

2. The Former Coates Institute, 1 Main Street

The Coates Endowed School in Ponteland was founded in 1722 under the Will of Richard Coates to provide free clothing and education for 24 poor children from the village of Ponteland.



The first school was attended by some 15 children aged from 7 to 11. It was originally erected as a single-storey building on the present site, located on the corner of Main Street and North Road. With the gradual increase in the number of pupils, however, it had to be extended by the addition of a second floor in 1834. By the time of the introduction of the Education Act of 1870 it had nearly 100 pupils and was due to be closed by the Board of Education because of the overcrowding and generally poor conditions.

With the help of the Church authorities – mainly Merton College, who have the Living of St. Mary's Church in their gift – a new school was completed to the south of the Church in 1874. The former school then became the Coates Institute and Reading Room, originally housing 320 volumes. At about this time, also, a Subscription Library came into being in a private house on Bell Villas, and this continued in use until the County Library on Thornhill Road was built in the late 1960s. The Coates Institute had by then, however, ceased its public educational role and has since hosted a succession of estate agents. It is an attractive building of a distinctive character, constructed in stone and slate. It is not, however, obvious from its appearance that it has

played such an essential role in the education of children, and subsequently adults, in the village over a period of some 200 years. [1] [2]

[1] "Ponteland; One Thousand Years of History". ISBN 0 9510381 0 9
Leslie Almond/Ponteland Local History Society. 1984. pp. 27 – 28.

[2] "Ponteland Through the Twentieth Century." Pub. 1992. ISBN 0 9510381
Leslie Almond/Ponteland Local History Society. pp. 5 – 17.