

**MORAL INSTRUCTION IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN
ENGLAND AND WALES: A
RETURN COMPILED FROM
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS**

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Official documents by Harrold Johnson

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IN ENGLAND AND WALES

A RETURN

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BY

HARROLD JOHNSON

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IMPORTANT PRONOUNCEMENTS

I

“THE purpose of the Public Elementary School is to form and strengthen the character, and to develop the intelligence, of the children entrusted to it. . . . Though their opportunities are but brief, the teachers can yet do much to lay the foundations of conduct. They can endeavour, by example and influence, aided by the sense of discipline which should pervade the School, to implant in the children habits of industry, self-control, and courageous perseverance in the face of difficulties; they can teach them to reverence what is noble, to be ready for self-sacrifice, and to strive their utmost after purity and truth; they can foster a strong respect for duty, and that consideration and respect for others which must be the foundation of unselfishness and the true basis of all good manners; while the corporate life of the School, especially in the playground, should develop that instinct for fairness and for loyalty to one another which is the germ of a wider sense of honour in later life. In all these endeavours the School should enlist, as far as possible, the interest and co-operation of the parents and the home in a united effort to enable the children not merely to reach their full development as individuals, but also to become upright and useful members of the community in which they live, and worthy sons and daughters of the country to which they belong.”

Introduction to the Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools.

II

“The purpose of the School is education in the full sense of the word: the high function of the teacher is to prepare the child for the life of a good citizen. . . . The establish-

ment of character must always be one of the main aims of Elementary Education, and every part of the School life has some influence in this regard, whether for good or for evil. . . . Moreover, the good moral training which a School should give cannot be left to chance: on this side, no less than on the intellectual side, the purpose of the teacher must be clearly conceived and intelligently carried out. . . . In the matter of the moral training of children, a most important factor will be the habitual conduct of the teacher in the School. The example of his patience, kindness, and determination to be obeyed, of his constant watchfulness and scrupulous fairness, will evoke similar traits in his pupils, and will give point and force to formal instruction. . . . The work of the Public Elementary School is the preparation of the scholar for life . . . and though the teacher can influence only a short period of the lives of the scholars, yet it is the period when human nature is most plastic, when good influence is most fruitful, and when teaching, if well bestowed, is most sure of permanent result."

Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools, 1905.

III

"In presenting these Regulations for the consideration of Training College Authorities the Board of Education desire to take the opportunity of reminding those Authorities, as also the students in the Colleges, of the high and responsible duties which it is the privilege of the Training Colleges to fulfil, for the public good. For, if it be true that the moral and intellectual progress of the nation is very greatly affected by the nature and quality of the training of character and intelligence which the Public Elementary Schools provide for the children, it is equally true that the nature and quality of that training will depend very largely, indeed, upon a steadfast adherence to high ideals, and a conscientious fulfilment of their most exacting duties, on the part of the principals, the teaching staff, and the managing committees of the Training Colleges. It should be their aim to send out zealous and capable teachers who will be competent to undertake the care and education of the children in Public Elementary Schools on the principles set

out in the Introduction to the Code. Throughout the training it should be remembered that the function of the College in relation to the students is the formation of character no less than the giving of practical or intellectual instruction."

*Regulations for the Training of Teachers, 1905.
Prefatory Memorandum.*

IV

"*Moral Instruction* should form an important part of the curriculum of every elementary school. Such instruction may either (i) be incidental, occasional and given as fitting opportunity arises in the ordinary routine of lessons, or (ii)* be given systematically and as a course of graduated instruction.

"The instruction should be specially directed to the inculcation of courage; truthfulness; cleanliness of mind, body, and speech; the love of fair play; consideration and respect for others; gentleness to the weaker; kindness to animals; self-control and temperance; self-denial; love of one's country; and appreciation of beauty in nature and in art.

"The teaching should be brought home to the children by reference to their actual surroundings in town or country, and should be illustrated as vividly as possible by stories, poems, quotations, proverbs, and examples drawn from history and biography.

"The object of such instruction being the formation of character and habits of life and thought, an appeal should be made to the feelings and the personalities of the children. Unless the natural moral responsiveness of the child is stirred, no moral instruction is likely to be fruitful."

*Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools.
Art. 2.*

V

"Two other changes of great importance have also been made, both likely to bring a more humane atmosphere into the school and after life of the children. The Code provides that if suitable provision can be made, a part of the afternoon

* "It is desirable that where systematic teaching of this subject is practicable such teaching should be direct, systematic, and graduated."—Prefatory Memorandum to the Code (of 1906), Sect. 7.