

Ewelme Grammar School in Medieval Times

Although not mentioned in the Licence of 1437 William and Alice de la Pole planned a boarding grammar school in Ewelme to freely educate the bright boys from the Foundation estates to enter Oxford University.

A Grammar Master was appointed at a salary of £10 per annum and provided with a house, chambers, hall, kitchen and a garden. He was to be a priest *‘apt and able to teach grammar to all the children of our chapel of the tenants of our lordship of Ewelme and of the lordships pertaining to the said almshouse, now and at all times to come... without exaction of any scolehire’*. His duties were to *‘so sadly and discretely rule his scholars that none of them be tedious, noisesome or troublesome to the said place or any of the inhabitants therein.’*

Elementary level of medieval schooling included reading, song and elementary grammar for boys of 7-10 – known as pettetes (petty scholars). The older boys’ lessons included, Latin, logic and philosophy, so both elementary and advanced tuition was supplied at Ewelme.

The boys would begin lessons at 6 am and continued until 4 pm. Candles were provided and paper, ink and books with Latin grammars. Rushes and bracken would cover the floor.

The first recorded Grammar Master was John Clyfford appointed in 1455 until 1461.

The school was the last of the foundation complex to be built and not yet operating when Duke William was assassinated in 1450.