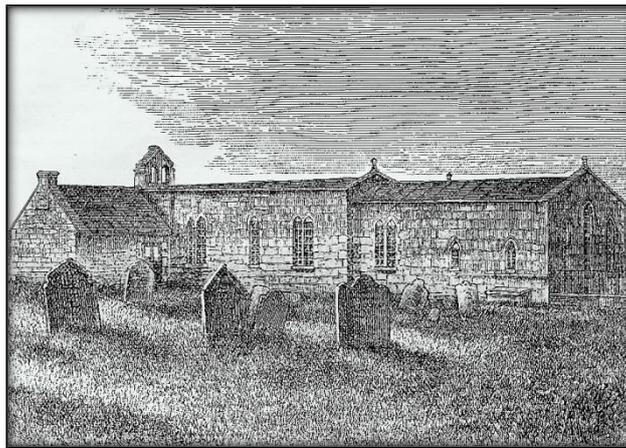


Education in Medomsley

Early History

There was a possibility that a first early school existed in the Stewards House, now called Emerge House (opposite the Miner's Arms); this was thought to have been established for 'wayward Children'.

In 1874 the Parish of Medomsley appointed the Rev. William Cockin as vicar and was very instrumental in furthering and developing education in the village. On his arrival he was confronted by the existence of a school held in the porch of St. Mary Magdalene Church in which children were cramped in the small space, seated on benches in very dimly lit surroundings. The porch had been altered in 1827 to accommodate the school, replacing a porch dated 1800 which may have been used as the school.



Porch sited left of the church

Rev. Cockin was also the driving force in the extensive alterations and refurbishment of the church which was completed in 1878. Because of the inadequacy of the church porch he had the CE School accommodated in the newly built Temperance Hall in 1874. (sited in Fines Road above the Methodist Church) The Temperance Hall is no longer there and prior to 1874, the school may have been temporarily held in two nearby houses. In 1876 107 pupils attended and would have been overcrowded. (infants & mixed) Since the school in Medomsley was a Church School, special reference was always afforded to Religious Education. Teachers or Masters would not have been properly trained at this time but from 1876 training was introduced and from 1881 Pupil Teachers underwent a three hour examination, subjects included Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid (mathematical geometry) and Grammar; there was also a reference to Latin as a subject studied by Pupil Teachers. Thus the content of study was perhaps more rigorous and academic than would popularly be assumed nowadays to be required in a small village school in the County of Durham. Funding for the Church School was provided by the Diocese, parishioners and fund raising events. School inspections were carried out by the Diocesan Inspector and the HM Inspectorate.

Education in Medomsley

Church of England School 1887 - 1944

It was evident that the Temperance Hall was only marginally more suitable than the old porch; ground glass (non-transparent) non-opening windows, no urinals for the boys, inadequate heating and overcrowding were remarks made by HM Inspector in 1884 and 1885. Infants had no desks or lavatory; these were only some of the criticisms made at this time. Needless to say, the vicar and church officials were soon involved in raising funds for an entirely new school building.

Funds were raised by subscription, grants and voluntary contributions; there was even a bazaar held at Hamserley Hall to raise the deficit in funding. The new school opened in 1887 and by 1889 there were 162 pupils in the mixed department. (85 boys and 77 girls) and 44 infants (22 boys and 22 girls)



The CE School : categorised as a 'National School' opened in 1887 in Fines Road on the corner of North View Glebe : now No.'s 24 & 25 Fines Road : adjacent to the Methodist Church.

As the population increased new classrooms were periodically added from 1888 and by 1904 228 pupils attended. (138 mixed and 90 infants) The infants section was now operated as a separate school.

Education in Medomsley



The CE School in Fines Road used from 1887 - 1969 : a later view exhibiting alterations as new classrooms were added.

Population growth created more problems of accommodation over the next two decades and the CE School was regarded to be overcrowded and in 1910 another school was opened, the Medomsley Edge Council School, located in Watling Street, Medomsley Edge, (opposite Pretoria Terrace and the Pretoria Club) 98 children attended, 22 of which were infants.

The Rev. William Cockin, vicar of the Parish of Medomsley, passed away in 1917, and the village was deeply indebted to his efforts in establishing education in this small corner of County Durham. He served for 43 years as Vicar of Medomsley, having made a deep impression on the life of the village.

The school continued to function up to 1944 without much change other than minor changes in teaching practice and academic methods, such as the use of pictures, self-teaching cards and dramatisation to lessons.

Education in Medomsley



Medomsley Edge Council School Group II in 1918.



Medomsley Church School Football Team : 1929 - 1930.

Education in Medomsley

Church of England School 1944 - 1969

The introduction of the 1944 Education Act created a new chapter in the life of the school. Pupil numbers in 1946 were just below 60 and a considerable amount of money would have to be raised to bring the building up to the requirements of the new act.

The Church's interest in the school required the consolidation of the religious foundation and as a valuable piece of parochial equipment to maintain the close link between the School and the Church. This link is of real value and importance, as it was the only building in the parish catering for parochial needs of the Scouts, Guides and Youth Fellowship.

Fundraising during 1948 and 1949 provided the finance to carry out school repairs and re-decoration, some financial assistance being afforded by the Diocese and Durham County Council Education Authority. In 1951 it was decided that the school should apply for 'Aided Status' ie. half the funding to be met by the Ministry of Education and half from the Diocese and parishioners. The application was successful and the school became categorised as 'Aided Status' in 1952.

Briefly, an 'Aided Status School' is a voluntary school whose management is responsible for repairs to the exterior of the building and for capital expenditure for alterations required by the local education authority, to bring the premises up to the standard of the Building Regulations. All running costs are met by the authority and management have substantial rights in the appointment and dismissal of teachers and in the administration of denominational Religious Education. One third of the school's management is appointed by the local education authority. On the other hand a 'Controlled School' is a voluntary school for which the local education authority is financially responsible and appoints two thirds of the management.

In 1955 the seniors were taken out of the school and the years that followed were of quiet consolidation of the financial position. In 1965 a new vicar arrived and it was time to take a fresh look at the school, now having about 80 pupils. The old buildings exhibited constant maintenance problems and were becoming overcrowded, especially in the Infants Department. After much discussion it was decided that building a new school on another site would be more cost effective than refurbishing the existing school. At this time the Ministry of Education were dispensing 75% grants for new build in reference to 'Aided Status' schools, the remaining funding being met by the Diocese; by the time the school was built the grant increased to 80%. Most of the land in Medomsley was owned by The National Coal Board who was instrumental in providing a site in the south west corner of Manor House Wood. This project was a bold move, committing a thinly populated parish, in a district suffering from economic distress, to a major development which would perhaps cover a long period of years. The Fines Road CE School closed in 1969.

Education in Medomsley



Youngest pupil Catherine Bean presenting Mrs. Margaret Ramsey with a bouquet of flowers for laying the foundation stone at the Bishop Ian Ramsey Church of England School in 1968.

Education in Medomsley

The Bishop Ian Ramsey School 1969 - 2008

The new school was named after the Right Reverend Ian Ramsey, Bishop of Durham, who opened it in 1969; this would be a three class building having a kitchen for the first time and about 60 children on the register with provision of being able to cope with rising numbers to 120. Naming the school after the Bishop was most welcomed, both as a compliment to the Bishop and as a means of emphasising the school's status as a Church School.

After a short service in the Parish Church a procession, headed by the Bishop in cope and mitre, made its way down Manor Road to the new building. The Bishop, was preceded by the processional cross from the church, carried by a pupil and the Wardens carrying ancient wands of office. After the ceremonies at the entrance, the climax of which consisted of the Bishop, staff in hand, gave his blessing to the new school.



Bishop Ian Ramsey opens the new school on 25th April 1969.

Education in Medomsley



Bishop Ian Ramsey Church of England School in 1977.

Over the next 20 years the number of pupils increased to 80 as children from adjacent villages required places and extra classrooms had to be built. By 2000 there were 140 pupils and the facilities were becoming increasingly stretched. The school was placed on a priority list for government funding to replace the old buildings.

Twin Challenge for the Teacher May 2005

Teacher Clare Jackson was faced with a very unusual situation regarding her reception class of 25 children; 10 pupils were twins. Fortunately for Miss Jackson, only one set was identical and was able to distinguish who's who, as Megan Wayman 5, from Medomsley, wore glasses and her sister Laura did not



Education in Medomsley



From left to right and front to back

Declon and Chantelle Watson

Melissa and Abbie Stubbins

Laura and Megan Wayman

Amor and Anisha Sahota

Neave and Joe Bousfield

The Bishop Ian Ramsey School 2008

Work to rebuild the school, began in September 2007 and completed in 2008. New features included a new school hall, drama and PE facilities, with more sports facilities provided by the outdoor multi-use games area, and a separate dining room, which meant the school could now offer a breakfast club and other after school functions.

The school was officially opened in 2009 by Sophie Countess of Wessex and currently has about 203 pupils from Medomsley and the surrounding villages.

Education in Medomsley



Sophie Countess of Wessex meets teachers, school governors and the Vicar of Medomsley : Sophie also met other staff and pupils during her attendance to officially open the school in June 2009.

Education in Medomsley



Bishop Ian Ramsey Church of England Primary School as it appeared without the security fencing.