

Carsphairn School.

By the autumn of this year, work will have been completed on extending and improving the facilities at Carsphairn Primary School - the first work of this nature to be undertaken since 1905. The building work was necessitated by an increase in roll over the past two years, and a lack of adequate facilities for present day education, and to take the education of the children into the twenty-first century.

It is not known precisely when the present building was erected, but we do know that there has been a school in Carsphairn since 1777.

In the school Log Books, dating from 1873, references are made to the schools at Meadowhead and Moor, presumably started to allow children from those remote areas to benefit from an education which would otherwise not been possible because of the distance they would have had to travel, especially in the winter months, to reach Carsphairn. Both schools, however, seem to have been under the authority of Carsphairn School Board and headmaster. Meadowhead ceased to function in April 1917.

References are also made to a sewing class, which took place in one of the houses in the village, as there was insufficient room available in the school building. An entry in the Log Book in September 1904 indicates the concern felt by the Inspectors about the inadequacy of facilities available in the school building of that time

Sept 7th 1904

....The attention of the Managers is directed to the following points.

- (1) Additional apparatus should be provided for Freearm Drawing and new desks should be supplied as soon as possible.
- (2) The playground is very small and about half of it runs right past the front of the schoolhouse.
- (3) The position of the offices (toilets) seems to be decidedly objectionable. The entrance to them opens from the shelter sheds and face the public road, and there are no doors.
- (4) Sewing is taught in a private house where neither accommodation nor lighting seems to be efficient. The room is about 15ft by 11ft but the cubic air space is very small. The roof is a sloping one; the side walls are only about 3ft high: the ceiling is only some 7ft high at its greatest height, and that only for a width of about 2ft 8in. The room is lighted by three skylight windows.

The Inspectors Report of the following June reads -

June 12th 1905

....The Managers deserve to be complimented on the promptitude with which they have met the suggestions made in the last report. Extensive structural alterations have already been begun.

It would seem that then, as now, pupils and teachers had to move out of the school building while building work was being carried out. Entries in the Log Book read

Sept 8th 1905

....The school is being held meantime in the pavilion, owing to the alterations and extensions at the school not yet being completed.

Sept 21st 1905

Getting better used to this place. Work getting on better. The school is to be closed tomorrow as the master is going to Glasgow concerning new desks etc. for the school under repair and alteration.

Sept 29th 1905

Work as usual this week. Find this place rather cold now for the smaller and younger pupils.

October 13th 1905

Work carried on as far as possible according to timetable. Have been feeling it cold in the pavilion. The school is expected to be ready by Wednesday of next week. To allow everything to be flitted and desks etc. set in order, intimation was made that there would be no school meeting until Wednesday and that in the proper building.

October 20th 1905

Work progressing fairly under present circumstances. Wednesday of this week was wet and stormy and a number of the country children were absent. The weather is cold for the season. The juniors and infants were removed on Monday to the vestry of the U.F. Church where they have very much more comfortable quarters.

The expectation was apparently fulfilled, as the entry for October 20th 1905 is as follows -

School met three days this week. Entered into our new and improved premises on Wednesday. The Revs. G.F. MacNaughton and William Fraser were present at the opening and conducted a short religious service. The other members of the Board also visited the school on the forenoon of that same day.

The provision of an extra classroom, cloakrooms and toilets at that time was the last major improvement to the school until the present time. Circumstances leading to and during alterations at both times have several similarities, eg inadequate facilities, the time of year, displacement of pupils and staff. Let us hope that improvements for the education of children in the parish will continue to have a high priority for many years to come.

*Contributed by A. Rutherford.*