



Gorse Hill School

During 1883 the first school opened in an old iron church, which was located off Cricklade Road, opposite what is now known as Tydeman Street. Twenty pupils attended the school, but continued expansion of the area meant that the number of pupils quickly rose. In 1877 a new school was built in Avening Street. Gorse Hill Infant and Junior School still occupy this site today and was opened in 1878 by the Stratton St. Margaret School Board to accommodate 450 boys, girls, and infants.

In 1879 an early teacher was John Bradford. The infants' department had a hall and 8 classrooms built for it in 1882. In 1890, when Gorse Hill came within the Swindon boundary, the school was taken over by the Swindon School Board – (*From: 'Swindon: Education and charities', A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 9 (1970), pp. 159-168.*). The following year a new boys' and girls' department was opened. The accommodation in the infants' school was considered suitable for 573 children, by 1904 the school had grown to 680 children. and in 1906 there were 735 on the register, and the average attendance for the whole school was 1,258.

In 1910 the school was still overcrowded despite the building of the Ferndale Road school nearby, and it was not until this school was enlarged after the First World War that attendance figures at Gorse Hill began to adjust themselves to the accommodation available.

In 1946 the older children were removed from the school, leaving separate infants' and junior schools at Gorse Hill. For some years before schools were opened at Penhill, children from that estate were taken by bus to Gorse Hill. Even after the Penhill schools were opened, classrooms in the Gorse Hill Junior School had to be used to relieve overcrowding in the new schools. In 1964 there were 202 children on the roll