

## Education

From its foundation as a reformatory school, Kibble had responsibility for its children's education. Taking various forms over the centre's history, education evolved in keeping with contemporary educational theories and strategies.

Literacy was a particular concern at Kibble, as evidenced in the first admissions register (1859-1880), which records literacy levels. Statistical analysis of this register shows that fifty-one *per cent* of boys could read when admitted; only twenty-five *per cent* could write.



In Scotland, education for children aged five to thirteen became compulsory after the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act; however, fees were still charged until 1890. Therefore general illiteracy rates were also high between 1859 and 1880.

Black and white mock-up of writing lesson (Scotland St. School Museum)

From 1863, Kibble recorded scholarly performance. Although not detailed reports, graded only as 'Poor', 'Fair', or 'Good', they are categorised into Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, indicating focus on the "Three Rs". Later Kibble records highlight provision of theoretical and technical vocational education in lecture form, covering agricultural subjects, tannery processes, tailoring, and conducting a business.

Increased specialisation, professionalisation and curricular diversity within the system are evident in minutes of Approved Schools Association meetings. The association adopted the principle of employing specialist Music, Art and Hobbies teaching staff in 1946. It also proposed engaging specialist teachers to address higher proportions of illiterate/semi-literate children admitted to Approved Schools. (*Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, 1946 Minutes*)



The staff specialisation trend was reinforced by 1948, when the Association recommended specialist teacher-training for Approved Schools' teachers. (*Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Association, 1930-1950, Minutes of Meetings, May 1948 Minutes*) This process advanced in 1950, when Approved Schools teachers' lack of parity with mainstream counterparts was discussed and proposed for action.



Current Kibble classroom

Despite these developments, Kibble operated a primary school model into the 1980s, with the day divided between half-day traditional academic subjects and practical classes, in joinery, painting, mechanics and bricklaying, for the other half. However, one teacher taught all academic subjects, in keeping with primary school models.

Kibble's shift towards a secondary education model from the early 1990s was consistent with wider systemic trends, firstly offering Maths at Standard Grade, then English in 1992. A full secondary model and curriculum were operating by 1996, with a full mainstream curriculum now offered at Kibble. There is an emphasis on expressive arts subjects: music, visual arts and physical education, all of which help to develop "soft" skills, such as confidence-building and team work.

Examples of boys' artwork

