

## St James's School



The school was built in 1842, two years after the church of St James's was constructed. It was built close to the church on Salop Street at Eve Hill and was designed by the same architect, William Bourne of Dudley, in an ecclesiastical style, with leaded lancet windows and stone crosses on the roof. It cost £490 to build, and a medallion was created in 1843 as a fund-raising venture. As a Church school, religious instruction was an important part of the school's curriculum:

*"It is hereby declared that it shall be a fundamental regulation and practice of the said school that the Bible be daily read therein by the children and that Instruction in the Church Catechism and in the doctrines and principles of the Church of England shall at suitable times, twice at least in every week, be regularly given to all the children in the said school."*

(The School Trust Deed for 1843)

It was intended that it should educate 300 boys and girls from the parish. The estimate £70 annual running costs of the school were to be supplied by *"Annual Sermons, Donations, Subscriptions and children's Pence"*. Over half of the school's revenue came from *"the school pence"* – two pence per child per week, collected by the teacher every Monday morning.

The school was divided into two with a partition. Boys over 7 years were taught in one half, and girls and infants in the other half. These were regarded as two separate schools and the two did not mix.

# St James' School Log Book

Initially entries are made by the Head Master of the Boys' School – Mr Westbury.

## 1845

[Until 1846 there was no system of training for elementary school teachers. The job had very little status and the wages were frequently lower than those earned by labourers. The School Mistresses referred to here probably relied on monitors to deliver rote-learning from cards and repetitive chanting.

The Government introduced regulations for teacher training in 1846. Children from the age of thirteen could become apprentices – known as pupil teachers - to approved school teachers for a five year apprenticeship and receive an annual allowance from the government. They had to work a minimum of 5 hours a day, instructing up to thirty children. They would also receive instruction from the teacher for 1½ hours per day. After five years they could sit the Queen's Scholarship Exam for entry into a training college – although many could not afford to go to college and so would continue teaching in schools and working for their teachers' certificate in their spare time.]

### **Report of the district H.M.I., the Rev. Bellairs**

*"At Dudley, St James, a large school was erected in 1842, which is but partially used. The mistresses, two being engaged to conduct the school in separate rooms, are inefficient. The children ill informed. There is no fence to protect the schoolyard (which is in an untidy state) from the public road. It is very much to be regretted that this school in so important a place as Dudley should not be better supported. The whole income derived from subscriptions, donations and annual contributions, amounts to £15.9s.10¾d."*

## 1862

[The 1862 Revised Code removed the system of government grants for pupil teachers, meaning that apprentices had to negotiate for an allowance from their individual school managers. This meant that in hard times schools reverted to using monitors – a retrograde step. Although by the 1860s monitors were also entitled to a small sum in payment for their duties.]

## 1863

**March 4**

*Some time wasted in taking pence. Made rule that those who do not bring on the Monday morning should be sent home for it.*

**June 18**

*Gave 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> a description of my voyage with Captain Carter in his balloon on the Wednesday in the Whitsuntide Holidays, boys much interested.*

[Mr Westbury}

**July 15**

*Found that one of the monitors was receiving bribes from the boys in his class, immediately sent him to his own class, told him he would forfeit his week's money and put another one on in his place.*

**August 21**

*Caught boys throwing wheat and paper about, pointed out the sin of wasting that which was given for food, and that paper and other things thrown about School gave it an untidy appearance and cautioned them for the future.*

**September 14**

*Many boys in upper class with dirty boots, made them stay in and write "Slovenliness" 100 times".*

<b>1864</b>	
<b>June 14</b>	<i>Many slates without strings, little boys frequently dropping them, one broken, told monitor I should expect him to pay for it as it is part his duty to see that all slates used in School have strings in them.</i>
<b>September 19</b>	<i>Effect of the Strike beginning to tell seriously upon the School both in the number withdrawn to be sent to Free School and in the attendance of those children not liking to come because they cannot bring their money.</i>
<b>1866</b>	
<b>September 5</b>	<i>Some boys in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes who take their fathers' dinners having been in the habit of coming late, made enquiries as to time of starting and how far they had to go, found that in some cases it was impossible to get to School exactly at two, so allowed them 10 minutes grace, the others were cautioned and ordered to be at School at two o'clock.</i>
<b>1867</b>	
<b>December 2</b>	<i>Sharp frost, boys asked permission to fetch water to make a slide, let them do so.</i>
<b>December 3</b>	<i>Let the boys go out to slide a few minutes in afternoon.</i>
<b>1868</b>	
<p>[In 1868 the School Managers decided that the boys' and girls' schools should be amalgamated as a mixed Boys', Girls' and Infants' School under the direction of the then Master of the boys' school, Mr Westbury. The Mistress of the girls' school was given her notice and Mr Westbury was put in charge of both departments. The school was still divided by a partition. The school had bare stone walls coated with whitewash, gas lighting and was heated by two stoves, one in each schoolroom. There was very poor natural lighting from the narrow lancet windows with their leaded panes. There was also poor ventilation as the windows did not open.</p> <p>Each schoolroom had up to four classes taught within it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Infants School there was the "babies" class who sat on the gallery, usually consisting of three year olds, classes II and I who sat on forms, some of whom had to take their lessons in the cloakroom when the school was very crowded, and Standard I, who often sat at the desks because their work was more advanced.</li> <li>• The remaining five Standards were taught in the Mixed School.]</li> </ul>	
<b>July 22</b>	<i>Another very hot day. Several little boys fell asleep, did not trouble to wake them.</i>
<b>1869</b>	
<b>January 4</b>	<i>Very cold, allowed the classes to stand round the stoves, 10 minutes each class.</i>
<b>February 8</b>	<i>Gave the children a sharp run round the School yard and five minutes quick exercise in School.</i>
<b>1875</b>	
<b>February 12</b>	<i>Several boys in the lower standards have left to go to work although not 13 years of age. This is no doubt owing to the bad state of trade in this district, the parents finding the trifle earned by the children useful in consequence of the small amount they are able to earn themselves.</i>
[In March 1875 Mr Westbury left St James' to take up an appointment at Lloyds Bank in Dudley. His place as Master of the Boys' School was taken by Edwin Griffiths, a certified	

teacher. On August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1875 Edwin Griffiths married Thirza Key from Nottingham. Thirza was also a certified teacher and in August 1875 she took charge of the Infants School at St James's.]

<b>August 16</b>	<i>Took charge of this school today. Examined the 1<sup>st</sup> class and find that they cannot say their letters properly, or make a letter on their slates. They also have no idea how to make figures, or to count. The organisation is in a most wretched condition. The Apparatus is wanting to teach Infants as they should be suitable to their age. It will require some time to raise this school to the mark of a "good infants' school" and the Mistress will have very trying work."</i>
------------------	---

## 1888

<b>June 18</b>	<i>Some children in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class getting on very nicely with their sewing and began hemming handkerchiefs</i>
----------------	---

<b>June 25</b>	<i>Lesson given on the "horse" to 2nd Class.</i>
----------------	--

## 1890

<b>January 13</b>	<i>Examined "baby class" talked to them about their picture alphabet sheet.</i>
-------------------	---

<b>20</b>	<i>Several children away through sickness. Boy in Class 1 died of Bronchitis. Also another scholar with Fever.</i>
-----------	--

<b>June 9</b>	<i>Lesson given to Standard I on the Pear Tree.</i>
---------------	---

<b>June 16</b>	<i>Three children came in at 2 O'clock. Sent to their parents and found they had played truant.</i>
----------------	---

<b>June 23</b>	<i>Sent home some children with Whooping Cough. Boy who was exceedingly dirty and untidy sent home to be made decent.</i>
----------------	---

## 1891

Hot water pipes for heating were installed in the schoolrooms.

## 1892

[The walls of the school were plastered down to the window sills and the lower section of the wall was covered with match boarding. This was to cut down the dust.]

## 1893

<b>February 13</b>	<i>Weather too cold for play-ground. Singing instead and joint drill.</i>
--------------------	---

<b>November 20</b>	<i>Many children absent through bad throats. Lessons in proper order. Annie Cooper gave a nice lesson "shoes". Children gave very careful answers.</i>
--------------------	--

<b>November 27</b>	<i>Babies on gallery are coming rather badly – the weather being very cold. Answered me very nicely on "Donkey".</i>
--------------------	--

## 1894

[At the end of this year two cloakrooms were built, one of brick at the rear of the building and another at the side of brick and stone. It is likely that one of these cloakrooms housed sinks for the children. There were no separate facilities for the teachers.]

<b>March 12</b>	<i>Have had rather a noisy day with the new-comers. Only 3 of the admitted scholars have been to any school and those to a dame school. The children seem old to have to form a Babies Class but as they do not know a letter it is their proper place.</i>
-----------------	---

<b>July 2</b>	<i>Several children away with "Mumps" and Scarletina.</i>
---------------	---

<b>October 1</b>	<i>Examined brickbuilding of 1<sup>st</sup> Class – found it done neatly. 12 objects were taken and with the exception of one or two all did well.</i>
------------------	--

<b>October 8</b>	<i>Some children returned from hop-picking. Examined numbers in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class much better since the use of ball frame.</i>
<b>November 15</b>	<i>Closed school on Thursday morning to enable the builders to do necessary inside work.</i>
<b>November 20</b>	<i>Commenced school on Tuesday afternoon. School is much inconvenienced by the work of alterations progressing so slowly.</i>
<b>December 10</b>	<i>Attendance very low, so much sickness prevalent. It has been impossible lately to work to time-table on account of the noise outside occasioned by the building of the cloakrooms. The children have for 12 weeks been admitted and dismissed through the mixed department.</i>
<b>1895</b>	
<b>February 4</b>	<i>Sarah Annie Challenor began to help in this department. Took 1<sup>st</sup> class for some of their work with Standard I.</i>
<b>March 18</b>	<i>Lesson given on Ivy Leaf to 1<sup>st</sup> Class.</i>
<b>July 22</b>	<i>Obliged to give half day holiday on Wednesday afternoon only 13 children present at 2 O' clock owing to the Cycle Parade in town.</i>
<b>1898</b>	
<b>November 16</b>	<i>Sent after a number of absentees, and received answers that 8 out of 10 sent after "were kept home to mind the child".</i>
<b>1900</b>	
<b>March 12</b>	<i>The new children are a little quieter. Some of them have been noisy and upset the work of the school.</i>
<b>March 19</b>	<i>Babies' class is quieter and lessons progressing favourably. Singing lessons omitted on Wednesday and then on Friday.</i>
<b>May 4</b>	<i>Examined Babies' class in Bead-threading, which was well done both with regard to colour and number.</i>
<b>July 10</b>	<i>Excessively hot. The babies seem quite tired out.</i>
<b>September 19</b>	<i>Half holiday on account of school treat. Began to teach marching in from playground.</i>
<b>October 1</b>	<i>Half holiday in afternoon - October Fair.</i>
<b>November 5</b>	<i>A poor attendance owing to bad weather.</i>
<b>1901</b>	
<b>January 28</b>	<i>Half holiday in afternoon on account of Proclamation of King Edward VII.</i>
<b>February 5</b>	<i>Only 80 children present owing to a heavy snow storm.</i>
<b>March 4</b>	<i>Half holiday. Only 96 children present on Wednesday morning on account of storm. Some of the scholars had to be sent home again to change clothes.</i>
<b>May 6</b>	<i>Attendance rather poor. Some children away on account of Fair. Sent after all absentees.</i>
<b>1902</b>	
<b>March 3</b>	<i>Leah Lawrence retained in Infants' department being "a cripple".</i>
<b>March 13</b>	<i>Had much trouble with a boy in Babies' class. Mother of boy was exceedingly rude.</i>
<b>April 30</b>	<i>Examined 3<sup>rd</sup> Class in Alphabet. Good progress has been made. Embroidery work of 1<sup>st</sup> Class is neat. Paper folding of 2<sup>nd</sup> Class is good.</i>

<b>May 5</b>	<b>Report of Infants' Department</b> <i>"In this school work and order are satisfactory making allowance for the fact that the classes are taught in one room. The school does not appear to supply sufficient accommodation for the want of the immediate neighbourhood."</i>
<b>May 13</b>	<i>Examined needlework specimens in mixed school, St. IV, V, VI, and VII. On the whole specimens were very carefully executed. They were neat and clean. St. VII were having a lesson on "diagonal cross-cut darn" and fair progress was made.</i>
<b>June 2</b>	<i>Half holiday "Celebration of Peace".</i>
<b>June 23</b>	<i>Holiday week for Coronation.</i>
<b>June 26</b>	<i>Children entertained in School with "tea".</i>
<b>July 17</b>	<i>An epidemic of chicken-pox is the chief cause of absentees.</i>
<b>September 18</b>	<i>Some of the absent scholars are gone hop-picking.</i>
<b>October 21</b>	<i>Ist Class knitting needs attention.</i>
<b>December 2</b>	<i>Board of Education gave £5 for "New furniture and apparatus. Desks for St. 1".</i>
<b>1903</b>	
<b>February 17</b>	<i>Number present 66 out of 125. There are 33 cases of measles.</i>
<b>February 24</b>	<i>School closed for "measles".</i>
<b>March 23</b>	<i>School opened after measles. (Total children registered 110).</i>
<b>March 31</b>	<i>Sent after absentees. Received various messages. 5 reports of "measles". The other children got up too late to be in readiness for school.</i>
<b>May 7</b>	<b>Report of Infant School</b> <i>The work of this school is in general only fairly satisfactory. Number is especially weak and generally speaking, there is need of more individual and less of simultaneous work. The speech of the children should be better trained. The offices should be better kept. The children are very unpunctual in coming to school and at the final visit 57 children out of 108 registered, came in at irregular intervals after the opening of the school. Strenuous effort should be made to cope with this weakness in discipline..."</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Thirza Griffiths Head Teacher</i></p>
<b>June 24</b>	<i>Complaint made about Miss Harper punishing Charles Stone.</i>
<b>December 4</b>	<i>Object lesson for Babies to be taken last lesson in the morning on Friday.</i>
<b>1904</b>	
<b>February 10</b>	<i>Teacher of 1<sup>st</sup> Class gives Object Lesson to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class also Reading Lesson to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. Monitors meanwhile helping with 1<sup>st</sup> Class.</i>
<b>June 24</b>	<i>Dudley Education Committee have sanctioned the appointment of Miss M. Wood as an Asst. Salary £25 from this date.</i>
<b>September 30</b>	<i>Half Holiday. "The unveiling of the monument" in New Cemetery in memory of the Soldiers who fell in the S. African War.</i>
<b>November 11</b>	<i>Took 1<sup>st</sup> Class for reading out of new book "Foam and Spray" illustrated it by models of the sea-side. Children much interested.</i>
	<b>H.M.I Special Report on the premises</b> <i>The buildings and site of this school are very unsatisfactory.</i> 1. <i>Mixed School. The premises are dingy, dilapidated, and dirty, the fittings old, ventilation extremely imperfect, the classroom badly fitted and</i>

	<p><i>inconvenient, the main room unduly wide and its fittings badly arranged for instruction, the cloakroom accommodation inadequate, the offices unduly near the school and malodorous, and the playground extremely limited in size.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Infants' School. The infants' room shares with the mixed schoolroom in the general defects above noted. There is no classroom for the babies, who are perched on an awkward gallery and have no opportunity for the exercise and motion needed in their instruction. The playground and offices are altogether inadequate for the wants of so many scholars.</i></p> <p><i>It is quite impossible to improve either site or buildings so as to bring them up to a satisfactory modern standard, and on this ground I recommend that the School should be discontinued as soon as possible.</i></p>
<b>1905</b>	
<b>February 1</b>	<i>17 children provided with free breakfast at 8.20 am. E. House and A. Sefton in attendance. Children seemed well pleased. I have received 3 more names of deserving cases. The supply of bread was less according to the allotment specified for each child (5oz)</i>
<b>February 2</b>	<i>The supply of bread has been increased. There are 40 children provided with breakfast.</i>
<b>July 21</b>	<i>Lesson given to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class on the "Bee". Specimen of "pollen" obtained from "Tiger Lillies" and honeycomb containing honey obtained from "Arley". The children were much delighted with the lesson.</i>
<b>September 11</b>	<i>Many children away hop-picking.</i>
<b>September 14</b>	<i>Began a new kindergarten occupation – lacing cards.</i>
<b>23 October</b>	<i>Circular 25 Dudley Education Committee. Children under 5 March 1<sup>st</sup> 1906 to be refused admission.</i>
<b>1906</b>	
<b>March 8</b>	<i>No. on books 169. Clay modelling begun with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class.</i>
<b>March 12</b>	<i>Many children away with bad throats and whooping cough.</i>
<b>March</b>	<p><b>H.M.I. report</b></p> <p><i>"The infants are still working under unsuitable conditions, in a single room dark and badly ventilated. There is not space for Kindergarten games or Physical exercises. Part of the floor is occupied by a gallery uncomfortable and so badly planned that it is impossible to examine the work of the children without stepping over them.</i></p> <p><i>Under the circumstances, the results of the instruction are distinctly creditable to the teacher's industry and perseverance under difficulties."</i></p>
<b>1907</b>	
<b>September 3</b>	<i>Heard lesson given to St. I. on the measurement of the square prism. Practical work the children's measurement of three sides. Children were interested in their lesson and the teacher took great pains with the lesson.</i>
<b>1908</b>	
<b>January 9</b>	<i>School very cold. Without coal.</i>
<b>April 27</b>	<i>190 children present.</i>
<b>May 22</b>	<i>Half holiday to commemorate Empire Day.</i>

<b>June 25</b>	<i>Nurse Gunning visited school and examined some of children specially.</i>
<b>July 22</b>	<i>Days holiday for Sports, held at Buffery Park.</i>
<b>August 10</b>	<i>Commenced school after the holidays. 199 present. The district Nurse visited the school. Some of the parents did not come when sent for to answer what was required concerning the children.</i>
<b>September 25</b>	<i>School opened after one month holiday. No. present 200.</i>
<b>October 20</b>	<i>Medical examinations of scholar admitted in 1908.</i>
<b>1909</b>	
<b>February 15</b>	<i>There are 49 recorded cases of measles.</i>
<b>February 23</b>	<i>School closed for epidemic of measles.</i>
<b>March 22</b>	<i>School assembled (after measles epidemic). 146 children present.</i>
<b>June 11</b>	<i>Visiting day. Only one parent visited the school.</i>
<b>December 23</b>	<i>School closed for Xmas holiday in the afternoon. Each child had presents and plum puddings which had been made in school by the scholars.</i>
<b>1910</b>	
<b>February 22</b>	<b>Report made HMI W.J. Hudson after visit of February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1910</b> <i>"...In all classes some desks are much too high. In the lower classes some children's feet dangle in air as they sit. Standard I exhibit various physical distortions as they write."</i>
<b>May 10</b>	<i>St. I scholars were taken into the market place to hear the proclamation of H.M. King George V.</i>
<b>October 26</b>	<i>The drawing Inspector visited the school. Mr Saltmarsh. 1<sup>st</sup> Class drew a bulb in a glass. A pair of scissors. 2<sup>nd</sup> Class boys, drew a horse from memory. The girls drew a toasting fork. An onion from specimen. St. I painted different kinds of bulbs from specimens. A rose-leaf from memory. Babies Class a wooden spoon and a spade.</i>
<b>1911</b>	
<b>June 16</b>	<i>Closed for Coronation holiday.</i>
<b>July 5</b>	<i>Picture of the Vicar presented to the school.</i>
	<b>Report of H.M.I. J. Hudson, Esq. Inspected on 26 October and 3 November 1911</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. The rooms in which the infants are taught are dirty and lacking in brightness. Under these circumstances it is credible to the Head Mistress and her staff that the teaching and work are good in so many points.</i></li> <li><i>2. In Standard I the Reading, the oral Arithmetic, the Needlework, and the Observation Lessons are very creditable but in the pencil drawing the lines are too heavy and lacking in freedom and the drawings are too small. In the practical Arithmetic accuracy of measurement should be secured and the children should be trained to discover the arithmetical truth through the handiwork.</i></li> <li><i>3. Class 2 is taught by a young teacher who had not had much experience. Many points of procedure in her Reading, Wordbuilding and Observation Lessons are open to serious objection and she fails to secure satisfactory class co-operation. She should conduct her lessons more quietly and should find employment for every scholar throughout the lesson.</i></li> <li><i>4. Class 1 is well taught on the whole but in the paper cutting lesson correction</i></li> </ol>

	<p><i>of faulty observation and faulty manipulation should have received more attention.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Class 3 is particularly well taught. Many of these children are comparatively new to school life but the teacher has perfect control of her large class and secured clear speech and ready response and close attention from these young children. The accuracy with which the various exercises are done shows that the training is careful and systematic.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Class 4 is taught in the same methods and in the same room as Class 3 and the Supplementary Teacher in charge imitates the Teacher of that class with very fair success. Her work would be improved by a little more vivacity.</i></p> <p>7. <i>Many of the desks are unsuitable for the children using them. They are too high and the seat is too far in the rear of the desk.</i></p>
<b>November 28</b>	<i>Closed for alterations.</i>
<b>1912</b>	
<p>[On June 12<sup>th</sup> 1912 Thirza Griffiths resigned as Schoolmistress at the age of 65. She had worked at the school for 37 years. The schoolchildren presented her with a wicker armchair, and in a special evening ceremony the Vicar of St James's presented her with a purse of gold and spoke warmly of her achievements.</p> <p>S. Annie Challenor took over the Infants School. She had attended the school as a pupil, continued there as a pupil teacher and later became a teacher under Mrs Griffiths.]</p>	
<b>January 18</b>	<i>Closed school at noon on account of bad weather.</i>
<b>January 23</b>	<i>School reopened after inclement weather.</i>
<b>Feb 22</b>	<i>Medical Inspection. 39 children examined. Doctor Newey here 2 ½ hours.</i>
<b>March 1</b>	<i>234 (children) in total</i>
<b>April 4</b>	<i>Easter Hols.</i>
<b>April 15</b>	<i>Commenced School.</i>
<b>May 24</b>	<i>Empire Day. Closed school for Whitsun holiday at noon.</i>
<b>June 3</b>	<i>Commenced school again.</i>
<b>June 28</b>	<p><i>Resigned my post as Head Teacher on this day</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Signed S. Thirza Griffiths.</i></p>
<b>July 1</b>	<p><i>Commenced duties as Head Teacher</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Signed S. Annie Challenor.</i></p>
<b>July 4</b>	<i>Medical Inspection. 30 children examined. Dr Newey here 1 ¾ hrs.</i>
<b>July 10</b>	<i>Holiday for school treats.</i>
<b>July 17</b>	<i>Holiday for Charity Sports.</i>
<b>August 2</b>	<i>School closed for 1 week.</i>
<b>August 12</b>	<i>School reopened.</i>
<b>August 19</b>	<i>Lists published of successful candidates in the Oxford Local Examinations. Miss Edith E. Bennitt formerly Supplementary Teacher passed in the Oxford Senior Examination.</i>
<b>August 30</b>	<i>School closed at noon on this date for four weeks.</i>
<b>September 30</b>	<i>Commenced school after September Holidays. 168 children present.</i>
	<p><b>General Report Frank W. Mason Asst. Diocesan Inspector</b></p> <p><i>I must congratulate all concerned on the great improvement effected in the buildings which are beautifully light and airy. The whole school is in excellent</i></p>

	<i>order and very well taught. Prayers are reverently and clearly said. The babies were thoroughly interested.</i>
	<i>Inspected August 14<sup>th</sup> 1912.</i>
<b>December 24</b>	<i>School closed at noon for Christmas holiday.</i>
<b>1913</b>	
<b>January 2</b>	<i>Commenced school. 177 children present.</i>