



Leicestershire History

our county, our history

Education of the Poor Digest, Parl. Papers 1819 (224)

This gives details of the day schools and Sunday schools that provided free or low-cost education to children from the 'working-classes', including those schools that educated a few poorer pupils alongside the children of those who could afford full fees. The following two consecutive entries, for a large and a small village, give a flavour of the type of information this return contains:

<i>Parish and name of minister signing return</i>	<i>Population [in 1811]</i>	<i>Particulars relating to endowments for education of youth</i>	<i>Other institutions for the purpose of education</i>	<i>Observations</i>
Hathern S.T. M. Phillips, rector	1,098	A free school for boys, open to all who rent less than £10 a year; the numbers there vary from 10 to 50, at present there are only 10. The master is paid £10 per annum by a principal family in the village, upon whose ground the school-house was built by voluntary subscriptions, and £5 more is added by trustees of lands left to the poor of the parish, for instructing 10 scholars in writing. The master has a house, rent free, and a considerable number more children would	Two Sundays schools for girls and boys, comprising about 250	The poor have sufficient means of education; and the minister observes that there are lands left to the poor of the parish, the rents of which amount to about £50 but the designation is not known, as the original deeds are lost. They are vested in trustees, and the profit annually expended in linen, which is distributed to such parishioners as do not receive parochial relief.

		attend, if the duties were efficiently performed.		
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As with any historical source, you need to consider any possible bias. It is interesting that in Hathern, where only 10 boys attended a day school from a total population of over a thousand, the rector thought there were sufficient educational opportunities in the village. He probably thought that what was taught at Sunday school was enough of an education for the poorer classes, even though it may have been little more than the church catechism, Bible stories and some reading. There appears also to be some disagreement between the rector and the schoolmaster, with the rector believing the master was neglecting his duties.