**A History of Swinderby All Saints Primary School**

**Swinderby All Saints Primary School was built in 1849 on its current site next to the church. However, there has been a school in the village since at least 1771 when an endowment of £3 a year paid for the teaching of eight poor children. The 1849 school had just one main teaching room and was built in red brick with stone window surrounds and a slate roof. Within ten years it was too small and had to be increased by half as much again along the street front to the east. Major extensions were added in 1877, creating a second, smaller classroom at the back and at the front the distinctive porch and bell turret which has been adopted as the school logo.**

**The nineteenth century was a period of great change and development in education. In 1833, the first state grants for schools were introduced but education was not compulsory and it was free only for children from the poorest families. In 1856, 37 boys and 2 girls attended school in Swinderby; about 12 of these were free scholars. The Church of England was very involved in education at this time through the National Society and glebe land belonging to the vicarage was given to the school in 1871 – this is at the bottom end of the school field In 1891 free elementary education was extended to every child in the country. Swinderby used the pupil-teacher system by which at the age of 13 children could start a five-year apprenticeship before qualifying at college as certified teachers.**

**Often children were not sent to school when there was a chance for them to earn a few pennies. School records from the 1860s and 1870s state that children were absent for reasons such as potato setting and picking, weeding and picking carrots, pea pulling, pig killing, fox hunting and local fairs. At this time there was a three-week harvest holiday in August but in 1872 the start of term was delayed by a week because the harvest was late.**

**There were over 80 children attending the school in January 1876. Records from the 1870s reveal the “school pence” were often paid very irregularly and that fines were imposed on children who broke their slates. Children were sent home for coming into school after registers had closed, as well as for bad behaviour. Attendance was an increasing concern in the 1880s, when attendance defaulters were reported to the Newark Union Officer, and in the 1890s the head teacher, Harry Easton, notes that “many parents utterly disregard their obligations to send their children regularly to school, and absent them frequently without cause”.**

**An outbreak of measles closed the school for several weeks at the end of 1895 and in autumn 1898 the new school year did not start until mid October because of an outbreak of diphtheria following the six-week harvest holiday. In 1899 a piano was bought thanks to a local family and the proceeds of school concerts. In December 1912 it was reported with obvious delight that all 105 children on the attendance register were present. Mr Easton retired as head in 1924 after nearly 35 years in post. He was succeeded by his wife Amy Easton who had taught at the school alongside him for many years and was head teacher until 1928. The couple lived in the school house in the village where they brought up their own children.**

**War-time and peace celebrations have had a great impact on the life of the school as well as the families of pupils and staff. In October 1905 there was a week’s closure for Trafalgar celebrations and in 1918 there were half day holidays as the school adopted the Blackberry Scheme to gather the fruit for the Ministry of Food. During the 1939-1945 War, children could take a two-week “holiday” to go potato picking as part of the war effort. There were dramatic changes with the arrival of evacuees from Coventry and Leeds and everyone having to carry a gas mask.**

**During the 1930s, several children walked from Norton Disney to attend Swinderby school, but this stopped in 1941 when the road was closed and the aerodrome was built. RAF Swinderby would continue to have a major effect on the school.**

**Popular playground games during the 1940s were hopscotch, skipping and song circle games such as “The Farmer’s in his Den” and “Poor Mary Sits a Weeping”. Children also enjoyed bringing a whip and top to school. Boys and girls played together in the playground, but had separate cloakrooms - the boys’ was under the bell and the girls’ next to the porch, in which there was a metal stand with a bowl in it for hand washing. The toilet was a bucket! Heating was from pot bellied stoves which went out if they were not managed properly. There was no electricity in Swinderby until after the end of the war. During the 1950s the school still had only two classrooms. The large original school room was divided for two classes and the small room was used for a further classroom. The big room now houses the boilers and a storage area, while part of the small classroom has become the staffroom. The school canteen opened in 1951.**

**Married quarters were built at RAF Swinderby during the early 1950s and a school bus was laid on. The school grew rapidly and it was never clear from day to day how many children would turn up for class – the infant class doubled in size to around 60 and extra staff had to be appointed. Kesteven County Council’s Education Committee hired the village hall where three classes were held, making six classes in total.. By January 1954 there were 211 children on roll. Plans for a school at RAF Swinderby were abandoned in the late 1950s and instead it was decided to extend the village school. An ambitious plan was drawn up for building a hall, doubling up as two classrooms, and two more classrooms behind that. The fourth classroom was never built, but the improvements brought hot and cold water and flushing toilets to the school, as well as a kitchen. In the late 1960s, the classroom built in 1959 was demolished and a two-storey block containing four classrooms was constructed. The final addition came in the early 1970s when a fifth classroom was added and the school was finally able to move out of the village hall after more than 20 years.**

**The number of children on roll stood at 162 in the 1975 summer term, but in the autumn term of 1980 numbers dipped to 114 due to the reduction of married quarters at RAF Swinderby. Numbers fluctuated considerably, depending on what was happening at the base, but the downward trend continued – by September 1982 there were 80 pupils and only four classes. When the autumn term started in 1993 after the closure of RAF Swinderby earlier in the year, the school had 56 pupils and Jeff Day became the new headteacher.**

**The number of pupils increased to over 120 in 2004 thanks to a combination of the school’s excellent reputation and families moving onto the former RAF Swinderby site, as married quarters were sold off and new houses built. Since the 1990s there have been many changes to keep the school up to date, including a covered outdoor space for the reception class, interactive whiteboards throughout the school, a peace garden and adventure play area.**

**Today we pride ourselves on giving children an exciting and extensive curriculum offering more than just the 3Rs. The quality of our performing arts provision has earned us the national Artsmark award and we celebrate numerous sporting successes.**

**Although the teachers who taught here over 150 years ago would not recognise Swinderby All Saints Primary School, the fundamental purpose for its existence remains the same – to ensure that children in our school’s care are offered the opportunity to achieve their very best and are presented with opportunities that inspire them to achieve highly .**

**The end of August 2018 marks the retirement of the current headteacher and the possibility of an exciting chapter in the future chapters of this schools history.**