

## **Carswell. The Council School**

To generations of Abingdon's residents the identity of this school needs no explanation but for the benefit of newcomers it is Carswell School with entrances on Conduit Road and Bostock Road. Its buildings give no indication of the many roles played by the school during its long history. The earliest of the buildings, designed by architects Dolby and Spencer, was constructed by local builder Mr Thomas, was opened in December 1865, the same year the statue of Prince Albert was unveiled in Albert Park. It is the oldest surviving purpose-built school building in Abingdon still in use for educational purposes – it now houses the Early Years' Unit. It was designed to cater for 200 children, most of whom would have come from the nearby courts in Ock Street.

The school has been known by various names during its long history: Conduit Road Infants, the new Church Infant School or National school possibly because of the role played by Rev Nathaniel Dodson, the Vicar of St Helen's, in its establishment and funding received from the National Society and the Oxford Diocesan Board for Education as well as by voluntary contributions. 1902 Board Schools. It was, however, non-denominational and is best known as the 'council school'.

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