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Want ik verlang zeer naar de school

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Summary

The introduction gives a brief overview of the nineteenth-century history of Schoonhoven and a summary of the study of the history of education in the Netherlands in the same period. The 1806 Education Act greatly influenced developments in the first half of the nineteenth century and from the late 1820s onward its effect was apparent in Schoonhoven.

It was then that the city council laid the foundations for good primary and secondary education. The designation of the Doelen building as boarding school and the redevelopment of the second floor of the nearby Arsenaal building for use as a school paved the way for education for children from every class of society. From the mid-1830s the number of pupils, as well as the prestige of the schools, began to rise under the leadership of municipal teacher and boarding school keeper Johannes Collewijn.

From 1846 the 23-year-old second-grade teacher Gerrit Westbroek continued the upward trend set by his predecessor. The boarding pupils of the French school achieved success in the examinations for secondary education and the number of pupils at the city school increased. A small number of children received Jewish education, girls' education and special (independent board-run) education during this period.

Following the introduction and Chapter 1 we come to the main question of the study: What influence did the Education Acts of 1857, 1878 and 1889 have on day-to-day school education in Schoonhoven and the surrounding area? The 1857 Act had major consequences for the teaching staff. The setting of a minimum salary and the introduction of a pension turned assistant teachers and head teachers at state-funded schools into municipal officials.

There was almost-daily contact between city hall and school. The provincial executive, provincial inspector, school inspector, the municipal schools supervisory committee, the municipal executive and the municipal council all acted as advisers and supervisory bodies for the schools. Johannes Leusden (from 1861) followed by Leendert Akkerhuijs (from 1867) were headmasters of Primary School 1 and Primary School 2 (the evening school).

Primary-school education gradually began to take place from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 2 to 4 p.m., in line with most of the country. Lessons in the nine compulsory subjects were introduced gradually, as the assistant teachers had to first learn the subjects themselves. Pupils in the extended primary programme (OLS 3) were taught the additional subjects French and maths by headmaster and teacher Gerrit Westbroek, with the added option of English and German depending on the tuition fee.

The headmasters had to carry out a lot of administrative work. Maintaining pupil records, writing reports and ordering books and other educational materials were among their continually recurring tasks. Personnel management, with the constantly changing teaching staff and the coming and going of student teachers, required tact and patience.

The opening of the new school building for basic primary education and extended primary education (LO and ULO) in Doelenplein in 1866 brought the school under one roof and made it therefore easier to manage. The steadily increasing number of pupils in primary education meant that this building was soon too small. This lack of space would continue to be an issue throughout the century. The growing cost of education – quotas for admitting non-fee-paying pupils were generous – was in part financed by charging high tuition fees for the ULO. The classroom problem and funding for education led to a continued debate between all parties involved: teachers, the municipal executive, the schools supervisory committee and parents.

From 1869 the description of education-related activities by the liberal newspaper the *Schoonhovensche Courant* significantly affected the image of education. Reports of the activities of the *Schoolverbond* – an organisation set up to combat truancy – underlined the importance of regular school attendance. With the celebrations surrounding the liberation of Den Briel from the Spanish on 1 April 1572, marking 300 years of the independence of the

Netherlands (1572-1872), the newspaper set the tone for descriptions of historic events in the decades to come.

All festivities around the House of Orange, where the headmasters of the state schools played a significant organisational role, were warmly received by the local populace and meticulously reported in the newspaper. Schoolchildren were always a part of the processions featuring the municipal authorities. The festivities opened and closed with choral tributes. Patriotism and faithfulness to the House of Orange were a standard part of the upbringing.

The 1878 Education Act was important because of the 30% state funding to education which kept the cost of education at an acceptable level for the municipality. Needlework was added to the curriculum and female teachers were admitted to the first two years of primary school. A radical development was the compulsory introduction of the *leerplan* – a document outlining the intention, principles and organisation of the school, to be drawn up by the headmaster. This document contained a timetable, a book list for every teacher and the dates of all school holidays. The *leerplan* continued to form the basis for day-to-day educational practice until deep into the twentieth century.

Akkerhuijs's book orders throw some light on the educational practice in his school in the 1860s and 70s. He introduced modernisation gradually, while still holding on to the tried and trusted methods such as that of H. Hemkes. Westbroek followed in the same line: he introduced reforms yet continued using the outdated material for a long time to come, the Doelen building made a good storehouse.

From 1880 the *leerplan* not only provided insights into how education was carried out in Schoonhoven, but also in the neighbouring villages of Ammerstol and Bergambacht. Each school organised education in its own way, but the quality of education in these villages was certainly as good as that given in Schoonhoven. Bookshop Van Nooten also provided books and teaching materials to these schools.

The name 'teaching assistant' disappeared from the law from 1878 onwards and teacher training improved. From 1881 headmasters in the Krimpenerwaard, under the leadership of headmaster Akkerhuijs, began to teach state-standard teacher training (*Rijksnormalessen*), beginning in Bergambacht and from 1890 in Schoonhoven following the 1889 Education Act. The 1889 Act required drawing and gymnastics to be taught and the subject *vormleer* (related to geometry) was dropped. From this time special (board-run as opposed to state-run) schools which were seeking to be given the same rights as state schools were eligible for state funding. From 1890 state-funded Christian education was provided at the school at Oude Haven in Schoonhoven.

The increasingly better educated teachers became more assertive. As a result of training for the subject calisthenics a regional education association was formed. From 1890 education salaries and the content of the curriculum became the subject of discussion between a number of young headmasters and teaching staff. Later on a group of teachers began to organise themselves on a national scale. Salaries, which were governed by the principle of supply and demand, were inadequate. Many a local headmaster supplemented his meagre income by writing articles for the *Schoonhovensche Courant*. The teaching staff earned a little on the side by teaching extra lessons. Teachers campaigned either individually or in groups for higher salaries. In Schoonhoven the problems surrounding the salaries and the subject matter caused tension between Akkerhuijs and his staff.

The school supervisory committee, which until the mid 1890s had acted as mediator in conflict situations, was dissolved as a result of too much meddling by chairman Westbroek and the diminished interest being shown by the liberal middle-class. The municipal executive became the mediators in the strained labour relations between Akkerhuijs and his staff and was present at school meetings from 1899 to the end of 1901.

The minutes of these meetings reveal a generation conflict and an intense discussion about which didactic method should be used for imparting knowledge. On a national level the discussion about 'too academic' education had already been waged. This discussion reached Schoonhoven, but as far as we know did not catch on in the surrounding villages.

School 3 was far less influenced by the education laws. The introduction of an entrance exam for extended primary education (ULO) - that was graded either strictly or leniently according to the number of candidates - forced the teaching staff of the state primary school (which by now comprised six years) to attain a certain final standard with a group of pupils. The heyday of the boarding school was over, boys and girls from the middle classes of Schoonhoven and beyond ensured the continuity of the ULO. The girls' education was usually finished in around three years, although they sometimes went on to train as teachers at the *normaalschool*. The ULO provided a good foundation for the entrance exam for the *normaalschool*, grammar school or the HBS (higher secondary education). Some boys remained at school longer before going on to secondary education.

School fees remained high, despite parents' protests. Staff changes were seldom. In the event of complaints by parents, the two permanent teachers knew they could depend on the unconditional support of the headmaster. When the schoolmistress was not replaced and the classrooms were made smaller to accommodate new building for the primary school, Westbroek handed in his resignation after forty-nine years of teaching. Two years after Westbroek's departure the grounds of the Doelen building were occupied by a new Drawing Academy and a new MULO (more extended primary education) building. The Drawing Academy was the result of a private initiative and the MULO an initiative of the municipal authorities. Finally the primary school had enough space to accommodate all its pupils. However after the introduction of compulsory education Akkerhuijs again complained of a shortage of classrooms. His successor in 1902 was faced with the same problems.

Akkerhuijs remained active as head of teacher training until the end of 1909. Both he and Westbroek were to work in education until the ripe age of seventy-two. Just as their colleagues in the surrounding villages, their work in education, their public service and other cultural activities made a valuable contribution to public development and education. Broad-spectrum primary education had become a permanent feature in the daily lives of young people in the Netherlands.