

Kibble - A Lasting Legacy

Education



1859 - 2009



Kibble

www.kibble.org

Introduction

Since its foundation as a school, albeit a reformatory school, Kibble has always had a focus on the education of children and young people. This has taken various forms over the centre's history and has changed and evolved in keeping with contemporary social and political opinion and strategy. The care and protection of children was also a concern from the beginning, as our early records demonstrate. The care aspects of the service also developed gradually over the years as understanding, attitudes and policies changed, and the service moved increasingly from a justice-based model to one grounded on a welfare basis.



Education: Kibble's early days/historical context

Education, and particularly literacy, was a concern from Kibble's earliest days. This is evident in Kibble's first admissions register, which records whether boys admitted to Kibble could read and/or write. Statistical analysis of the boys recorded in this register (429 boys in total), which covers the period from 1859 to 1880, shows that fifty-one per cent could read when they were admitted. Only twenty-five per cent were able to write. Although Scotland was legally bound to have a school in every parish after the Education Act of 1696, education for all children between the ages of five and thirteen became compulsory only after the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872; however, fees still had to be paid until 1890. It must, therefore, be borne in mind that illiteracy rates in general would have been high during the period 1859-1880. This point is supported by evidence from another reformatory school, Rossie in Montrose; a booklet called 'A Visit to Rossie Reformatory', published in 1872, reports that not one of the boys in Rossie was able to write when admitted to the school.¹

¹ *A Visit to Rossie Reformatory, by a Dundee Resident', from Montrose Standard, January 5th 1872, p.12*

From 1863, Kibble's first admissions register records boys' scholarship performance while they were placed here. These are not detailed reports, being graded only as 'Poor', 'Fair', or 'Good'; however, they are broken down into Reading, Writing and Arithmetic reports. This indicates that the educational focus was on the "Three Rs". However, later Kibble records show that theoretical and technical vocational education was also put in place in the form of lectures. For example, between 1910 and 1915, lessons included: a series of lectures on agriculture subjects and poultry, given by a Mr Leitch of the Agricultural College in Glasgow; a visit to a local tannery and an explanation of all the processes; lessons in silk and the silkworm from a Master Tailor; a series of lectures on dairying by Mr Leitch; a lesson on drafting a jacket and a tailor shop lesson on how to conduct a business. A report from April 1914 states that technical lessons in each department 'are receiving increasing attention'.

(Kibble: Minutes of Industrial Committee Meetings 1905-1928, Minutes of April 1914 meeting)

Education: Kibble's early days/historical context

This approach parallels that at Rossie Reformatory where, during the winter, they delivered a series of popular lectures 'on interesting subjects by gentlemen in the district and from a distance'.² The Rossie booklet goes on to say that these lectures were also well attended by the farmers, ploughmen, cottagers and female servants of the neighbourhood – a very early example, perhaps, of such an institution fulfilling an adult and community learning role.

Religious instruction was another subject area that was given prominence at Kibble; the minutes of an Education Committee meeting in October 1910 record that the new scheme of religious instruction had been in operation for some time and had been very favourably reported on by Mr Love (Superintendent). The committee agreed to continue the scheme of instruction and to have an examination of the work done towards the end of the session.

² 'A Visit to Rossie Reformatory, by a Dundee Resident', from *Montrose Standard*, January 5th 1872, pp. 6-7

(Kibble: *Minutes of Education Committee Meetings 1910-1914*, Minutes of 5th October 1910)

TEACHER WANTED for 3 hours in the morning and 2½ in the evening, for KIBBLE REFORMATORY, - PAISLEY. Salary £30. Further particulars will be given by Mr GRANT, at the Institution. Application, with testimonials, to be lodged with the Secretary on or before Tuesday, 13th October.
JOHN M'INNES, Secretary.

This course of instruction was, of course, in addition to attendance at Church services every Sunday. In Kibble's earliest days, boys went to Church twice on Sundays. Some local residents, even today, can still remember seeing the boys walking to Church in orderly lines on Sundays. It is not clear from our records when this practice came to an end; however, one of our oral history interviewees, William Anderson, who was at Kibble in the late 1940s and early 1950s, remembers attending Church every Sunday morning. He does say though that he doesn't remember having any other religious instruction or Bible study in the school.

(William Anderson, Interviewed 24th May 2006)

Education: Kibble towards the mid-twentieth century

During the twentieth century one of the most notable changes, both in the wider reformatory schools system and in Kibble specifically, was increased specialisation of staff. This is, of course, indicative of greater curricular variety and specialisation. Many of these modifications began with structural changes to the system as a whole. From 1928, for example, convictions were no longer to be recorded in Juvenile Court and use of the word 'sentence' was to cease. In addition, Reformatory Schools were re-designated as Approved Schools (*Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, 11th November 1928 Minutes*) and some other terminology was subsequently altered to reflect these changes; in 1933, the Scottish Education Department (SED) recommended that the terms 'headmaster' and 'headmistress' be adopted in place of the long-used term 'superintendent'.

(*Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, 19th January 1933 Minutes*)

Some of the most important of these changes were heralded by the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act of 1932, which abolished the distinction between Reformatory and Industrial Schools in an attempt to remove stigmatisation. In addition, the Act transferred administration of the schools from the Home Office to the SED, thereby finally terminating the association between Reformatory/Industrial Schools and the prisons system and formally strengthening links with the education system.

Increased specialisation and professionalisation within the system, as well as greater curricular diversity, are evident in minutes of the Approved Schools Association meetings. The association adopted the principle of employing specialist teaching staff for Music, Art, and hobbies etc. in 1946, as well as proposing that each school should engage specialist teachers to address the higher proportion of illiterate/semi-literate children admitted to Approved Schools.

(*Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, 1946 Minutes*)

Education: Kibble towards the mid-twentieth century

The trend towards staff specialisation was reinforced when, by 1948, the Association was recommending specialist training of teachers for the Approved Schools service.

(Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, May 1948 Minutes)

This process took another step forward in 1950 when Approved Schools teachers' lack of parity with their mainstream counterparts was a topic of discussion. In fact, a delegation from the Association met with SED representatives in November 1950 and expressed a strong feeling that there should be parity with regard to holidays and sick leave.

(Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, 1950 Minutes)

These developments gained further impetus when courses were arranged at Jordanhill Training College (now part of Strathclyde University) in Glasgow for some instructors and matrons in 1951.

(Approved Schools Association Minutes 1951-1961, May 1951 Minutes)

The process was ongoing, with Jordanhill proposing a teachers' training course to commence in Autumn 1953 *(Approved Schools Association Minutes 1951-1961, March 1953 Minutes)*, as well as a headmasters' course to take place in September 1954 *(Approved Schools Association Minutes 1951-1961, January 1954 Minutes)*, and a refresher course for heads of Scottish Approved Schools to take place in London in September of the same year.

(Approved Schools Association Minutes 1951-1961, May 1953 Minutes)

Education: Kibble in the later twentieth century

Despite these proposals and developments, Kibble's education system operated very much on a primary school model well into the 1980s, as some of our oral history interviewees recall. Jean Logan, for example, who first came to Kibble as a residential social worker in 1986 told us that the boys had lessons from 9am till 4pm at that time. The day was split, with traditional academic subjects taught for half of the day and practical classes, such as joinery, painting, mechanics and bricklaying, for the other half. However, one teacher would be responsible for all of the academic subjects in each class, such as Maths, History and Geography, in one classroom; this was in keeping with the primary school model. Jean believes that there were some positive aspects to this:

'...they built up a better relationship with the teacher because that was the one teacher they got all the time...and it was the one style of learning they got all the time. So the one teacher had their way of teaching...so they were getting consistency of the one person always doing it the same way, which was quite good as well.'

(Jean Logan, Interviewed 8th March 2006)

Nonetheless, some other staff perceived the potential for problems with this method. David Speirs, principal teacher of science and technology until recently, first came to Kibble in 1984. He saw potential difficulties if there was a situation where a pupil and teacher didn't get on, as they had to spend all of their classroom time together. On the positive side, though, this situation meant that the teacher had to deal with issues and develop understanding of them. In more difficult teacher/pupil relationships, he adopted the professional approach that you don't have to like someone or what they've done in order to help them make progress and go forward.

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Education: Kibble in the later twentieth century

David saw another negative aspect to this teaching method when it was necessary to arrange cover for a teacher who had to be absent from class in order to attend reviews, for example, and finds the current eight-period day with specialist subject teachers more effective in this respect:

‘...in an eight-period day there might be gaps in somebody’s timetable and these are used for cover. It means that we don’t have supply teachers coming in, strange faces and so on. It’s actually the best way, really a better way of doing it.’

(David Speirs, Interviewed 12th October 2006)

Robert Forrest, former Assistant Director of Education at Glenthorne Youth Treatment Centre in Birmingham and former Headteacher at Kerelaw (1981-1995), recalls that gradual changes to education within the residential schools’ system began around 1982/83:

‘...historically, it would be trade training for youngsters...the idea was you would then give kids the skills, perhaps, to get jobs when they left – give them an edge on the market. It was felt, however, that the youngsters were being discriminated against; they were being denied the opportunities of youngsters that the mainstream...i.e. doing exams and whatever. So there was a big push to move towards the mainstream curriculum... and there was also a push very much from the HMIE (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education) as well, so it wasn’t just driven internally, there was external pressure.’

(Robert Forrest, Interviewed 8th June 2006)

In keeping with this trend, Kibble gradually moved to a secondary model of education from the early 1990s, firstly offering maths at Standard Grade, followed by English in 1992. A full secondary model and curriculum were in place by 1996.

Education: Into the 21st century

Two key structural changes occurred towards and during the last quarter of the twentieth century: the re-designation of Approved Schools to List D schools in 1971, following the Social Work (Scotland) Act of 1968, then Kibble’s transition to an independent social enterprise in 1996. The latter change followed local government reorganisation, specifically the break-up of Strathclyde Regional Council, and the consequent restructuring of Social Work departments.

One of the main effects of the first change was a shift of power, from Approved Schools Headteachers to the newly-formed Children’s Hearings system; this was particularly the case with respect to duration of a boy’s stay in Approved School, as Robin Hall, a former Deputy Head at Kibble (1968-71) and subsequently Headteacher at Thornlypark Approved School, told us:

‘One of the reasons they (Head Teachers) had power was, the sentence came from the Courts – one to three years or whatever, and there was the Head, who determined when the boy would go. So it was the Head that decided on the boy’s release and so that exercised enormous power over the young people as to when they would get out. Now as you know, when the Children’s Hearings came into being, it wasn’t the Head that decided that at all, it was the Children’s Panel... this is now 1971 when the Children’s Hearings came into being and overnight that power that I was talking to you about just vanished.’

(Robin Hall, Interviewed 23rd June 2005)



Education: Into the 21st century

Kibble

Kibble's transition to an independent social enterprise allowed the organisation greater flexibility in terms of freedom to innovate with regard to curriculum and practice. For example, it enabled Kibble to continue to have the young person at the centre of his education programme, drawing on experiences and learning situations which actively engage him in learning. In addition, as Kibble's current Depute Head Teacher, Pauline Harte explained, it allowed for the following changes to be implemented:

- Closer working between Education staff and Care colleagues to ensure care and education aims for the youngster are owned and promoted by all
- Further support for parents and carers in their drive to secure better outcomes for their youngster
- Enhancement of Kibble's curriculum to ensure future skills for successful living in Scottish society were embedded, i.e. Skills for Work, Enterprise, Multi-Cultural education
- Use of divergent thinking to engage the most troubled youngster, e.g. working with the impoverished people of Ecuador
- Development of fun in learning through whole school events such as daily assemblies, bi-annual talent shows, sports days, and charity events
- Greater availability of flexible programmes of learning, such as one-to-one tuition
- Reduction of class sizes and increased support for learning staff within the classroom

Development of Kibble's integrated array of services, including education, is an ongoing process. The organisation continuously promotes and facilitates research, training, and reflective practice in all aspects of child care and education, thereby ensuring that Miss Kibble's original bequest is indeed a lasting legacy.





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If you are interested in finding out more about the education history of Kibble, or perhaps you would like to contribute to it by telling your own story, please contact:

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