

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
BLAKE MUSEUM



EDUCATION IN BRIDGWATER



Dr Morgan's, 1937, renamed Haygrove School

A church school existed in the town in medieval times, and in 1561, following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, became the Free Grammar School. By 1819 it had no pupils, but had been overtaken by Dr Morgan's school, founded in 1723, which in 1888 received the endowments of the Free Grammar School.

Various schools were established in the town during the seventeenth century. These included the renowned Dissenting Academy of John Moore, at Christ Church Chapel which continued into the eighteenth century. Christ Church Sunday School was founded in 1780 and there was a Wesleyan Sunday School by 1800.

Early in the nineteenth century, conflicts grew up between the Church of England and Nonconformists about how children should be educated. This resulted in the formation of two competing societies which funded the building of new schools. These were:

Church of England:

National Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England.

Nonconformist:

British and Foreign Schools Society

Between 1824 and 1870 several schools were established in Bridgewater by the two competing Societies, and the period is littered with closures or amalgamations. In addition, many churches had Sunday Schools.

National Schools

Infants' school near Angel Crescent, 1830. By 1891 amalgamated with the Girls' National School.

Boys' school, Mount Street, 1839. Merged with Dr Morgan's school by 1825

Girls' school, Northgate, 1830. Known as St Mary's Church of England School by 1937. By 1947 assumed Voluntary Controlled status. From 1961 infants only; 1973 moved to Park Road; 1977 amalgamated with St Matthew's School in Oakfield Road.

Boys' and girls' school at Eastover 1847. Known as St John's (Eastover Parochial) School. In 1975 transferred to new buildings in Westonzoyland Road and known as St. John and St. Francis C. of E. School.

West Street Ragged School, 1860. By 1875 known as West Street National School. By 1947 adopted voluntary controlled status. 1958 renamed St Matthew's C. of E. school. 1964 moved to new site in Oakfield Road and was joined by St Mary's school in 1977.

British Schools

School in Mount Street, opened 1824 and ran until 1852.

Girls' school in Friarn Street, by c 1860. Transferred to the Bridgewater School Board

in 1878 and closed in 1879.

Catholic Schools

School in Gordon Terrace by 1850. Moved to new premises in Binford Place, 1883. After some years of decline, it revived from the 1940's as St Joseph's Roman Catholic aided primary school and in 1963 moved to new premises in Park Avenue.

Sunday Schools

Independents, founded 1819

St Mary's, founded 1823

Unitarian, founded 1830

2 Baptist schools, founded 1835

Board Schools

In 1878 a School Board was established in Bridgwater and it found there were 27 public and private schools in the town and that new ones were needed in the newly developed east and west parts of the town. These were:

Eastover School opened in 1873 and by 1899 had an attendance of 1334 pupils. This figure declined during the next forty years, and, after the World War II the school was reorganised into junior and infants departments. From 1969 the school has been known as Eastover Primary School.

Albert Street School opened in 1880, and by 1906 the attendance was 718.

Council schools founded since 1903.

A pupil teacher centre for girls opened at the Art and Technical Institute in 1904. In 1919 it became a recognized girls secondary school. In 1929 the school moved to new premises in Park Road, where pupil teaching continued. It later changed to a grammar school. The school closed in 1973 on the introduction of a comprehensive system in the area.

Westover senior council school, Wembdon Road, opened in 1937 as Westover secondary modern school. The school closed in 1973.

Three new schools were opened between 1956 and 1966 to provide secondary places for children from the north, east, and south sides of the town. Hamp secondary modern school was opened in Hamp Avenue in 1956. Its name was changed to the Blake secondary modern in 1957 and from 1973 it became a comprehensive school.

Sydenham secondary modern school opened in 1961 in Parkway. In 1973 it became comprehensive, and in 1988 was a community school. Chilton Trinity school, Chilton Street, opened as a secondary modern in 1966 and became comprehensive in 1973.

Haygrove comprehensive school, Durleigh Road, was created in 1973; combining Dr Morgans and the girls' grammar school. It used the buildings of the former Dr. Morgan's boys' grammar school while junior classes were initially in the former Westover school buildings.

PRESENT-DAY EDUCATION

Today there are numerous primary and infants schools and four comprehensive schools and Bridgwater College serving the needs of secondary and higher education.



Westover Green School

The primary and infant schools in Bridgwater These are: Eastover Community Primary School, Hamp Community Junior School, Sedgemoor Manor School, St John and St Francis Primary School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, St Mary's Primary School, Somerset Bridge Primary School, Westover Green Primary School and Hamp

Nursery and Infants School, and Willowdown primary school. A new school is being built, (2017), at Northgate, Bridgwater

Secondary schools

These are: Robert Blake Science College, Brymore Academy, which specialises in agriculture and now run by Bridgwater College, Chilton Trinity Technology College, Haygrove School which has specialist Language College status.

East Bridgwater Community School was previously known as Sydenham School. This now forms part of an Academy run by Bridgwater College and incorporates the neighbouring infants and primary schools. It is a Performing and Visual Arts College.

Special schools in the town include: Elmwood Special School, New Horizon Centre School and Penrose School.



Bridgwater College Academy, Parkway

Bridgwater was selected as the first town in the South West, outside Bristol, for the UK government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative, which aimed to rebuild and renew nearly every secondary school in England. Within Bridgwater, BSF was to redevelop all of the four secondary schools and two special provision schools at an expected cost of around £100 million. This included the complete relocation and rebuilding of a new school combining the both Haygrove and Penrose School. In July 2010, several components of the Bridgwater BSF programme were cancelled and others were singled out for further review. Only

Blake and Chilton Trinity schools were completed.

Further Education

This is provided by Bridgwater College which was formerly Bridgwater Technical School. It is located on the Bath Road.

In 1860 the Bridgwater School of Art was opened in George Street, possibly in association with the Literary and Scientific Institution there. Another art school was established in Queen Street in 1888, and in 1891 it moved to Lonsdale House, Blake Street, where art and technical schools were formally established. In the following year continuation night schools were also held there. The Bridgwater Art and Technical (later Technical and Art) Institute, from 1958 the Bridgwater Technical College, expanded to premises in Mount Street and Queen Street, and in 1959 to new buildings in Broadway. In 1975 it also occupied premises in Park Road. A new building in Bath Road was first occupied in 1978, and in 1988 most of the college departments were housed there, the Broadway site retaining the building and continuing education departments. In 1973 it became a tertiary college.

It now educates approximately 800 students between the ages of 16-18 in academic and vocational programmes in addition to several thousand part-time or mature students. It also has centres in Cannington, Yeovil, and Paignton.

The college offers courses from entry level through higher education. In addition to A-levels and BTEC qualifications, the college offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The college has links with the University of Plymouth by way of the University of Plymouth Colleges network, Bournemouth University, Oxford Brookes University and is part of the Wessex Partnership, in association with Bath Spa University. After a merger with Cannington

College in September 2004, the college expanded its curriculum of full-time and part-time courses for school leavers, adults, university level students, the business community and students from overseas. In 2012 the college became the sponsor of Bridgwater College Academy.

Bridgwater College has maintained its Ofsted 'Outstanding' rating for 13 years, with success rates that place the College in the top 2% in the UK. It has also won 13 national Beacon Awards. It received the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2015, and the Times Educational Supplement (TES) College of the Year 2016 award.

In 2016 it merged with Somerset College, based in Taunton and the new group will cater for more than 26,000 students and 1,500 staff across a range of further and higher education courses. It might well form the basis of a university.

Material adapted from papers on the Bridgwater Heritage Group website:

Bridgwater Industry Past and Present by Edmund Porter, 1971, updated by Tony Woolrich, 2016

800 Years of Christianity in Bridgwater by Tony Woolrich, 2000

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