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## On the British Education System and The State Schools in Cambridge (VI)

Minoru SHIGETA\*

In the preceding essays, I mentioned how we settled in Cambridge, how I got permission to the local state schools for my three children, the British compulsory education system especially concerning LEA (Local Education Authority) schools, and also explained some special features of the British school system, Further Education, the British Universities—the origin, the three types of the universities in Britain, the admission procedure to enter a university, and the Degree system of Oxbridge—and Polytechnics and Colleges of Higher Education in Britain. In this essay, I will tell you about the school and colleges in Cambridge where my three children attended. First of all, I will mention Milton Road Junior School where my younger daughter Ritsuko went.

As I said in the preceding essay (Vol. I), on the morning of October 7, 1986, I went to the Education Headquarters (Shire Hall at Castle Street) where Mr. Michell (our neighbour in those days) had told me to go that day, for the purpose of my children getting admission to the local state schools. When I got there, I asked a clerk if I could consult with someone about my children getting admission to the local state schools. After a while, Mr. Gage, one of the staff of the Education Headquarters, came up to me and asked me the date of birth of my three children, so I handed in the certificates of studentship which I had written out in Japan. Making a note of them, Mr. Gage told me to call him up in the morning or afternoon two days later, and said that he would be able to make some advice about the matter. Feeling relieved to hear that, I made my way home.

On the morning of October 9 (Thursday), I called up Mr. Gage in the Headquarters from a public telephone, and he told me that he had made an appointment with the headmaster of a junior school and the pastoral care of a lower secondary school, and that it would be better for me to call Mr. Ellis, headmaster of Milton Road Junior School, as soon as possible. He also advised me to contact with Mr. Dixon at Collegiate Board for my elder daughter. When I called up Mr. Ellis and said that I should like to see him for the admission of my younger daughter to his school, he said he could meet me at three thirty that afternoon. So my wife, younger daughter Ritsuko and I visited Milton Road Junior School at 3:25 p.m. to see Mr. Ellis. The headmaster was a gentleman of great stature, and gave me a school pamphlet of his school and explained the school meals and P.E. Kit, and so on. Then, showing us a sentence “**The longest journey starts with a single step,**” put in a frame, he asked me to have my daughter understand it well, and said she could come to school at 9:20 a.m. the next Monday (October 13), adding that Mrs. J. Russon, teacher of social studies, would be in charge of my daughter, and that my daughter could bring any Japanese teaching materials with her that day. Offering our cordial thanks, we left the school.

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As above-mentioned, Mr. Ellis gave me a school pamphlet when we called at his school for the first time. First of all, I will mention the School Organization, Curriculum, Extra Curricular Activities, P. T. A. and some other notes according to the pamphlet, and then I will tell you about the school lessons and events, and something like that which my daughter, my wife and I took interest in.

### I. A General Statement of the School Pamphlet

Milton Road Junior School is one of the state schools in Cambridgeshire, so first the pamphlet tells us the Cambridgeshire Education Department and its place, and then shows us the name of the school and headmaster, and chairman of Governors, and the classification of the school as follows:

SCHOOL YEAR: 2nd September 1986 to 24th July 1987

Cambridgeshire Education Department, Cambridge Area,  
Castle Court, Shire Hall, CB3 0AP. Tel: Cambridge 317111

Particulars included in this booklet are correct at the date of publication, March 1986, and while every effort will be made to ensure the continuing correctness of all items, it cannot be guaranteed that there will be no changes affecting arrangements.

#### MILTON ROAD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Milton Road,  
Cambridge, CB4 1UZ

Telephone: Cambridge 359324

Headmaster: Mr. J. R. Ellis

Chairman of Governors:

Dr. R. Barnes,  
14 Montague Road  
Cambridge

Tel: Cambridge 357338

This school is classified as a co-educational County Junior day school and caters for children from seven to eleven years old.  
In January 1986 there were 259 children on roll.

And in the next page, there are compliments to the parents of school children with invitations to some school meetings throughout the school year:

MILTON ROAD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Milton Road,  
Cambridge.

Dear Parents,

It is a pleasure to welcome your child to the school. It is our aim that he/she shall enjoy learning in a happy and well-balanced atmosphere.

Come and visit us

I shall be available from 3.00 to 3.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please drop in at these times for brief visits. For longer interviews please telephone or write for an appointment. Where necessary I shall monitor matters arising from our discussions and arrange subsequent review meetings.

Similarly, you may make an appointment to see your child's teacher by telephone or letter.

Early in the Autumn term all parents are invited to meetings with their children's new class teacher.

Towards the end of each term you will be invited to visit your child's classroom where he/she will guide you around the term's work. In January, or early February—half way through the school year—you will be invited to discuss your child's progress with his/her class teacher. A written report will be sent to you late in the Summer term.

In June or July there will be a meeting for the parents whose children will be joining the school in September.

Children of the new intake will be visited in the Infants' School by their new teachers and will visit their Junior classrooms towards the end of the Summer term. Every effort will be made to make their transition as smooth as possible.

Other meetings dealing with educational matters are arranged from time to time, as are musical events, exhibitions, etc.

Yours sincerely,



Headmaster.

There are Staff List, and School Hours and Playtimes in page 1.

### STAFF LIST

Mr. J. Adey	(Mathematics)
Mrs. C. Bowen	
Mrs. N. Carter	(Remedial)
Mrs. M. Gates	(Language)
Mr. I. Giddings	(P.E.)
Miss R. C. Parker	(Music)
Mr. I. Phipps: Deputy Head	(Science)
Mrs. J. Russon	(Social Studies)
Mrs. S. Stuart	
Mrs. P. Thompson	
Mr. D. Bass	– Tuesday morning – Violin
Miss P. Jones	– Wednesday morning – 'Cello

Children are promoted by age (1st September – 31st August)

Secretary: Mrs. D. Ellis  
 General Assistant: Mrs. P. Hume

Lunchtime Supervisors: Mrs. J. Williams Mrs. T. Vealey  
 Mrs. E. Cumner-Price Mrs. C. Illsley

Canteen Assistants: Mrs. M. Tylka Mrs. S. Hoppett

Crossing Patrol: Mrs. A. Lenton

Caretaker: Mr. R. Lilley

Mr. Phipps is in charge of lost property

School Hours: Monday to Friday – 08.55 to 12.00  
 13.15 to 15.30

Please note: Children should not arrive at school before 08.40 and – unless staying for an official after-school activity – should leave by 15.45

Playtimes: 10.40 to 10.55  
 14.15 to 14.30

From page 2, the pamphlet expresses the school organization, curriculum, school rules, extra curricular activities, P. T. A., and educational visits, and so on. As I think they are important things, I will write down the essential outlines in the following :

### ORGANISATION

There are eight full-time classes. All are mixed ability classes. The 4th year children may, however, be set for mathematics into two groups according to ability.

Children who find reading or writing especially difficult may be withdrawn for intensive tuition for one or more periods each week. Classes and groups spend some time each week with the Mathematics specialist.

### CURRICULUM

(A) The aims of the school : to make every day a rewarding experience for each child and teacher

The School is a community deeply involved in the present but aware that it is essentially a preparation for the future. Thus we aim to help children :

- i. to develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks ;
- ii. to acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities, and the will to use them ;
- iii. to use language and number effectively ;
- iv. to develop respect for religious and moral values, and tolerance of other races, religions, and ways of life ;
- v. to understand the world in which they live, and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations ;
- vi. to appreciate human achievements and aspirations ;
- vii. to foster aesthetic awareness and to afford children opportunities for creativity and imagination ;
- viii. to develop agility and physical coordination, confidence in and through physical activity, and the ability to express feeling through movement ;
- ix. to develop habits of self-discipline and acceptable behaviour and to lead them to an appreciation of the value of courtesy and good manners.

We guide each child towards fulfilling his/her potential by :

- i. providing a stable, happy atmosphere within which each child may work confidently and make the best use of his/her time ;
- ii. setting individual goals so that success is obtainable with an effort ;
- iii. offering equal opportunities to boys and girls ;

- iv. ensuring that he/she takes an active part in learning ;
- v. praising and recognising talents of every kind ;
- vi. encouragement and high expectation ;
- vii. providing good teaching and reference materials.

(B) Brief notes outlining the work in particular areas of the curriculum.

(i) Language teaching extends into all parts of the curriculum. The teaching of reading for information and pleasure continues throughout the school. Simpler books are coded according to "Individualised Reading" by C. Moon. Children are taught to comprehend and interpret what they read and hear and to express themselves clearly, appropriately and creatively. Considerable emphasis is placed on the value of advanced reading skills. All forms of writing are encouraged.

(ii) Mathematics :

The overall aim of this subject is to provide structured mathematical experiences so that, whether developing numeracy and problem solving skills, or engaging in practical spacial investigation of the world around them, the children will acquire the ability to reason and to communicate logically with the concepts and conventions of mathematics.

To achieve this aim various strategies are adopted. Until recently these were confined to well tried conventional means, but currently have the added input of a scheme unique to Milton Road Junior School.

Class teachers still provide the main lesson guidance, following the school maths' scheme, "Mathematics for Schools" (Level II) by Howard, Walker & Fletcher, and inject further enrichment or skills work themselves. Now children have the added advantage of undertaking timetabled class or group maths projects in another room devoted solely to mathematics and supervised by the teacher responsible for this subject.

This innovation enables special attention to be given to issues recommended by staff, as well as the introduction of thematic modules. Staff discussion and interaction in this area of the curriculum are extended and also, through greater opportunity to monitor their junior school progress, a detailed overview of children's needs and resources is made possible.

An advantage of small group sessions both for those children in the maths room and for those remaining in their classrooms, is the opportunity of greater contact time with their respective teachers. Smaller numbers have meant ease of access to, and exploitation of,

both the computer (e.g. in maths orientated data-base work) and the calculator.

(iii) Science :

Work in Science is concerned with fostering enquiring minds and a scientific approach to problems and their possible solutions. This is achieved in a number of lined ways, developing :

- scientific concepts through various activities
- processes and skills
- the ability to make well-founded generalisations.

The acquisition of scientific concepts is important in order that the children make some sense of the many aspects of the world around them. The concepts may include, for example, energy, structure, life and change. Processes and skills, such as observation, exploration and experimentation will lead to new knowledge, an aesthetic awareness of the subjects under study and the ability to form, test and re-test their own hypotheses. The children should be able to make meaningful scientifically-based general statements and to apply some of their knowledge to practical situations.

Some topics for study are linked to other areas of the curriculum so that the children see that Science is related to all aspects of life. They will include nature study and ecology, basic physics and chemistry, and design technology. Health Education is taught throughout the four years in a scientific and social context, culminating in the Health Education Council's "My Body" project, which includes a section on sex education.

(iv) Social Studies :

Social Studies is an important area of the curriculum which overlaps some more traditional subjects. It deals with human beings. The Schools Council title "Man in Place, Time and Society" is at once precise and all-embracing enough for our purposes.

Teachers make a choice (within a framework) of subjects to be studied. These range from studies of our school community and the local environment, to Europe and the Third World; from a "patch" of history to a modern issue such as conservation or communication. In the course of this work, children learn to observe and enquire, to select and compare, and to record their findings.

(v) Religious Education :

This is taught in accordance with the agreed syllabus and is much concerned with the wider

consideration of personal and social values. Our morning assemblies which include a hymn, are the one time during the day when the whole school is together; each child can be aware of his/her part in the life of the school. Any parent who wishes his/her child/ren to be withdrawn from religious worship or education should contact the headmaster.

(vi) Music :

We aim to stimulate the creative imagination, cultivate an interest in music and develop musical abilities in all children. Opportunities for singing, playing, movement, dance, listening and notation work are available through class work and/or through the various club activities. Group violin and cello lessons are given by peripatetic staff.

Musical Instruments : You should insure privately owned instruments since the school cannot be asked to pay for repair or replacement.

(vii) Physical Education :

Skills and use of apparatus are developed to suit the needs of the growing child. Games help the child to enjoy and develop these new skills and they promote social development, self-discipline and fitness. Children are encouraged to play a variety of sports in addition to the major national team games and various school teams play matches against other schools. We are always pleased to hear from parents who have coaching skills and who can spare the time to help in training.

First and 2nd years have a daily use of the hall. Third and 4th years have two half-hour hall periods plus an hour's games each week.

Swimming is part of the PE programme for all pupils.

Winter games : Netball and soccer ;

Summer games : Cricket, rounders and some softball.

PE Kit : Plimsolls, shorts and T-shirt/singlet/leotard - a bag in which to keep them.

"Trainers" are not suitable for apparatus work.

It is important that children change for PE. For reasons of hygiene, plimsolls used in PE should not be worn for the walk to and from school.

Please mark all clothing clearly and ensure that it is laundered weekly.

(viii) Art and Craft :

Includes work with a variety of media in two and three dimensions. Some art is linked with other subjects such as Social Studies, Maths or Science ; much is derived from direct observation. Techniques and skills are taught where appropriate and inventiveness is encouraged.



Curriculum Meetings

PTA Meetings are held from time to time at which particular areas of the curriculum are explained and discussed.

We modify, update and revise our methods and aims through regular staff curricular meetings. Discussion on curriculum matters naturally forms an essential part of the work of the Governing Body. We are also involved in liaison with teachers in the Infants' School and in the three Community Colleges which we "feed".

(Continued)

(平成6年9月20日受理)