



St John's Green School 1898

5th September 1898.

It my pleasure and honour to welcome you on this first historic day to St John's Green Schools, 5th September 1898. This school has been built with capacity for 840 pupils.

I am Head Master of the Mixed School and Miss Harriet Taylor the Head Mistress of the Infant School. There is capacity for 840 children, who will sit when we are full at 60 children to a classroom.

You will be aware that there are three separate entrances for the pupils. Boys, Girls and Infants. It is eight years now since schooling became mandatory and I suspect that next year, the school leaving age will rise to 12 years old.

Let us aim high

'Everything is new, new school, new desks, new books, children and master all new to each other. I do not hesitate in saying that we have made a good beginning, but we must remember that, having begun well, it is necessary, that we do our level best to continue to do well. I am proud of our school and I want each one of you to have pride in it also. We are all anxious that it should be not only a successful and popular school but a great power for good in the neighbourhood.

A few hints

Now, I will give you a few hints as to how to set to work. Well, first of all as I said before, *you must take pride in your school*, and not only you, but teachers, parents and friends. We must one and all put our shoulders to the wheel! From myself as Head Master, right along the line, teachers, monitors, Standard VII, Standard VI right on down to the smallest boy or girl in Standard I. (NB—Standard I is 7 year olds, Standard 2 is 8 year olds...etc) All must think that for them, St. John's Green School is the best school anywhere-not only in Colchester, but in England or the world. If we do this, we take one sure step towards making it so. It will be *useless* to work in different ways-we must all *pull one way, having one aim only, success!*

Kindness and Courtesy

Then we must all look to our behaviour, not only in school, but at all times. We little think how we are noticed every day, how we are praised or blamed by lookers-on, as our behaviour is good or ill. We must see to it that we keep ourselves clean, and our clothes and boots brushed and neat. We must endeavour to be honest, truthful and pure, never using bad bad language, and always avoiding bad company. Above all we must have kindly and thoughtful consideration for others.

Your Teachers



We look upon you, one and all, as our little friends, and as friends we shall do all we can, not only to make you proficient in your school-work, but to make you happier and better boys and girls. If you are at any time in difficulty or trouble of any kind go to your teacher, or come to me, and tell me about it. You may be sure of our sympathy, and our help too if we can in any way render it, and you must remember that difficulties and troubles are much less hard to bear when confided to another.' Mr. J. E. Cheese.

Great as the advantages of good and suitable buildings for school purposes, the quality and enduring results of the training given depend most of all upon the character and capacity of the teachers. The staff of the new school is, we believe, fully up to the high standard which has been reached in other schools.'

From Left to right -

Lilly Roff, Fred Cooper, Mr. W. Guy, Mr. W. Cox, Mr. W. Ure, Mr. L Hobday.

Miss Chestney, Beatrice Finch, Miss Witherow, Miss Williams, Nelly Mason, Mr. J. E. Cheese, Miss Wilson.

Unabridged from 'Scholars Own' October 1898 No 1.

Gill's School Management 1882.

We can only surmise the teaching texts that Mr. J. E. Cheese, utilised for the school as Head Master. However, as Gill's School Management was written shortly before the opening of St John's Green—it is reasonable to assume that the principles of teaching in the book, some of which are outlined below were utilised by Mr. J. E. Cheese.

School Discipline

Discipline is a word of twofold force. It denotes all the means and motives employed by the teacher to enforce right conduct amongst the children of a school, and it denotes the results achieved by the use of these means and motives.

How powerful is the influence of a master on the habits and character of his young charge...The personal character of the master, it has been said, produces a continual effect. In a certain sense he is teaching always, and often when he least thinks of it....

Love, honour, truthfulness, sincerity, consistency, justice, patience, and judgment must be elements of a teachers character if he would have an ascendancy over children both effective and lasting. When children find the love of their teacher to be real; that his honour can be reposed in; that he never exposes what he has promised to conceal, nor refers to what he has promised to forgive; that he treats all alike, without favouritism or partiality; that his patience and judgment are such that his decisions have not to be reversed, nor his actions regretted,—then they are disposed to obey, and to repose a confidence in him which nothing else could secure at their hands.

Cheerfulness is sunshine, making everything pleasant; but a cloudy brow, an anxious countenance, or troubled aspect diffuses gloom and depression. Children are apt, too, to interpret such as signs of annoyance; and when some of them get the notion that they can tease or annoy the master, they are not long without finding the means to do so.

Fear is a word used somewhat ambiguously, so that doubts are often expressed as to its being a legitimate agent in education. Some attribute all manner of evil to it, others contend that its action is beneficial...The existence of fear may be traced to pain, apprehension, uncertainty and strangeness. Pain does not invariably produce it; the temperament of the individual and the circumstances under which it is endured have much to do with it; e.g., a smart stroke-in school-is observed to produce grief in tender natures, anger in irascible ones, and fear in weak ones. The presence of others, too, often influences the result; the sufferer being nerved by sympathy, buoyed up by vanity, or saved from the imputation of cowardice by shame...The punishment of a boy in school often sends a thrill of fear through the little community of onlookers.

The discipline of a school must be founded in the right to enforce obedience. This right is invested in the teacher by the very fact of parents entrusting him with the education of their children. It must then be made clear that he possesses this right, and that when needs be he will exercise it—that he will not and cannot allow his authority to be disputed.

Cases are continually occurring in which punishment of some kind is necessary, in which there must be a deprivation of some pleasure, or the infliction of some pain. There could be no government, no law enforced, if there were no punishment for offences. Hence fear, the feeling to which punishment appeals, is, as has been shown, a legitimate source of influence in the government of children.

Gill's School Management—by John Gill, 1882.

It wasn't until the Education Act in 1986 that Corporal Punishment was banned in schools.



This is a picture of how a classroom would have looked, we think in 1898, when the school was first opened—with children sat in rows and 60 children in each class.

(This picture was taken we think circa 1933)

In 1898, children would have been put bands (A, B) etc depending on how intelligent they were. So in Year 1 for example, If you were in 1A, you were deemed more intelligent than if you were in 1B.

Toilets were a bit primitive back then mind you—a bucket under a boxed seat with a hole in the middle!