

## The Village School 1835-1968

In July 1835 a National School was set up at the top of School Hill. Attendance was not compulsory. Pupils paid a small fee called "school pence" and village rate-payers made voluntary contributions. The school was largely run by the church and in the late 1800s the vicar, Rev Samuel James, fought to prevent it being taken over by a School Board which would have reduced his influence.



In 1880 schooling was compulsory up to ten years of age, and in 1918 this was raised to fourteen. Early School Log Books reveal that pupils taking time off for blackberrying and potato-picking. Coke stoves had to be lit every morning. The boys in this 1907 photo would have been given this task.

The head teacher usually taught the older pupils. Staff often stayed in post at the school for long periods, such as Infants' teacher, Mrs Dora Ayres nee Holden, who taught there for forty-two years. She can be seen on the left of this photo taken in 1924.



There were two classrooms and these two rooms had to house over a hundred pupils at times, particularly when one hundred wartime evacuees came and went! Granborough School also closed in 1944, adding to the numbers. Electricity was connected in 1938, mains water in 1945, flush lavatories in 1959 (a year after the date of this photograph) and the telephone in 1960.

By the mid-1960s it was decided to erect a new school on the playing field next to the original building. In April 1967 construction began. The corner of the new building can just be seen in this photograph. It opened in September 1968 with Mr John Aldridge as headmaster, the first male head teacher since 1907. The old school was demolished and its site became a playground.

