instruction in the Christian faith.

6.7 Publicising the Society's work

The work of publicising the Society continued with activities including exhibitions, courses for day school teachers, summer schools and parents' conferences. There was a campaign for a substantial increase in the subscription list, which in 1943 stood at just over 4000 members in the form of parishes, schools and individuals. The target was 50,000 members each still only paying a guinea [£1.05] a year. Much literature was sent to parishes with sermon ideas on the National Society, and meetings were held to gain support for Church schools. Publishing work was expanded in the joint imprint with SPCK and the publishing committee was reconstituted to include teachers and lecturers in order to ensure the production of appropriate material. A series of conferences was held with teachers to find out what they wanted and the Society moved into the production of visual aids such as filmstrips. Schools that had been open for 100 years were provided with scrolls inscribed at the Scriptorium of the Community of the Holy Name at Malvern.

6.8 150 + years of the National Society

The 150th Anniversary of the Society was celebrated with choral Communion in St Margaret's, Westminster. The choir was provided by the College of St Mark and St John and the sermon was preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A buffet lunch in Caxton Hall was concluded with an oration in honour of Joshua Watson, delivered by Canon Charles Smyth, Fellow of Corpus Christi, Cambridge. Burgess and Welsby, who produced a short history of the Society. also spoke at the lunch.¹¹

The anniversary brought about a reconsideration of Joshua Watson's two fundamental principles: first, that education is a unity, sacred and secular together; and second, that worship plays the primary part in Christian education. Relationships with the Free Churches had improved to such an extent that the structure of the school system no longer divided them as both turned their attention to what went on inside the schools, the two agreeing that religious education had become isolated. In the old National school, the whole life and work of the school taken up in worship at the beginning of each day was given added intensity by frequent visits to the parish church by whole school. This was a pattern of work by teachers and clergy greatly valued by the Church.

The halfway nature of the voluntary controlled school led to inhibitions about full pastoral ministry, meaning that the aided schools remained "the base from which the church's total educational witness and work is launched."¹² Over the next few years, a spirit of optimism about Church of England schools grew as the Church began to feel that it was no longer fighting a rearguard action to them, and their status increased.

But, the Anniversary was celebrated in the wider context of a period of clashes between older values and the newer ones of the Swinging Sixties. The trial of Penguin Books for the publication of the unabridged edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was followed by the Profumo affair; both highlighted shifts and diversity in public opinion concerning sexual morality. This was an era of individualism, with increasing concern for women's rights and equality of opportunity, and a growing fascination with religious cults.

Such ideas helped to generate concerns about how RE was taught. It was understood that RE was going to be affected not only by changes in society, but by those of the era of the "new theology" of *Honest to God*, and the application of Piaget's theories to RE, led by Goldman. Both diocesan and Agreed Syllabuses were being revised. Even while Church schools were attacked by humanists for indoctrinating pupils into Christian faith, the new Agreed Syllabuses were still comparable in aim but now they started from pupils' experiences, and their mainspring was relevance to the lives of the pupils. In advance of Plowden, they adopted a thematic approach.

By 1966 humanist pressures for radical change in the religious sections of the 1944 Act were growing, in particular for the removal of Christianity from the whole system. This proposition was on the grounds that church-going was practised by only a minority of people as England had become a secular society. It followed, therefore, that a minority's beliefs should not be legally entrenched in the education system and nor should the members receive public finance. It was also argued that Church schools were divisive because they catered for a minority interest. A contrary view, however, existed. Many parents, who called themselves Christians but did not go to church, wanted their children to be given a proper basis on which to make later decisions about faith. To support this potential, the Society asserted that a closer relationship between Church and school was required:

"It is necessary for all churchmen, and especially the clergy, to recognise the fact that the only people today who can bring a word from God to the vast majority of the children of this land are teachers in schools – in its organisational life the church is not in contact with them, and what it says is therefore not heard."¹³

Developments in theological thought and the growth of secular groups led to the conclusion that the pre-suppositions of 1944 were no longer applicable. The National Society therefore set up a Commission, under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Durham, to report on religious education in schools. The Commission, which reported in 1970, interpreted its mandate widely, looking at RE in various types of school and considering the role of Church schools in society and their possible future. It continued to assert the historic claim of the two purposes of Church schools: the domestic – Christian nurture – and the general – for the nation as a whole.

The main points made in the report were that RE should remain a compulsory subject, its aim being "to explore the place and significance of religion in human life and so to make a distinctive contribution to each pupil's search for a faith by which to live." It should "ensure proper teaching of the Faith and a place for religious education on the time table." ¹⁴ Pupils of other faiths should have opportunity for systematic instruction in own faith, as long as they also acquired an understanding of Christian faith. The report also recommended that the Church should not withdraw from the dual system: not only would it be impracticable, but it could not survive unless it was genuinely involved in the world in which we live. Admissions policies should give priority to children of the local area, whatever the parental denominational allegiance – as long as parents accepted the basis of an Anglican school. The Church of England should undertake its work on an ecumenical basis wherever possible: share Christian experience and demonstrate common Christian concern for what education is about.

An immediate inquiry was launched, chaired by the Bishop of Carlisle, into the functions of the "Diocesan Director of Education" or "Religious Education". *Partners in education: the role of the diocese* recommended that Diocesan Education Councils should maintain a competent advisory service for teachers in Church schools and keep an up-to-date handbook of suggestions for RE in their aided schools as well as running training courses for managers and governors. It proposed that patrons of parishes with Church schools appoint clergy with educational competence and understanding who could contribute to the life of the school, and hoped that Bishops would permit the admission of non-Anglican staff and pupils to communion services in aided schools.

The Durham report quickly sold out and had to be reprinted. Both reports had pointed to the need to re-examine the role of central educational agencies of the Church of England and their relationship with each other. There was cross-representation between the Board of Education and National Society on committees and regular consultation between officers, but there were two issues to be resolved. First, the system depended solely on good personal relations between officers, so could it continue? Second, in a time of financial stringency, should not central resources be deployed within a single strategy? A joint working group was established to review the situation.

From the early 1960s, reorganisation of secondary schools into comprehensives began to generate concerns in the National Society about funding for these large schools, particularly in the light of its own creation of small rural secondary modern schools intended to separate older pupils from younger ones. The General Secretary was a member of a small group representing the Church of England, the Church in Wales, the Roman Catholic Church and Free Churches in intricate discussions with Department of Education and Science officials over the confidential draft of the circular to be sent out by Richard Crosland. When Circular 10/65 was issued, with its request to LEAs to draw up plans for comprehensive reorganisation, the National Society was careful not to make any political comment. Clearly both Catholics and Anglicans were concerned about the building costs likely to be incurred if they were to continue to have a place in local secondary education arrangements. Meetings were held at national level together with a joint meeting of Diocesan Directors and their Catholic Diocesan Schools Commissions counterparts.

By 1966 the number of applications from schools for building grants had increased, as total costs had grown considerably. There was therefore a further need to consider policy. Manchester diocese asked for special treatment for two schools in Educational Priority Areas – very poor areas with a high proportion of immigrants. The Church in Wales had a total income of only £1m, so it was offered regular grants, principally for Llandaff diocese. Friendly relationships, however, had now been established with the Free Churches which meant that there were no longer concerns about the support of church schools.

The Education Act 1967 ameliorated the building situation by providing building grants of 80% for all building work, including new schools. This had been agreed by all political parties and churches, and supported on social justice grounds because of rising costs and the educational developments that were causing churches to have to modify fairly new buildings. Opposition to this increase, however, came from humanists rejecting the Christian presence in education. The Act meant that the Church of England was likely to increase its stake in secondary education, although small aided grammar schools and Direct Grant schools were vulnerable. Early in 1968, the government announced economies in the building programme, which put a brake on comprehensive reorganisation. Single school areas continued to cause concern: not so much to Free Church parents as to agnostics and secularists, whose consciences seemed to be a greater problem than Free Church ones. The Church of England had long recognised that it did not want to perpetuate single school areas nor establish new ones.

Even though the threat of compulsory comprehensive reorganisation had been removed immediately by the new Conservative government, by 1972 there were grave worries about the financing of aided schools. It was estimated that the Church's gap in resources for its schools was of the order of £9m, the main problem being inflation. Although the Church was spending £1m a year on schools in order to bring them up to standard, the DES and LEAs now asked it to build larger secondary schools and new middle schools. In 1972 the Board and National Society together published *Crisis in Church schools*, which was approved by General Synod. Major changes since the 1944 agreement were high inflation with rises in building costs, population shifts, Raising of the School Leaving Age (twice), and school reorganisation. And, as had been picked up in the Durham report, there was a realisation that voluntary Controlled status did not meet the expectations for RE and these schools were often indistinguishable from county schools. It was estimated that between £13 and £18 million was needed to meet the estimated requirements of the next 15 years. More systematic planning at diocesan and national level was required.

School building programmes had been cut back, but the government's maintenance grant was increased by 5% to 85% from the first reading of the Labour Government's Education Bill in November 1975, a decision which was again supported by all political parties. But the building programme continued to be affected by financial stringency. The WO Street Trust, via Barclays Bank, offered the Society £15,000 to distribute as grants to Anglican schools on their behalf on condition that the Society provided its usual £5,000. From 1976 to 1987 the Society helped aided schools with grants towards building projects and major repairs to a total amount of more than £132,000.

The Church continued to need an involvement in teacher training, not least in order to keep professionally abreast of educational developments. The government demanded yet more expansion (30,000 by 1970–71) leaving the Church no option but to abandon its ideal percentage of places. Numbers of students were increased by the addition for some of a fourth year of training, leading to the degree of BEd. Yet at the same time, the birth rate had again dropped, and it was noted that students were concerned about whether they would be able to find jobs. The blow came with the 1972 white paper, *Education: a framework for expansion*, which was actually a demand for drastic cuts. The government planned to locate teacher training in large diversified institutions of higher education such as universities and polytechnics, making smaller colleges very vulnerable to the rapid changes anticipated in the numbers in training. By 1975 it became apparent that there would be a sharp reduction of numbers amongst the Church colleges: they were, on the whole, the smaller institutions, and often in rural locations making mergers difficult. Governing bodies and principals rushed to find soul mates. Final decisions were made by the DES, despite recommendations from the Board of Education. It was a traumatic time for the Church colleges: of the 27, only nine (which included two mergers) were left free-standing. Four closed, eight ceased to be church related through merger with university or polytechnic; and four became part of a larger institution.

6.9 A new charter and remit

Synodical government was introduced to the Church in 1972. The Report of the Committee on the Boards and Councils of the General Synod chaired by the Bishop of Rochester, commented that:

The Church owes a great debt to the National Society for all that it has done to foster a concern for education in the shape of both schools and training colleges, but the present relationship between it and the Board of Education is an unsatisfactory one.¹⁵

After much discussion, and bearing in mind the particular way in which the Society supported the Church in Wales, it was decided that the Board of Education and the National Society should have the same chairman, and general secretary. In the field of general RE, the staff of the Board and Society would work as an integrated whole and the distinctive links of the Diocesan Directors with the National Society would continue.

Discussions had been held about a revision to the Charter and the new Supplemental Charter took effect on 1st January 1973. It stated that the 'objects of the Society' were now:

the promotion, encouragement and support of religious education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England among all persons irrespective of age or degree who are living in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands and in any other locality in any part of the world where the Church of England may be at work.¹⁶

This was a shift from the original intention of ensuring a Church school in every parish, but a continuation of the concern for the widespread availability of education based on

Christian principles and specifically associated with the Church of England. It was designed to ensure that the Society would retain both its financial independence and its independence of action under the direction of its Standing Committee, and could work in close collaboration with the General Synod Board of Education through its common chairman and general secretary. In Wales the relationship was with the Governing Body of the Church in Wales and with the Welsh dioceses.

The Archbishop of Canterbury continued to be *ex officio* the President of the Society and its two Vice-Presidents, also *ex officio*, were the Archbishops of York and of Wales. Together the Board of Education and the National Society carried through the original purpose of the Society of affirming the positive contribution made by the Anglican Church to the maintenance and development of the Dual System in England and Wales. A formal concordat with the Board was signed which was reflected in a move to joint staff appointments. With decimalisation, the minimum subscription, the same as in 1811, had to be changed from 1 guinea [£1.05] to £1! It was not increased until 1978 when it was doubled.

In this new situation, the prime expectation of the National Society was that it would encourage the pursuit of excellence in the teaching of religious education in general, and Christian education in particular. It would achieve this by providing literature and advice on the theory and practice of religious education, with an emphasis on Christian education, and by maintaining its own national Religious Education Resource centres. A national RE centre was established in 1975 at St Gabriel's College, and another at St John's, York. Their responsibilities included the study of theological issues in education; the encouragement of RE curriculum development and, especially, its distinctiveness in Voluntary Aided schools.

Dissemination of best practice in RE and Church schools was carried out through the publishing programme of pamphlets and booklets. Arrangements for publications were made with the SPCK and included material from the Board of Education. From 1980 the Society published *Crosscurrent*, a termly magazine covering many different aspects of religious education.

The 1970 Durham Report continued to foster debate. A programme of discussions on "Durham revisited" that had originated in the dioceses, led to *The Camberwell Papers* that were presented to the General Synod in July 1977. While Synod was positive about the Church's schools, it recognised the imbalance between primary and secondary provision. The debate made the National Society realise that it had a problem in communicating educational issues and ideas, which were foreign to much of the General Synod's constituency. Synod had to be encouraged to have debates on education more often.

When, in 1979, the Thatcher Government came to power, it made clear its determination to wrest back control of the curriculum and teacher training from the education interest. The government concentrated on choice and the free market, and applied this to many aspects of life. Admission policies, incorporating the right of parents to state a preference for their child's school, made their first appearance in the 1980 Act; the Society hoping

that those for Church schools would not be built on too narrow a denominational base. In an era of falling rolls, there was a need for county and voluntary provision to be planned as a unity.

The nature and role of RE again came under scrutiny at this point. Many people recognised that although RE was compulsory in all schools, it was under-resourced and poorly timetabled. The National Society was the obvious group to clarify the educational arguments for RE and help LEAs realise that inservice training was even more important than changing their Agreed Syllabuses. With RE seen in some quarters as a form of social control, RE centres with their broad perspective remained essential. The Society's role was to promote RE, but understood that this also required questioning and critical comment.

The Board of Education and the National Society together prepared a memo on RE for the Commons Select Committee on Education which was looking at the 14–16 curriculum. The report was published in February 1982. It emphasised partnerships, the importance of RE specialists and the shortage of these, the possible need for Agreed Syllabus revision and the contribution of the voluntary sector to RE. These points were all welcomed, as was the recommendation to the Secretary of State to consult about the possibility of more flexible arrangements for Collective Worship. The educational development context in the early 1980s was a challenging one for the Church, with great emphasis on the upper secondary age group through sixth form colleges, Manpower Services Commission projects and Youth Training Schemes. How should the Church of England respond to these challenges in aspects of education with which it had had little previous involvement? Any response had to be articulated in a Christian rather than a humanist manner.

A Future in Partnership was a discussion paper produced by Robert Waddington on his resignation as General Secretary. The Bishop of London in his introduction noted that the National Society "used its resources to assist the church in taking its proper place in the formulation of educational policy and practice in the country as a whole."¹⁷ Partnership with a variety of bodies was again emphasised: "the future depends upon interpreting the balance of power and responsibility between these partners effectively and fairly." The most quoted section came in the chapter, "No apology for theology" in which there 10 points described a Church school. The July 1985 Synod debate on the paper led to a resolution reaffirming "the Church of England's concern for the well-being of the maintained system of education in this country and its expectation that it will continue to play a significant role as a national partner within that system."¹⁸ It urged all Voluntary Aided School Governing bodies to ensure that its school met the twin aims of serving the local community and providing a specifically Christian education. Foundation governors of voluntary controlled schools needed to find ways of enhancing the Church's role in the school and dioceses had to support all Christian teachers, whatever their sector.

The 175th Anniversary in 1986 was celebrated in various ways. On the anniversary day itself, 16th October, *Faith for the future*, edited by Graham Leonard, was published. It was a series of essays covering aspects of the Society's work in schools and colleges.

An educational pack was sent to over 450 schools during the year, and a commemorative medallion was sold for 175 pence. On the day of the AGM, 23rd May, (the date of the 1817 charter) a Eucharist was held in St Margaret's Westminster with the Archbishop of Wales (Vice President of National Society) as the preacher. Individual schools and dioceses also organised celebrations, for example there was a service in St David's Cathedral with Bishop Graham Leonard as preacher.

At this point, the educational world was about to change radically with the appearance of two highly ideological political administrations. Both the Conservative and Labour governments were to be characterised not least by their concerns with educational objectives and standards: a stance that recalled the debates of the National Society's early years.

NOTES

1. Standing Committee minutes, 6th February 1941.
2. quoted in Gosden, PHJH, *Education in the Second World War: a study in policy and administration*, Methuen, 1976, p 272.
3. National Society 131st Annual Report, 1942, p 10. In the event, the 1944 Act did not use the word "Christian" in relation to worship or religious instruction, so that the Act applied also to Jewish schools. Worship was defined as "collective worship".
4. Temple, W, *Our trust and our task*, National Society June 1942.
5. Lambeth Papers W.Temple 19, paper #282 4th September 1942 letter Temple to Earl of Selborne
6. National Society, 139th Annual report, 1950, pp 17–18.
7. National Society, 148th Annual report, 1959, pp 13, 15
8. National Society, 136th Annual report, 1947, p 18.
9. *The fourth R: Durham report on Religious Education*, NS/SPCK, 1970, p16.
10. National Society, Education Committee, 8th December 1944
11. The first part of the history was based on Henry Burgess's (Schools Adviser to the Diocese of Rochester), *Enterprise in education*, covering the work of the Church of England (i.e. the National Society) in the education of the people prior to 1870, and the second specially written by Paul Welsby from Annual Reports.
12. National Society, 151st Annual report, 1962, pp 8,9.
13. National Society, 153rd Annual Report, 1964, p11.
14. *The fourth R*, op cit, pp 103, 342.
15. Report of the Committee on the Boards and Councils of the General Synod chaired by the Bishop of Rochester, [CA1773] 5th January 1970, p 23.
16. National Society, 162nd Annual Report, 1973, p 9.
17. *A future in partnership: A green paper for discussion*, National Society, 1984, p 7.
18. *Positive partnership: a sequel to "A Future in Partnership"*, National Society, 1985 p 50.

Chapter 7

Working with Government–driven change 1986–2011

Summary

The run–up to the 1988 Education Reform Act saw market mechanisms being widely applied to the public service sector. This shift of emphasis affected the partnerships that had evolved between churches and central and local government. Subsequent governments also asserted the importance of parental choice, while the increasing emphasis on educational standards effectively instituted a competitive state system. In this consistently challenging context, the Society focused its efforts on the support of state education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England; in particular emphasising the importance of Christian religious education.

7.1 Standards and choice under Conservatives and Labour

In 1986, at the same time as the Society's 175th Anniversary, legislation was introduced to enable parents to have more information about schools before making their choices (or, rather, stating their preferences). Kenneth Baker, taking office in 1986, wanted to weaken local government and the professional autonomy exercised by teachers. He believed strongly in market mechanisms being applied to the public service sector and, as a result, "standards" and "choice" became the watchwords. The requirement for all schools to provide sex education, avoid political indoctrination and produce a curriculum policy generated philosophical and practical problems, leading to a greater need for support from the National Society and the dioceses. However, all Baker's actions contrived to lead to a diminution of the previous partnership between churches, central and local governments.

Two years later, at the start of Margaret Thatcher's third term of office, the Conservative Government produced its major educational reform. The Society and the Board together held four conferences for Diocesan Directors of Education on what was known as the Great Education Reform Bill. This Bill proposed a National Curriculum and a framework of testing [SATs], devolution of finance by local education authorities to schools [Local Management of Schools], the possibility for schools to opt out of local government control [grant maintained schools], and the requirement that schools take in pupils up to their agreed physical capacity [open admissions]. Each of these characteristics had originally existed with the Revised Code in the 1860s, which had gradually been eroded

by the abolition of Payment by Results and then replaced by funding from the Local Education Authorities. In this ethos of testing linked to reputation and thus funding the era of Payment by Results seemed to have made a return in the form of market criteria and customer satisfaction.

All the churches had serious concerns about many of these proposals, not least the lack of consultation by government, the attack on local education authorities, and the application of market principles to education. The churches' strong criticisms mystified government officials, who assumed that they were protesting against the extension of their schools' privileges to others. In reality, as the Bishop of Guildford put it, the regret was that "partnership seems to have slipped out of the government's vocabulary." ¹

Kenneth Baker as Secretary of State claimed that:

The Butler Act of 1944 had been essentially a religious settlement, as indeed had most of the earlier Education Acts this century. In 1987, therefore, I did not have to frame my Education Bill with the powers and responsibilities of the churches and other faiths in Britain at the forefront.²

Baker thought that RE and Worship as spelt out in the 1944 Act had fallen by the wayside, so included spiritual development and made it a duty on schools to provide RE. There were many meetings between the churches themselves, and with other faith groups, as well as with Baker, but little debate in the House of Commons. The House of Lords, however, led by the Bishop of London (chair of the National Society), made up for this. Eventually four points that were essential to the churches were incorporated in the legislation. These made RE part of the basic curriculum and strengthened the procedures for developing Agreed Syllabuses. LEAs were required to have Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education [SACREs] and RE was also included in the parental complaints procedure.

With this experience of fighting the Church's corner in support of RE, in the run-up to the 1988 Education Reform Act, the retirement of the Bishop of London as chair of the Society prompted the Standing Committee to define the essential qualities to be brought to the role. First, he must be a Bishop with a seat in the House of Lords so that he had the ear of their Lordships; second, that he had to be tough and resilient in negotiation; and third, that he had to be strong enough to carry the heavy workload that the joint Chairmanship would impose. The Bishop of Guildford took on this role.

The Society's freedom of action and links to the Board enabled it to respond quickly to the Education (Schools) Act of 1992 (amended in 1993), which brought in inspection of the trust deed related parts of the life of voluntary schools with a religious foundation, that is everything to do with the religious ethos. This inspection, under Section 13 of the Act, paralleled the OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) inspection of the schools. While OFSTED looked at the quality of education provision, the educational standards achieved, the management of resources and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the work of schools, it could not look at "denominational religious education." As there could be no guarantee that OFSTED teams would include someone who was

qualified to look at the foundation aspects of schools, a separate set of inspections had to be arranged. The "denominational aspects" were developed as covering the distinctiveness, ethos and leadership of the school, the collective worship and, in aided schools, the RE. The legislation made it the responsibility of the governing body to find an inspector to carry out an inspection within the same academic year as the OFSTED inspection. There was great concern about the quality of some of the inspectors whom governors might choose, so the National Society set up sessions to train Church School Inspectors for this process. Dioceses set up their own teams of "Section 13 inspectors".

The churches' relationship with government continued to be difficult, however, as the DES tried to ignore them when promoting matters that were of fundamental importance to the schools' foundations. The announcement of legislation to the media without consultation with the churches, even when it affected their schools, was seen as an indication of a fundamental lack of recognition of the churches' contributions.

In the mid-1980s, the Society took on the publications programme of the Board of Education. In addition to *Crosscurrent* and *Together*, four new titles came out in 1989, supplementing ongoing sales of existing booklets. Following legislation, the development of guidance for governing bodies and SACREs became a priority. A brief guide on RE and School worship as an interim document sold 12,000 copies, while a similar one on *GM status and the Church school* sold 850 in one month. The Society was a focus of research and advice. In 1995 an inspection handbook was published.

The Board of Education's activities were reported to each meeting of the Standing Committee. The review of Synodical infrastructure held the re-working of the Board/Society relationship as a model for other voluntary bodies wanting to develop links into the General Synod structures. While this might have sounded simple, it was recognised that careful scrutiny and clarification of some areas of obscurity were necessary. It was important to have offices in close physical proximity. A working party on the relationship reported in 1990 and resulted in the Schools Committee of the Board being reconstituted as a joint committee of the Board and the National Society. The Board agreed that the Church in Wales should have a permanent place. Both the voluntary society and the General Synod spoke in the name of Church of England, so it was important that they spoke with the same voice and together shaped policy.

The Labour party under Tony Blair swept into government in 1997, with the mantra "education, education, education" and asserting that standards mattered more than structures. With the concentration on raising standards and promoting parental choice it initially appeared to be business as usual. Targets, assessment, and the literacy strategy were all brought in to tackle perceived underperformance in classrooms, and were followed by a limit of 30 on infant class size in the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act. The National Curriculum was reviewed and specialist schools and beacon schools were identified, as were gifted and talented children. After the election of 2001, with an attack on "bog standard" comprehensive schools, diversity amongst secondary schools was promoted and the independent sector ceased to be pilloried. In 2000, "failing" inner city comprehensives were targeted, to be replaced by academies sponsored by business and independent of the LEAs. Many of the decisions were purely

pragmatic; based on what, in some cases, was perceived to have worked in specific instances.

7.2 Church schools and the Dearing Report

There was change for the National Society also, with a supplemental charter and a new logo. The new charter indicated that:

The objects of the Society shall be the promotion, encouragement and support of education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England, in England and in Wales and in any other part of the world where the Church of England or churches in communion with it may be at work.³

The amendments submitted to the Privy Council enabled a five year term for the Standing Committee, now to be called the Council. A new, more democratic, membership was created, including Diocesan Directors, elected members, and representatives of the Independent Schools Joint Council, Church of England Colleges of Higher Education, the General Synod, the Church in Wales and co-opted people.

The new Council met for the first time in May 1997, at the same time that the new government came into power. The Government's 1997 White Paper, *Excellence in schools*, led to church concern that the new regime was about to bring to an end the contribution of voluntary schools to the maintained sector. Such was the worry that the House of Bishops issued a formal press statement in support of maintained church schools. Further discussions with government resulted in confirmation of the schools' position. A further change was created with Welsh devolution in 1997. With the formation of the National Assembly for Wales, virtually all central government responsibilities for education and training were transferred. This meant change in the ways that the Welsh Dioceses related to central government, their roles not having the formal position of their English counterparts through Diocesan Boards of Education measures.

The Church in Wales had an Education Review in 2009, considering the ways in which it could develop its strategic role in promoting Christian education in the province. Clearly, its link with the National Society continued to be valued, and it recommended that, in order to ensure co-ordination of policy on legislative matters, the Society be represented on the proposed Provincial Education Strategy Group. While valuing its link with the National Society, it now works closely with the Catholic Church in Wales (which is in a similar position in relation to the Catholic Education Service in England and Wales). A seminar based on a joint document Faith in education was held in June 2011 involving the Welsh government, the two churches and CYTUN (the Welsh Churches Together), in order to establish the role that church schools could play in raising the standard of education in Wales and the impact of faith on learning.

After the School Standards and Framework Act was passed in 1998, a full report on Church schools was written for a General Synod debate. [GS 1321] Introducing the report, the Bishop of Ripon (Chairman of the Board of Education and the Society) said

that the new government had listened to the churches and their concerns and had recognised that parents were attracted to schools which appeared to be different from the "bog standard" comprehensive. A large proportion of Church schools, being oversubscribed, were fortunate to appear in such a group. He also reported that David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment,

believes that the success of Church schools is because of their capacity to draw together staff, pupils, parents, governors, members of the community, on the basis of a common belonging. I would agree with that but would add that the basis of this belonging is a set of shared values derived from Christian belief. It is Christian belief that makes Church schools distinctive, even though many associated with these schools are not themselves believers.⁴

The Archbishop of Canterbury paid tribute to David Blunkett's constructive approach seeing the Church of England as a

"major partner with government in transforming society". Little surprise perhaps that elsewhere Mr Blunkett has expressed an interest in bottling the ethos of Church schools and delivering it throughout the school system: a new medium perhaps for the Holy Spirit (and a new twist on school milk)!⁵

The motion passed by General Synod was strongly supportive, "believing that Church Schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation". The opportunity presented by the 1998 Act had to be grasped, so it urged Dioceses to get involved in all aspects of statutory education, while Parochial Church Councils should serve all schools in their parishes, and Deanery Synods help the parishes where Church schools served more than one parish. The result of debate was the formation of the Church Schools Review Group, under the chairmanship of Lord Dearing, with funding coming from the National Society, Central Church funds and the Ecclesiastical Insurance Fund. Its terms of reference were "To review the achievements of Church of England Schools and to make proposals for their future development."⁶ This was to be covered under three main headings: effectiveness, strategic development and vocation. It began work in January 2000, and issued a consultation report in December 2000, giving the provisional thinking of the group and inviting comments. The Government White Paper of 2001, *Schools achieving success*, picked up on some of this interim report. It welcomed the increased number of schools with a religious character (now known as "faith schools") as a way of increasing diversity and raising standards. It proposed to decrease the governing bodies' share of building costs from 15% to 10%.

The Dearing Report, *The Way Ahead: Church schools in the new millennium*, was published in June 2001 to wide acclaim. Its major theme was that of "the crucial importance of Church schools to the whole mission of the Church to children and young people, and indeed to the long-term well-being of the Church of England."⁷ Commenting on the need for a sufficient number of schools and on the current variation of provision, especially of secondary schools, between dioceses, it recommended that a hundred extra Church secondary schools be opened, with a particular focus on deprived areas. To achieve this major expansion of secondary schools and to improve access to primary schools, a fundraising campaign was necessary, with the objective of raising £25 million over 7 years. But for the schools to achieve the Church's mission, they must

be distinctively Christian, in close partnership with their local worshipping community, which had implications for clergy training. Crucial to this expansion was the recruitment of Christian teachers and leaders, and the need to increase vocations to teach. There was also a need for the Church colleges of higher education to secure and enhance their Christian distinctiveness. The Group supported an ecumenical approach to new schools and suggested closer links between maintained and independent Anglican schools. A clear message came from the Report: that the role of the Church schools was to be less concentrated on the "domestic" provision and more on the "general", which is to say that the schools should be seen as service to the whole community and not solely as a service to the Church. Clearly, this message echoed the original purpose of Church schools to serve the poor of the parish, and to introduce them to the Christian faith.

While waiting for the Group to report, the National Society continued its regular work, bringing many resources up to date. Seventeen new titles came out in 1997. Sales of *Together with children* increased, and a wide range of resources to support the new *Common Worship* lectionary for parishes was developed. In 2000 the publications began a shift towards the new media with the subscription management website, and a Collective Worship site jointly produced by Society and Culham College Institute, updated every half term. Contracts for teachers and other school staff also continued to be revised and published.

At the end of the 1990s, the Valuing Cultural Diversity project with the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns was set up, with a particular brief to look at how cultural diversity could be covered in small rural schools. The report on the first phase appeared in 1999 and when it was completed in 2000, the resource material was published on-line. A second conference for the Spiritual Development in primary schools was held and a joint project on Eucharist in primary schools with the National Children's Adviser was set up. A retreat was held for Church school heads. The final conference on Spiritual development in the primary school was held in 1999 and the Encountering Christianity in primary schools project was published as books and website for lesson plans.

Work also had an international dimension, as contacts with the Anglican Communion in Europe and US Episcopal schools were developed. A symposium was held in the Netherlands on research into education in schools with a religious affiliation. The Society was represented at the Triennial Conference of the Inter-European Commission on Church and School at Trondheim and at the biennial conference of the National Association of Episcopal Schools held in San Francisco in 2000.

But attention never strayed from governmental activities. The results of the first round of Section 23 (replacing Section 13) inspections were analysed and new editions of the Handbook and *Preparing for inspection* were published whenever the OFSTED process changed. Changes to the inspection regime brought in with the New Relationship with Schools Act, 2002, resulted in schools having shorter notice of inspection. This led to difficulties in enabling the Church School Inspection (now Section 48) to take place concurrently with OFSTED. While the Secretary of State (Charles Clarke) believed that the choice of inspector should remain that of the Governing Body, the National Society

argued that to achieve concurrency, dioceses had to manage Section 48 – as many were already doing. In 2005, to match the new OFSTED inspection regime, the Society produced a new inspection framework, *Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools* (SIAS) to operate under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. From 2005, inspection reports were published on the website. Modern technology was also brought into play when a weekly mailing to Diocesan Directors was established.

Financial structures had also to be kept up to date. The St Audries [Girls' School] and St Francis [Maladjusted Boys' School] trusts were both wound up, meaning a transfer of £224,000 to the National Society accounts, masking a deficit of £9,000. Control of many of the small trusts continued to be transferred, keeping only those in which the Society had an interest. In 2001 expenditure once more exceeded income but stock market gains again led to a surplus. The Treasurer commented that the Society is "strong in capital but weak in income".⁸ About 60% of the expenditure came from the past inheritance, with only 40% being raised each year. 2001 was a difficult year financially, with a rising demand for services and a drop in the net assets, although in the long run some recovery in capital values was expected. The income stream from the investment portfolio remained healthy until the financial turmoil of 2008.

In preparation for the 2001 Dearing report, a radical review of every aspect of the Society's work was carried out, seeking the most effective application of its assets for the core mission and removing unproductive effort. As the Annual Report noted, while the Society "does not determine the Church of England's educational policy, it must act to resource those who must respond to changes in direction."⁹ The Archbishops' Council Education Division was established from January 2003, with the chairman of the Board of Education (and of the National Society) now becoming a member of the Council. The General Secretary was the Chief Education Officer of the Archbishops' Council's Education Division, and his and some other posts were jointly funded. The Society supported the Board in resourcing its own policy changes, but the core of its work now became the advisory service to schools, with other services reshaped. It was decided that the publication of *Together with children* would end in the summer of 2002, following the launch of the ecumenical *Roots*, which fulfilled one of the Archbishops' Council priorities of working ecumenically. RE policy and support was franchised through the Culham Institute. This left the ongoing responsibility for the training of Section 48 inspectors, legal advice, and support for Diocesan Directors of Education and Headteachers and chaplains of secondary and independent schools with Anglican religion or affiliation, together with the Society's website, collaboration with the Culham Institute and a termly newsletter.

While the National Society did not now see itself as a grant making charity, it continued to give grants to other bodies to finish specific work, for example, the Church in Wales Education Officer and *Roots*. This changed with the need to help with "Dearing" schools. It also funded the video *The challenge of a lifetime* to help disseminate the Dearing vision to dioceses, and appointed a Development Officer to implement Dearing.

7.3 Implementing the Dearing report

A debate on the Dearing report was held in General Synod, based on a summary from the Board of Education. The report noted that this was the first time that a coherent national policy for Church of England schools had been developed. In the summary of recommendations, it stated that these schools must be distinctively Christian institutions, fully integrated into the life of parishes. After noting the recommendation for increased provision, in particular of Anglican secondary schools, it pointed out that:

any new Church schools must be both distinctively Christian and inclusive communities, nurturing children from Christian backgrounds in their faith whilst seeking to bring children from different backgrounds together as a distinctive expression of Christ's commandment to love one another and of Christian service. It gives an explicit welcome to ecumenical initiatives.

Since the majority of Anglican schools were primary, serving their local communities, they tended to have significant numbers of children of other faiths in them. The disparity of provision between 4500 primary and 200 secondary meant that only 1 in 5 Church of England primary school pupils gained admission into Church secondary schools. An overwhelming demand from Christian parents led to many secondary schools allocating most places to children from Christian families.

The way ahead now challenges all Church schools to consider how they are responding to the changing needs of the local community, and to reserve some places for children of other faiths and no faith.¹⁰

The only way to ease this was to create more Anglican schools. Clearly this could not be achieved without a supply of Christian teachers, which appeared to be the single most important issue facing Church schools now and in the future.

This confidence in the continuing contribution of the Church in education led to 10 new Church secondary schools being developed within two years, and more planned as dioceses responded to the Dearing challenges. The Society urged that when there was a parish vacancy, information about any Church schools should be included in the parish profile, and deaneries were reminded that they should not forget to include schools in their strategic plans. A national fund raising exercise, the Church Schools Campaign, inspired by Dearing was started in 2003 and included approaches to major trusts and donors. While it was promoted by the Archbishops' Council, the income went to the National Society to make the grants for newly established Anglican secondary schools. By 2005 18 schools received grants, mostly about £4,000. By 2007, £49.5m had been received or promised, of which £1.5m was made available for the grants programme. Meanwhile, once the Government had declared its intention of rebuilding every secondary school [BSF], existing schools needed support. After many legal difficulties, including a consideration of how to fund the governing bodies' 10% contributions, it was agreed with the DfES that all voluntary Aided schools in BSF would be 100% funded by grant.

A national conference, *Faith in the future*, funded by the National Society, was held on 14 March 2006 in the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, with the Archbishop of Canterbury giving an address, "Church Schools; a national vision". It was recognised that another way of applying Dearing was the setting up of Church of England sponsored academies in challenging contexts; this would give new life to the Church's mission to the deprived. The Church discussed with government the possibility of having Anglican academies on the understanding that if it were to be involved then the schools must be distinctively Christian. An Academies Enabling Unit was set up, and a National Society Trust for Foundation Schools and for sponsorship of academies established by the Society. The government agreed that the Society could be treated as a single national sponsor, with individual dioceses being local leads. The Church of England Academies Services Ltd provided in-house support for these Church of England Academies. Five leading educational provider companies were recruited to provide educational and project management services in the development of ongoing support for the Church academies. By 2009 there were 29 Church of England academies under these schemes, with more in the pipeline. One or two Cathedral schools showed an interest in becoming academies and a number of joint Church of England and Roman Catholic schools and academies were established to serve local worshipping communities.

To develop leadership skills throughout the Church school sector, the Society managed a project funded by the National College for School Leadership. The majority of dioceses were involved in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today programme, working on succession planning strategies. While the Society was focusing its efforts on the Dearing project, it was also committed to its vision of schools as part of parish life and work; its links with schools enabled the production of related material for Sunday schools. A Religious Education Development Project was established to support diocesan advisers. *Christian values for schools* was published online to help schools to articulate and embed the principles of their Christian ethos.

7.4 Into the third century

In the face of rapid government-driven change which continued under the Coalition Government of 2010, the National Society had to re-examine its mission and resources. While the Labour Government had promoted academies as replacements for "failing" schools, to be provided by outside organisations, the Coalition immediately established academy status for "outstanding" schools. Because of the legal requirements set out for these new-wave academies to be created, the National Society and its lawyers combined with the other Churches and their lawyers to produce a model set of memoranda and articles of association for Church schools, paralleling those for community schools. While outstanding schools were not to be subject to OFSTED inspections, accountability to the government continued through the regular checking of examination results: falls could bring an inspection. Further concern resulting from this change related to ensuring the survival of the Christian ethos in Church academies and in the future availability of support for non-academies (both faith based and community) as local authorities were weakened.

The non-inclusion of Religious Education in the English Baccalaureate created worries about not only the future of the subject – which, judging by GCSE entries had become very popular – but also about the lack of understanding of the meaning of faith by tomorrow's citizens, as well as that the subject was likely to be squeezed out. There are also many concerns about the teaching of Christianity in schools using an Agreed Syllabus.

The National Society decided to celebrate its bicentenary with a variety of activities designed to showcase its achievements over the years showing its continuity of vision. In addition to the nationally organised events, dioceses held celebrations showing a range of ways of engaging children in the history of Church schools. There was an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall of the House of Commons; many were the MPs who stopped and spoke to those "manning" the stands. Advice on admissions was issued to DBEs, reminding them of the original purpose of National Schools: to serve the poor of the parish and bring them to an understanding of faith. Conferences were held for chaplains, secondary headteachers. and diocesan RE advisers and a symposium on Church schools was planned to take place in St John at Hackney Parish Church – Joshua Watson's spiritual home. Education Sunday was planned around a theme of Firm foundations, an edition of Songs of Praise celebrated church schools and the climax of the year was a service in Westminster Abbey.

NOTES

1. Education, 14.12.1990, quoted in Priscilla Chadwick, "The Anglican perspective on Church Schools," *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol 27, #4, December 2001, p481
2. Baker, Kenneth, *The turbulent years: my life in politics*, Faber 1993, p 207.
3. National Society, 186th Annual report, 1997.
4. General Synod, Report of proceedings, debate of 17.11.1998, vol 29, #3, p 787–8.
5. General Synod, Report of proceedings, debate of 17.11.1998, vol 29, #3, p 792.
6. *The Way Ahead: Church schools in the new millennium*, [Dearing report] GSI408, Church House Publishing, 2001, p 1.
7. *ibid*, p xi.
8. National Society, 190th Annual report, 2001
9. *ibid*.
10. *The way ahead: Church of England Schools in the new millennium*, GSI439, Church House Publishing, 2001.

Conclusion

For 200 years, the National Society has sought to follow the vision of its founder, Joshua Watson, "to instruct and educate the Poor in suitable learning, works of industry and the principles of the Christian Religion according to the Established Church".¹ There have been many changes in the context of the Society's work over this period, but its core concern has been for Christian education. The only shift in its remit has occurred with the movement towards ecumenism, so that the religious ethos in most schools is now Christian rather than specifically Anglican.

It may have been Watson himself who wrote in the *British Critic* (a journal that he owned), "Education with religion is the greatest good which man can bestow on man; education, unless grounded upon religious principles, may be a curse instead of a blessing."² This summarises one of the principles that inspired him, and to the practical application of which he gave his skill, his energy and his wealth for 30 years. Reflecting his influence, the Society's ethos was dominated for over a century by High Churchmen with a very specific understanding of the role of the Established Church in the country. Change gradually began in the 1920s. Acceptance emerged that Agreed Syllabuses for council schools were better than no religious instruction whatsoever. This enabled Temple, twenty years later, to agree with Butler that the new category of voluntary controlled schools should use their local agreed syllabus. Still later, this ecumenism led to the creation of joint schools with other churches.

The history of the National Society has been one of continued negotiation within the expansion and formalising of educational provision in England and Wales, with the position of RE central to this. It was initially assumed that the parish clergy would teach the catechism and liturgy in the schools, while the teacher taught everything else: a position maintained despite the argument that you could not separate the religious from the secular. The Revised Code was attacked by the Society because school funding would be dependent on secular subjects and there was a concern that RE would be sidelined. The Education Reform Act of 1988 attracted the same criticism with the introduction of the National Curriculum and RE as a part of the "basic curriculum", in that the published league tables took no note of the subject. Much work has been done by the Society over the years to ensure the continued expectation that all schools would have a daily act of collective worship and teach RE. The issue raised its head again in 2010 with the introduction of the English Baccalaureate, which required GCSE passes at grade C or above in all of English, Maths, two sciences, a modern (or ancient) foreign language, and a humanity (history/geography/ancient history) – but no place for Religious Education. The churches and many other organisations campaigned vigorously to have RE included among the humanities.

The argument about the impossibility of separating the religious and the secular came into full play once the government decided in 1839 that it needed to know that the grants

for school building were being appropriately spent and proposed an inspection system. Church of England schools, in the Society's view, could only be inspected – if they had to be – by Anglican clergy; an argument that the Society won. Once the government decided in 1870 to end the practice of specific HMI for each church, the National Society was left to find a way to inspect the religious instruction in its schools. The work had to be delegated to dioceses, and by the late twentieth century had almost fallen by the wayside. The inauguration of OFSTED with no power to inspect "denominational education" led to the introduction of a separate set of inspectors for church schools, considering the quality of the school as a Church school, its worship, RE (in voluntary aided schools) and its leadership and management. The National Society spearheaded all the work to provide a framework for the inspections, self evaluation kits for schools and training for inspectors, with the whole system administered by the dioceses.

When, in 1811, Watson and his friends initially wanted to set up a system of schools, they realised that the first necessity was to have teachers. Throughout its two centuries the Society has had a concern for teacher training, starting with the provision of a central school, first of all in Baldwin's Gardens and then in The Sanctuary, to train youngsters to operate the monitorial system. With the realisation of the inadequacies of this method, the Society was in the forefront in establishing training colleges – Stanley Grove (St Mark's) for men and Whitelands for women. Shortly afterwards the Welsh Committee was supported in the setting up of Trinity College in Carmarthen. The work in the diocesan central schools and training colleges was supported by the Society, which absorbed several other colleges, since closed. The Society saw the benefits of helping the Colleges to work together and set up the Board of Supervision, through which all grants were channelled. Since the savage reduction in teacher training from the 1970s, the Society has worked to support the remaining colleges, now universities, in keeping hold of their Christian ethos. The National Society's three remaining institutions enable it to keep a practical insight into the world of higher education.

In addition to providing "trained" teachers, the other initial task was to help parishes erect their school buildings, with the first ones based on the model of a barn. The Standing Committee decided on a policy of "matching grants", a method later adopted by successive governments. From the early days there was a concern for security of tenure and trust deeds that spelled out the purpose of the building. This type of legal work continues to be supported by the Society, which today works with the Department for Education on the legal documents required to set up academies. Under the recent Labour Government, several new Church academies were built in areas of deprivation, while the "new style" academies of the Coalition have had their Church foundation protected.

For the whole of its existence, the Society has tried to be involved with the government of the day in order to protect church foundations and keep church schools open. The creation of academies (preceded by the Thatcher government's grant maintained schools) broke the clarity of the "dual System" created in 1870 when publicly funded board schools were set up to fill gaps in the spread of church school places. The competition with the better funded board schools left the church schools struggling with poorer buildings and equipment and unable to pay similar salaries. From 1897 onwards energetic attempts were made to generate more funding. The 1902 Education Act

ensured that they received all their running costs, although they still received no help with building costs. It was the 1944 Education Act that gave the voluntary schools a great lift with its provision of 50% of building costs (later raised in stages to 90%) for voluntary aided schools and total provision for voluntary controlled ones. It was this acceptance of voluntary controlled status, with its financial benefits but the corollary of religious education delivered according to the local agreed syllabus, that marked a change in the Society's relationship with its schools. The question remains as to whether, in a fragmented education system, the schools will remain within the Church family.

In its early days the National Society was able to be in touch with most of its schools, but as numbers grew, work had to be passed on to the diocesan boards of education. This left the Society to represent the Church at large in all negotiations on education with the government of the day. Meanwhile the Church was affected by the spread of notions of democracy and representation, which led to the setting up of the Church Assembly. The National Society had been speaking to government for the Church – but it was a charity with no "official" position within it. The question therefore arose, "Who speaks for the Church of England?" After some years this was settled, in effect, by merging the Society with the General Synod's Board of Education, and having common chair and general secretary – now Chief Education Officer. To ensure that dioceses were enabled to have a legal basis for their work with the schools in their areas, the 1943 Diocesan Education Committees Measure was passed. This has since been amended, but still provides the framework for the work.

The National Society was set up to cover Wales as well as England, and has always striven to ensure that Wales was fairly treated, especially as the country was very poor in comparison with England. Additional funds have been provided for church education in the province, especially after the Church in Wales was disestablished. Devolution of government made a major difference, in that there were two governments to be negotiated with. To a large extent the Welsh dioceses have managed this alongside their Catholic colleagues. Representatives of the Welsh dioceses serve on appropriate National Society committees and the Society's officers attend meetings in Cardiff.

The vision of the Society was clearly expressed in the 1858 Annual Report,

The value of the National Society is best tested by the amount of work which, by God's blessing, it has been enabled to complete. As the handmaid of the Church of England in the matter of education, it has led the way in the various schemes put forth during the present century for the promotion of sound religious instruction among the labouring classes of this country. Not only in populous towns, but also in small country villages, the traces of the Society's work are to be found; the Church school, with its trained teacher, and with a supply of books and materials, being now the accompaniment of every well-ordered parish.³

The Society has never forgotten that its purpose is to serve the whole population, but especially the less fortunate. From the 1840s support for factory schools in Halifax, and the acceptance of the gift of St John's College Battersea designed to train mature men to be sent to the rougher manufacturing and mining districts, to the Dearing Report calling for more stress on serving the whole nation rather than the Church alone, the theme has been constant. This concern for the whole population is continued in the National

Society's 2011 advice to DBEs on admissions, suggesting that a proportion of school places in every school be "open": that is, without regard to parental faith commitment (or lack of it).

From its beginnings 200 years ago, the Church of England has now achieved a situation whereby through its 4605 primary schools (a quarter of the total) and 236 secondary (6.25%) and 42 academies, there are approximately one million children hearing the gospel message. There are, in addition, 564 independent schools and 168 Church schools in Wales that declare themselves to be based on Church of England principles.

After 200 years, the National Society shows that, far from the possibility of its being an historic anachronism, it is a major source of financial and organisational support to Church schools. It can move quickly to develop programmes of support in response to outside pressures. It has a wealth of knowledge and, in particular, access to legal expertise unrivalled elsewhere in the Church. Representation in the House of Lords ensures that proposed legislation is thoroughly considered and its implications for all faith-based schools drawn to public attention. For the present, as the government tends to give increased autonomy to individual schools, thereby reducing the role of local authorities, the Society will work to ensure that support is provided for the Diocesan Boards of Education. In line with its historic work and remit, this will support schools in more deprived areas.

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2. quoted in National Society 144th Annual Report, 1955, p 9.
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