

Account of Purley on Thames

Purley Church of England School

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In 1818 in reply to a questionnaire on the education of the poor, the rector reported 'The poor have sufficient means of education'

There were no educational endowments within the parish but there was a day school for 20 younger children whilst older children went to schools in neighbouring Tilehurst or Pangbourne.

The Reverend Richard Palmer used money left him by his brother to build a new school. Work began in 1873 and the school was opened in 1875. It has remained a Church of England School but serving only infants for many years. However in 2015 it changed its status to a primary school and now serves primary school children from north of the main road.

Initially it was the sole prerogative of the parish who had to find all the money to run it, but gradually the funding was taken over by the County Council although the church remains a strong influence.

A bitter dispute broke out in 1937 with the Parish Council as to whether or not they had the power to appoint managers or merely recommend and nominate. It was brought about when Miss Palgrave resigned as the Council's nominee and Mr R PWalden was chosen to succeed her. His nomination was challenged and the matter had to be referred to the County Education Committee.

