



Private Education

The first known education was in the form of a privately-run Dame school at what is now 19 Green Lane.

Vicars also took on a few select students as this advert shows

PRIVATE TUITION.
THE REVEREND CHARLES NESFIELD, A.M. of
 Jesus College, Cambridge, Vicar of **Stratton St. Margaret**,
 near Swindon, Wilts, intends to take into his Vicarage-house,
 situated within thirty miles of Bath, Oxford, and Cheltenham,
 a LIMITED NUMBER of PUPILS. Terms 120 guineas
 per annum.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette December 18, 1834

The church had a small Parochial School from 1835-1869, where all children were taught at least their 'ABC'.

In 1845 a Classical, Commercial & Agricultural School was set up at Kingsdown The Rev. Frederick Tollar a teacher of Classics has been employed. Classes will start of 3rd February. Fees at £25 per annum, under 14's £21, one-2-one at £30 and addition Agricultural training at £35. *Devizes & Wiltshire Gazette 30-01-1845.*

1869 - TO BUILDERS AND OTHERS – Proposed new Schools, Master's house, and boundary walls, &c., at Stratton St. Margaret. Estimates are required for carrying out the above works. Plans, specifications, and terms of contract may be seen on application at the Vicarage, on and after Monday, April 26, at any time between Seven a.m. and nine p.m. Tenders to be sealed and endorsed "Tenders for Schools, &c.," and delivered at the above-named vicarage not later than four o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, May 4. Separate estimates may be given for joiner's and mason's work. The Committee do not pledge themselves to accept the lowest or any Tender.

Jackson's Oxford Journal

24-04-1869.

In 1885 the local paper reports local exam results of private teacher's pupils – Miss Mary Fernie passed the Cambridge Local Exam & her sister Miss Olive Fernie passed the College of Preceptors Exam, both daughters of James Fernie Esq

Main Education.

1876 - The new school board was formed February 12, 1876, following The Lords Committee of the Privy Councils orders dated 15-01-1876, (*The Morning Post 19-01-1876*) and was dissolved by the Education Act of 1902, they met fortnightly.



National School (mixed) Swindon Road, Lower Stratton built 1869 by local voluntary labour for 240 children, the foundation stone was laid by Mrs. David Archer, of Kingsdowne house. The cost of the building was £1,300. *The Bath Chronicle 05-08-1869*.

George Packman King was an early teacher mentioned in 1870 to 1879.

1880, Master is George King and Mary Ann King the mistress. (*Kelly's Directory*)

In 1881 Robert Highman, 22, assistant teacher, was summoned by the Guardians of the Union for assaulting a lad named William COOK, (a schoolboy and inmate of the Workhouse), on the 27th inst. It appears from statements that defendant gave the boy a box on the ear. Later, he struck the boy with a book, which made him fall to the ground and vomit. He was taken to the hospital and diagnosed with concussion. He was fined 3 with £2 13s costs and declared unfit to work in a school. In default he was committed for one month. *The Bristol Mercury 14-10-1881*.

1889 to 1911 - G.J.G. Gilbert master; 1889 Miss Mary Benstead, infants' mistress. Schoolmaster in 1890 Mr Coltrip Gilbert.

1891 - Queens Scholarships for Pupil Teachers – 3074. Alice A. E. HIGGINS, 2nd Class, Stratton St. Margaret National School. *The Royal Cornwall Gazette 22-10-1891*.

1901 – Miss Coulton resigned as head. *29-01-1901*.

1903 – Mrs Gilbert, sewing mistress was transferred to Highworth and Mrs Wollacott employed at £55 per annum. *Swindon Advertiser 25-12-1903*.

1904 – Miss Lewis, teacher

Mr E J Rodway in mentioned as a teacher in 1910.

Headmaster in 1920/30's was Percy Bridgewater. It was split into 2 schools mixed & infants by 1915, Headmaster 1961-65 F J Appleford, was demolished June 1976, a couple of houses stand in its place.

1st School in Green Road opened Jan 1872, with Head Mistress Miss Sarah Ann Brooke aged 25 with her assistant Mary Ann Greenway who was 14. 1880 has Thomas Whittle as master & Miss Mary Strong as mistress. (*Kelly's Directory*).



Stratton Board School, Infants was founded 10th June 1895 –

Miss S Vowles (later Pound) was first headteacher, Ida Sealy first teacher stayed until 1940. Ethel Davidson joined in 1900 and stayed for 30 years. On 28th March 1906 it became Lower Stratton Infants Council School, 1924 Miss Lottie Walling became Mistress until 1945. In 1938 the school was given electric lighting and piped heating. The original bell turret was removed in 1939. During the war, the school shared with evacuees from Barking, London. In 1945 the school became Lower Stratton County Infants, Mistress Alberta Martin, she stayed until 1978 and in 1963 when the juniors had moved to the new school it became Grange Infants School. Miss Greta Metcalf took over in 1978. 1995 head is Mrs Davies



Board School (girls & infants) Upper Stratton built in 1883 for 537 children. 1886 - William. O. Hill, master; 1889 - Mrs. Evans, mistress; Miss Rennie, infants' mistress, 1886 Annie, wife of William Hill dies, aged 30 (*Swindon Advertiser 04-09-1886*), his second wife Clara dies at Norbury Cottage, Epping in 1941. *North Wilts Herald 18-04-1941*. 1895 - Miss E J Giles, mistress; Miss C. B. Anquin, infants' mistress, In April 1896, the school was closed for 3 weeks due to an outbreak of Measles. Mr. W O Hill, left in 1903 after 20 years, at a farewell event in the Boy's school, Mr. Viner of Swindon took a picture of around 50 past & present students, also internal pictures of the school. The tea that followed was attended by about 120 and finished with a concert. Mr. Hill was presented with a Mantle Clock. *Swindon Advertiser 30-10-1903*. 1905 headmistress Mrs. Griffiths, assistant Miss Loveday. 1905-1907 Miss Minnie E. Barrett infants' mistress, assistant Miss Culling. 1907 - Mrs. Elizabeth Griffiths, mistress; 1910, A collection was made by scholars for Dr. Barnardo's Homes of £3 6s, also, Mabel LOOKER & Dora BRAIN have obtained scholarships for Domestic Training at Trowbridge, gives free training plus board and lodging for one year. *Swindon Advertiser 04-11-1910*. 1911 - Mrs. Elizabeth Annie Usher headmistress, became girls only in 1915. Rates in 1924 were £55/16/2d. 1928 H. W. W. Brice. Run by Miss Trot and Miss Hinksman in the 1940s, Children gave up their Christmas party to raise funds for War effort, they had also made up an ambulance blanket. *North Wilts Herald 20-12-1940*. Mr. Bettison in 50's, 1961-65 H U Thomas and Mrs. Praed in late 60's. 1980's became Stratton Education Centre for disturbed children. 2020 being converted into flats.



Board School (boys) Upper Stratton built 1892 for 240 children, 1895 William O Hill master. In 1901 there was a concert to raise monies for a school piano *Swindon Advertiser* 13-12-1901. 1903 to 1911 - John E. Greenhaugh, master, 1911 - Miss Mary E Barrett Girls headmaster, 1926 Mr Brice, 1938 and the Seniors win the North Wilts Schools Athletic Association shield. *North Wilts Herald* 10-06-1938. 1940 now the Junior School. A wireless set was presented to Mrs. E. E. Hollick. For over 40 years as assistant. By Mrs E Trott, Headmistress, (*North Wilts Herald* 06-09-1940.) Miss D M Bush was appointed as her replacement. (*North Wilts Herald* 07-02-1941.) 1961-65 Miss M A Brown (infants) Miss C C Lane 1961, W H Betenson 1963-65 (juniors), 1992 Mrs Harper. Rates in 1924 were £7/3/4d. The school was enlarged with a new building in 2005.

By 1910 there was an Adult School. In October 1910 they held a Harvest Service with Mr J W Rose of Free Church Council presiding. Their hall was also used for Temperance meetings with various speakers including Mr C Harmund of Jersey. *Swindon Advertiser* 14-10-1910.



Grange Junior School (450 pupils) was built during 1961, by Swindon firm Wain Brothers which no longer exists. The architects were Alec French and Partners of Bristol. The 10 and 11-year-olds helped move the school from the old building during April and it was formally opened in June 1962 by Sir Noel Arkell. The first headmaster was Mr F J Appleford. The original houses at the school were named after 'Grange' Class GWR locomotives Arlington (team colour red), Eastbury (green), Calcott (blue) and Kingsland (yellow). Headteacher in 1970 Mr P A A Titchener. The building was completely rebuilt after a storm on Thursday 25th January 1990, in which an 11-year-old pupil, Emily McDonald, died and two 11-year-old boys were treated for minor injuries when the roof caved in, Mr Barrett a teacher helped get children to safety even though hurt himself, the headmaster at that time was Malcolm Emery.



St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School (196 pupils), Davenwood, Upper Stratton. Built 1970 Architect - Wyvern Design Group, builder Building & Public Works. In 1996 Mrs Margaret Shewry was given an award for 25 years as the school's dinner lady. The same year Headteacher John Kennedy was given an award for 25 years of teaching.



Upper Stratton Senior School, Hyde Road, built on fields farmed by William Large, and bought by Wilts C.C. from owners Messrs. J. Arkell & Sons for £750 (*North Wilts Herald 02-03-1934*). It was opened 27 Jan 1937, by the Marquis of Weymouth; the estimated cost was approximately £19,200, including £978 for furniture and equipment. It provided accommodation for 360 children (*Reply by Mr. Lindsay, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education to a question from Flight Lieut Wavell Wakefield on the cost of the new school in a Commons Debate 01/12/1938.*) It's first Head Boy in 1939 was Reginald Ireland. and in mid 1960's had become Kingsdown Secondary School. Headmaster in 1941 H H W Brice. It has been extended several times 1945 four extra classrooms, a canteen was added in 1950's later to become a Youth centre, 1960's a three-storey extension and gym were added, Headmaster 1961-63 A S Padfield and 1965 D C Shepherd, 1970's 11 classrooms and 2 science labs added. In 1970 Kingsdown High School headmaster was Mr I M P Millar. In 1998 a 2 storey 7 classroom block was added across front of school, 2005 a new Learning block and a D+T block was added. It became an Academy on 31 July 2011 (1250 pupils).

The school has a long history of sporting success, July 1950 Donald Ricketts of 99 Swindon Road wins U.15 boys 100 yards in record time of 10.4 seconds, while competing for Wiltshire in Schools National Championships at Port Sunlight, also [this](#) extract for 2001 Evening Advertiser shows and yes they did win as can be seen [here](#).

The exhibition at the Upper Stratton Secondary Modern School was planned to show visitors the progress of individual pupils through the school's various stages. This was not a display of selected work but the everyday results from the classroom and no attempt to embellish. There were appetising dishes created by the cooking class, art, needlework, dressmaking, metal, and woodwork examples alongside the Three Rs. Wiltshire Gazette & Herald 24-06-1949.



St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, Nythe Road.

Built 1958 by E W Beard. its first Headteacher, Mr Cyril Greenough. Then in 1977 Mr Steve Williams, and in 1991 Peter Wells.

The school became a Comprehensive in 1965 and by 1977 had grown to 1600 pupils, becoming a Grant Maintained school in 1993, reverting to Voluntary Aided Status. This building was demolished, and a new school built in 2006 out of the parish in Drakes Way, demolished in 2010 the original site is now the "Oakley Park" housing Estate built by George Wimpy.

In 1972 St Joseph's School's dramatic society went through to the second round of the National Festival of Drama as well as winning two cups at the Swindon Festival of One Act Plays. The school had put on its production of The Tiger's Bone by future Poet Laureate Ted Hughes for the competition at the Arts Centre in Devizes Road.



Headlands Grammar School, Cricklade Road, c.1943 by E.W.Beard. This was one of the 4 Swindon Grammar schools, originally called Swindon College School. It became a comprehensive for ages 14-19 in 1964, known as 'The Headlands School', then becoming an 11-16 school and finally closed 11 December 2009, being demolished in December 2009. Part of the site is used by Esprit Gymnastics; the playing fields are now a housing development. Headmaster 1961-1970 Mr T S Magson.

Trevor J L Moulding of Cricklade Road, Upper Stratton, a former pupil of Headlands Grammar School, now in his second year at University College London, coxed his Eight to victory in the University of London Allom Cup Regatta at Chiswick. Wiltshire Gazette & Herald 17-05-1949.

Pupils Robert Tyldesley and Geoffrey Davis were about to set off on a 3,000-mile tour of Europe aboard a 98cc motorbike. At less than one horsepower, the machine was the smallest mechanically propelled vehicle in its class. They wanted to make the trip to meet people from other cultures. They set themselves the challenge of travelling 200 miles a day with a budget of £25. Evening Advertiser 25-06-1952.

Merton Fields Secondary School 1963 to 1990's



Colebrook Junior School, Towcester Road
Headmaster in 1970 Mr Turner.



Colebrook Infants School, Towcester Road opened September 1975. Became an Academy from November 2011. Awarded Good report by OFSTED Jan 2014.

Ruskin Junior School (374 pupils), Wordsworth Drive, Upper Stratton.

Extract from Evening Advertiser 9-11-2000 - Parents and residents welcomed a chance to have their say on proposals to spend £500,000 improving a school in Upper Stratton. At an informal exhibition more than 30 visitors viewed plans to build a new resource area and classrooms at Ruskin Junior School. The proposals involve building three permanent classrooms to replace mobile accommodation and creating a new library with space stores for equipment. Simon Morris of the council's Technical Service Group attended Monday afternoon's viewing to answer questions from the public. He said: "Everybody supported the proposals, there wasn't any objections. "Some residents were worried about the extension obstructing their views but it is a very compact project. Others had expressed concerns over traffic." He explained the plans will not increase the size of the school. "If the work gets the go-ahead building will start by June 2001. It should be completed by March 2002. The plans went on show to the public after the council said it wanted to know what people thought before a detailed planning application is submitted. People were just glad that the children are to be moved out of the mobile accommodation and into permanent buildings."

Beechcroft Infant School (253 pupils), Beechcroft Road, ex. Upper Stratton Boys Board School.

Headteacher in 1970 Miss M Bond

Stratton Education Centre (96 pupils), St Phillips Road, ex. Upper Stratton Girls Board school.

Penhill Schools on separate page.