

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 63

A Guide to School Records

1 Introduction

The Norfolk Record Office (NRO) holds the archives of over 300 local schools, including log books, admission registers, managers' minutes and much more. They are mostly the records of elementary schools, but we also hold the records of many Norfolk secondary schools. The amount and type of material held for each school varies: not all classes of document have survived for every institution. This leaflet explains the main types of school records and lists some of the printed sources, such as trade directories and newspapers, which you can use to trace the history of a school.

School records include archives created by individual schools and their governing organizations. The records of these governing bodies which, over time, included voluntary societies, school boards and local authority education committees, can be surprisingly revealing. They might, for example, give an insight into educational policies, by-laws on attendance, staffing matters or the progress of school building and generally give you a more rounded view of education at the time. For more information about the records of governing organizations, please see our free information leaflet no.62, *Education in Norfolk: A Brief Historical Outline*, available by contacting the NRO or on our website at <<http://archives.norfolk.gov.uk>>.

2 Arrangement of catalogues

Before July 1991, it was NRO policy to arrange records of closed schools deposited by the county and borough councils according to their category. For example, log books (C/ED 2), admission registers (C/ED 4) and managers' minutes (C/ED 5). Some schools chose to deposit their records at the NRO even though they were still open. These records were listed with the reference Y/ED/S for schools in Great Yarmouth and as D/ED for other Norfolk schools.

Since July 1991 records for individual schools have been catalogued under a unique reference number. The majority of these schools have been allocated catalogue reference numbers from C/ED 22 onwards.

Some school records contain personal and sensitive information which is not usually open to immediate access to the general public. Where this is the case, it will normally be indicated on the catalogue entry.

3 School card index and online catalogue

The card index to school archives in the searchroom cross-references school records from a range of sources and is the main starting place for a search. It is arranged alphabetically by place and then by name of school. However, the index contains few references to Nonconformist and Sunday schools, for which you should look at records of the relevant church or chapel. In most

cases, the card index will refer you to a catalogue list. You can also search our online catalogue, NROCAT, *via* our website at <<http://www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk>>.

There is a list of schools which closed between 1948 and 1995 at the front of the C/ED catalogue in the searchroom. This list, which is arranged by date of closure, can help to establish when a particular school closed and what happened to the building or site.

4 Trade directories

Another good starting place for research is printed trade directories, which give a brief history of the school and can help identify the most likely place where children from a particular town or village would have attended school. Some directory entries name the headmaster or mistress, give details of school boards and average attendance figures. In particular, *Kelly's Norfolk Directory*, 1900, gives detailed information about schools. However, directories can vary in the depth and quality of information they give.

The NRO holds a number of trade directories for Norfolk, but a more complete set is held by the Norfolk Heritage Centre (NHC) at the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library. In particular, the NHC holds Norwich directories, 1783-1975 and Norfolk directories, 1836-1937. Please contact the NHC for a complete list of holdings. Their address is at the end of this leaflet. Digitised images of many Norfolk directories may be viewed on the Norfolk Online Access to Heritage website <www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk>. You can also access many trade directories for England and Wales online at <<http://www.historicaldirectories.org>>.

5 Local Newspapers

Newspapers can be a valuable source of information about individual schools and local education more generally. In particular, newspapers often report the introduction and activities of school boards established by the Education Act, 1870. They may give details of events, including school prize days and high profile disputes, such as the Burston school strike. Obituaries of teachers, editorial comment and letters to the editor, expressing views on education, can also be useful sources of information.

Newspapers sometimes include advertisements for teaching posts or to attract pupils to private schools. In some cases they may relate to schools which have no surviving records and give an idea of the school's size, fees, curriculum and location. For further advice about using newspapers and advertisements as a source for school history, see W.B. Stephens and R.W. Unwin, *Materials for the Local and Regional History of Schooling, 1700-1900* (London, 1987).

For Norfolk and Norwich, newspapers and newspaper cuttings can usually be located as follows:

- Copies of newspapers for Norfolk and Norwich dating from the early eighteenth century to present day are held at the NHC. Their address is

at the end of this leaflet. Please contact them direct for full details of newspapers available on microfilm and in hard copy.

- The NRO and NHC hold a select two-volume printed index to local newspapers. C. Mackie, *Norfolk Annals*, (Norwich, 1901) covers the Norfolk Chronicle from 1801 to 1900 and a supplement by H.B. Jaffa, *Norfolk Events* (Norwich, 1939) covers the period 1901-1938.
- Many schools, whose records are deposited at the NRO, kept their own files of newspaper cuttings or scrapbooks of articles. These are usually listed with records of the individual school, for which you should refer to the card index to school archives in the searchroom or to the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.
- There are files of textual records compiled by the BBC relating to its broadcasts, 1980s-2002. They include copies of newspaper cuttings from local and national newspapers, press releases and other publicity material, published reports and working notes and papers, including scripts, cue sheets and annotations. The files covering schools are arranged in an alpha-numeric sequence and are referenced AUD 1/1014-1172.

6 Census records

The census will record pupils and staff present in a school on census night and is therefore a particularly useful source for boarding and public schools. However, in such cases the census will not include any day pupils.

For households in general, census returns can indicate the number of children in a family classed as scholars. However, the term 'scholar' appears to have been applied quite loosely and its application became increasingly vague over time. Children classed as scholars may also have been working in some capacity and some parents were suspicious about disclosing details of child employment to the census enumerators at a time when it was increasingly limited by legislation and particularly following the introduction of compulsory education.

For more information on how to use the census for researching a school, see E. Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census Revisited* (London, 2005), pp. 43-47 and pp. 104-106.

Census records are available for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911. The census returns are arranged by street within each parish and registration district. The occupants of each house are then listed together. You can see copies of the Norfolk censuses, for 1841-1901, at the NRO and the NHC, which both hold name indexes for the 1851 and 1881 Norfolk censuses on microfiche. The NRO also has indexes on CD-ROM to the 1891 Norfolk census and to the 1861 and 1871 Norwich censuses.

Census records for the whole of England and Wales are held at The National Archives (TNA). Their contact details are given at the end of this leaflet. You can also search the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 censuses

online at <www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/census/> and <www.ancestry.co.uk>. Initial searching is free of charge but you will need to pay a fee to download full images of original entries. Alternatively, you can access the Ancestry website free of charge *via* computers at the NRO and at Norfolk libraries (including the NHC).

Currently, the 1911 census is only accessible through the Find My Past website at <www.1911census.co.uk>. Initial searching is free of charge and will give you a transcript, of limited information, from the original entry. You will need to pay a fee to download images of original entries.

7 School log books

The Education Department of central government issued a Revised Code of Regulations in 1862. It required schools which were inspected and eligible for state grants to keep a log book giving a regular account of activities in the school. However, many schools did not meet the criteria for a government grant, which included employing a certified head teacher and having suitable school premises. Therefore, log books for these schools often start at some later date when the school did meet government requirements and came within the inspection system.

The Revised Code of 1862 specified that the school log book should be a bound volume of over 500 pages into which the headteacher made daily entries. From 1871, weekly entries were acceptable. Once an entry had been made, it could only be amended by a new entry and could not be deleted or changed. The HMI (His or Her Majesty's Inspector) checked the log book during a visit to the school and a summary of the inspection report was copied into the book by the headteacher. For a detailed history of log books and their uses, see P. Horn, 'The School Log Book,' in *Short Guides to Records: Second Series*, ed. K.M. Thompson (London, 1997).

Log books are the primary source for the history of a school, but they can vary in content and the level of detail is often dependent on the headteacher making the entries. However, the type of information they give can include details of the school's academic progress, inspection and teaching methods or materials used. Log books often give the names of staff and their status, sometimes with brief details of employment. Most information about pupils is administrative, but in cases of exceptionally good or bad behaviour, sickness or lateness, names are sometimes given. The log book might also indicate details of any school fees paid. Since government grants depended on pupil attendance, log books often record the effects of bad weather, employment of children or epidemic diseases. Some log books also give information beyond school matters which might include details about the local community, wartime or significant national events.

Many school log books held at the NRO have been microfilmed for preservation purposes and where this is the case it will be indicated on the catalogue entry:

- For log books of closed Norfolk schools, see C/ED 2/1-313.
- For log books of closed Norwich schools, see N/ED 1/1-135.
- From July 1991, log books are listed with the records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

8 School admission registers

Registers of pupils admitted to a school were usually kept from the 1870s, but some schools may have maintained records of admissions before this date. Registers usually record the child's name, dates of birth and admission, parents, or guardians' names, and some include information on the standard attained, job taken on leaving and details of transfer from or to another school. In cases where school admission registers have not survived, daily class attendance registers have been kept where they are available.

Many school admission registers have been microfilmed for preservation and where this is the case it will be indicated on the catalogue entry:

- For admission registers of closed Norfolk schools, see C/ED 4/1-124.
- For admission registers of closed Norwich schools, see N/ED 8/1-155.
- From July 1991, admission registers are listed with the records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

9 Punishment books

It was required that a separate book should be kept for each school detailing all corporal punishments administered in the school. From 1900, HMIs examined the school punishment book during their visit. Punishment books usually record the pupil's name, date of punishment, nature of the offence and type of punishment given:

- For punishment books of closed Norfolk schools, see C/ED 10/1-16.
- For punishment books of closed Norwich schools, see N/ED 13/1.
- From July 1991, punishment books are listed with the records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

10 School managers' minutes and governors' minutes

Meeting minutes of school managers were kept in pursuance of the Education Act, 1902. They contain details of the administration of the committee, its membership and duties. Managers' minutes often deal with issues such as supplies and tenders, staff appointments, resignations and salaries, the school building, including alterations and maintenance, lighting, heating, letting of school property, fire protection and insurance. The minutes sometimes give details of school hours, term dates, and preparations for events such as jubilees, fetes and wartime:

- For managers' minutes of closed Norfolk schools, see C/ED 5/1-73.
- For managers' minutes of Norwich schools, see N/TC 35/5/2-16, N/TC/35/6/7, N/TC/35/13/1-3 and N/ED 12/1-19, 31-34.
- From July 1991, managers' minutes are listed with the records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

All state schools now have a governing body, which can include parents, staff and representatives from the Local Authority and community, depending on the type of school it represents. Governors do their work voluntarily, but they may be paid expenses. School governors are responsible for providing strategic management and leadership, ensuring accountability and for monitoring and raising standards at the school. They are also involved in appointing the headteacher, managing certain school budgets and reviewing exclusions of pupils from the school. In schools which act as their own admissions authorities, including some voluntary aided schools and academies, the governors are responsible for setting the admission policy and making decisions about admissions. Many public schools also have a governing body, but they usually set their own criteria for its composition.

School governors' minutes, and other documents, are usually listed with records of individual schools. For further details, please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom or the online catalogue, NROCAT.

11 School managers' portfolios

These distinctive black folders contain paperwork, including inspectors' reports, grant applications and managers' correspondence with central government and the Norfolk Education Committee.

Complete portfolios, or their partial contents, survive for very few schools and they are often incomplete. Where they survive, they are usually listed with the records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

12 Parish Records

For Church of England or parochial schools, there are sometimes managers' minutes and other records, such as deeds to the school premises and correspondence with the Local Education Authority (LEA), among the ecclesiastical parish records.

Please refer to the card index for school archives, available in the searchroom, which will cross-reference these documents, or to the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

13 Accounts and Financial Records

Accounts are held for some, but not all, schools and very few accounts survive which detail the building of a school. Stock books, which record the purchase of school equipment and its value, sometimes also survive. They are usually listed with the records of individual schools, for which you should refer to the card index to school archives, available in the seachroom, or to the online catalogue, NROCAT, for details. The NRO does not keep the current or semi-current financial records of schools.

14 Maps and Plans

14.1 Ordnance Survey (OS) maps at the Norfolk Heritage Centre (NHC)

Checking maps of different dates to see if the school is marked can help identify when it was built and show changes in the size and shape of the building over time. The earliest OS maps date from the mid to late nineteenth century and are available at the NHC. Their address is given at the end of this leaflet.

14.2 Department of Education and Science Building Grant Plans

In addition to records created by schools and those deposited by the Education Department of Norfolk County Council (NCC), the NRO holds a small, but significant, series of school building plans and drawings from the Department of Education and Science. The Public Record Office, now The National Archives, gave these plans to the NRO in 1965 and their reference is P/BG/1-140.

The records in this series are plans, elevations, sections and sketches of new or additional school building schemes submitted to the Department of Education and Science in the hope of attracting grants for the proposals. Many were successful in attracting funding, but others failed to meet with approval. In these latter cases, no grant was made and no buildings, in the form submitted, erected.

The responsible architect or builder usually signed the plans, which cover both successful and failed proposals, mostly dating from the 1840s to the 1870s, in about 140 city and county parishes. They are often accompanied by ancillary documents including sketched details of fixtures and fittings and notes of costings.

15 Records of School Inspection

15.1 The School Inspectorate

From 1839, inspection of elementary schools was made a condition of government grants and, at first, the inspectorate was organized by religious denomination. In the 1870s, the denominational nature of inspection was abolished and replaced by a system based on territorial districts. From this date, HMIs did not have to comment on religious instruction.

For a detailed history of the inspectorate, and information about records held centrally at The National Archives, see A. Morton, *Education and the State from 1833* (Kew, 1997).

15.2 HMI Reports

Reports of HMIs are usually found with the records of individual schools and a summary of the report was also copied into the school's log book by the headteacher. The HMI reports usually give a brief history of the school and comment on its general and academic progress:

- For HMI reports on Norwich schools, 1948-1965, see N/ED 4/1-112.
- For HMI reports on schools in Great Yarmouth, 1904-1965, see Y/ED 694-714.
- From July 1991, inspectors' reports are listed with the records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or our online catalogue, NROCAT, for details.

15.3 Reports of Diocesan Inspectors

The Diocese of Norwich also inspected religious education in Church of England Schools. Reports of the Diocesan inspectors give details of the type and standard of instruction and are usually located with the records of individual schools or, sometimes, in the parish records. Summaries of the reports were often entered into the school's log book. For records of individual schools please refer to the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or to the online catalogue, NROCAT.

There are also minutes of the Norwich Diocesan Religious Instruction Committee, 1930-1945, which includes annual meeting minutes of the Diocesan inspectors, see DN/DBF 2/73.

15.4 OFSTED Reports

In 1992, OFSTED took over from HMI, and their inspection reports are usually listed with the records of individual schools. Please refer to the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or to the online catalogue, NROCAT. For some schools, copies of OFSTED inspection reports can be found in the files of textual records compiled by the BBC relating to its broadcasts, 1980s-2002. The files covering schools are arranged in an alpha-numeric sequence and are referenced AUD 1/1014-1172.

Some records concerning OFSTED inspections are also held by The National Archives. Their address is at the end of this leaflet. For current OFSTED reports on individual schools, please refer to their website at <www.ofsted.gov.uk>.

16 School Publications: Prospectuses, Magazines, Newsletters, Programmes and School Histories

The official school prospectus, magazine and newsletter can be valuable sources for researching the history of a particular institution. They often give a broad variety of details including lists of staff, pupils, sports teams, term dates, building alterations and general information about the school's culture. In some cases, they may contain contributions from the children themselves and many give information about the wider community, including local or national events, such as wartime activities. They are often a useful source for pictures and photographs of the school.

For some schools there may also be unpublished histories, commemorative books produced for anniversaries, and programmes for sports days, concerts or other events. School publications are usually listed with records of individual schools and for further details please see the card index to school records, available in the searchroom, or the online catalogue, NROCAT.

17 Photographs

Photographs can help to build up a picture of the school and comparing them can provide evidence of changes over time. Class photographs may give an indication of the social groupings, or hierarchy, in the school, while others might show alterations to the building or record school events. For further advice about using photographs as a source, see W.B. Stephens and R.W. Unwin, *Materials for the Local and Regional History of Schooling, 1700-1900* (London, 1987).

The NRO holds a variety of school photographs and they are usually listed with records of individual schools. Please see the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or to the online catalogue, NROCAT, for further details. The NHC also holds a substantial collection of photographs, which includes pictures of schools. Many of their photographs are available online through the Library catalogue at <http://norlink.norfolk.gov.uk>.

18 Pupils' Work

It is less common to find surviving examples of pupils' work than administrative records created by schools about their pupils. However, where they survive, records of pupils' work, such as exercise books, can help to give researchers a fuller picture of the school. In particular, they can enhance knowledge about the school curriculum and teaching methods.

The NRO holds a variety of pupils' work, which is usually listed with records of individual schools. In other cases, individuals have deposited school-work in their possession, which is usually listed with their personal or family records. Please refer to the card index to school archives, available in the searchroom, or online catalogue, NROCAT, for further details.

19 Other Information Leaflets

Other information leaflets, produced by the Norfolk Record Office, which may be useful:

- Leaflet 32 *Schools in Great Yarmouth*
- Leaflet 55 *Guidance on the Preservation and Care of School Records*
- Leaflet 62 *Education in Norfolk: A Brief Historical Outline*
- Leaflet 64 *Grammar and Independent Schools in Norfolk*
- Leaflet 65 *The Burston Strike School*
- Leaflet 66 *Exam Results and Pupil Files*

20 Bibliography and Further Reading

S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulton, *An Introductory History of Education since 1800* (London, 1966).

E. Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census Revisited* (London, 2005).

P. Horn, 'The School Log Book' in *Short Guides to Records* ed. K.M. Thompson (London, 1997) pp 104-108.

P. Horn, *The Victorian and Edwardian School Child*, (Gloucester, 1989).

H.B. Jaffa, *Norfolk Events, 1901-1938* (Norwich, 1939).

C. Mackie, *Norfolk Annals, 1801-1850*, (Norwich, 1901).

C. Mackie, *Norfolk Annals, 1851-1900*, (Norwich, 1901).

A. Morton, *Education and the State from 1833* (Kew, 1997).

J. Richardson, *The Local Historian's Encyclopaedia*, (New Barnet, 1993), pp. 141-146.

W.B. Stephens, *Education in Britain, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke, 1988). A copy is available through the Norfolk Library Service.

W.B Stephens and R.W. Unwin, *Materials for the Local and Regional Study of Schooling 1700-1900* (London, 1987).

21 Useful Addresses

Norfolk Record Office

The Archive Centre
Martineau Lane
Norwich NR1 2DQ

Telephone: (01603) 222599

E-mail: norfrec@norfolk.gov.uk

Website: <http://archives.norfolk.gov.uk>

Online catalogue: <http://nrocat.norfolk.gov.uk>

Norfolk Heritage Centre

Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library
The Forum
Millennium Plain
Norwich NR2 1AW

Telephone: (01603) 774740

E-mail: norfolk.studies.lib@norfolk.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.library.norfolk.gov.uk>

The National Archives

Kew
Richmond
Surrey, TW9 4DU

Telephone (020) 8876 3444

Website: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>



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