

Schoolteachers in the Early Modern Suburbs of London : Focusing on Dame Alice Owen's School and the Coopers' Company's School

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Abstract

This article re-considers unexplored and unsettled issues in the historiography of early modern English history: situations of grammar schools on the humble status, and the relationship between the City of London and its growing suburbs. For these purposes, the article examines the situation of teachers at lowly grammar schools in the early modern suburbs of London, that is, Dame Alice Owen's School and the Coopers' Company's School, and the relationship between the company officers as governors and the teachers of these schools to assess to what extent the London livery companies could control their schoolteachers in the suburbs.

Introduction

One of the most significant changes in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England is the extraordinary growth of its capital. London's population increased more than tenfold between 1500 and 1700,¹ which was mainly caused by the flood of immigrants swarming outside the City wall.² The relationship between this growing suburbs and the City has been one of the major topics of discussion. While some insist a social and ideological schism between them or political fragmentation of the capital from the early seventeenth century onwards,³ others appreciate the capacities of the existing organisations in the City, including the livery companies, to regulate the suburbs and to create a capital-wide unity through their activities until at least the Restoration.⁴ Opinions thus diverge on the relationship between the City and the suburbs during the period.

The both centuries are known not only for the growth of London but also for the growth of English education. It has been established that there was a remarkable augmentation of educational provision especially in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods.⁵ As to the study of grammar schools, however, it has not been well explored since the 1970s. As a result, our knowledge of grammar schools remains as patchy as it was half a century ago, being constructed by the study of leading and well-documented ones. Although Ian Green criticises such a historiography of early modern secondary education and tries to cover provincial grammar

schools in his innovative study, those on the humble status in London are not fully discussed.⁶

To explore such unsettled and unexplored issues, this article examines schoolteachers who were engaged in two grammar schools in the suburbs of London, that is, Dame Alice Owen's School at Clerkenwell and Islington managed by the Brewers' Company, and the Coopers' Company's School in the hamlet of Ratcliff in the parish of Stepney. It can shed light not only on the situation of schoolteachers at lowly grammar schools in the capital but also on the relationship between the officers of the livery companies who governed the schools and the teachers who resided on the suburban school site.

While there were few schools except leading ones that kept detailed records during the period in question, both schools can be studied through the records of the trustees, the Brewers' and Coopers' Companies of London.⁷ This article searches through these records roughly up to 1660 to investigate the situation of schoolteachers at lowly grammar schools in the capital and the relationship between the company officers and the teachers, in other words, to show to what extent the London livery companies could control their schoolteachers in the suburbs during the period for which scholars disagree in opinion about the companies' capacity to the growing capital.

Life Histories of the Teachers

First of all, we analyse the educational background of the teachers in both schools in question. As for Owen's School, taught by a single teacher, there were eight schoolmasters in office from its foundation to the Restoration.⁸ Regrettably, no mention of their academic qualification can be found in the Brewers' records, but two of them can be identified as graduates from other sources. According to the early eighteenth-century account, Peter Vowell held MA at Cambridge.⁹ George Lovejoy, matriculating at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1631 at the age of eighteen, acquired BA in 1634 and MA in 1640 while enjoying a fellowship at Merton College from 1633 to 1647. Then, he had served in Owen's School from 1654 to 1665 until he became a master at King's School, Canterbury. On the other hand, as to four of them, we cannot find any relevant information in the Oxford and Cambridge alumni lists.¹⁰

For the Coopers' School, while all eleven schoolmasters in the sixteenth century do not seem to have had any university degrees, four of seven schoolmasters in the early- and mid-seventeenth century, that is, Andrew Hughes, Samuel Wilson Nicholas Lawnds and Richard Edwards, probably held the Master of Arts.¹¹ As for the assistant teachers, that is, ushers, three of twenty-four had BA degrees, that is, Thomas Doughty, John Payne and George Harris inaugurated respectively in 1596, 1618 and 1631.¹² Given David Cressy's analysis that the rate of graduates in the licensed teachers in the diocese of London increased from 27 per cent in the 1580s to 59 per cent in the 1630s,¹³ the teaching staffs in the Coopers' School, at least, seem to have generally

followed the diocesan trend. Notwithstanding, we should not overlook that the majority of the teachers in both schools still does not appear to have held any academic qualifications.

Next, we examine the mobility of the teachers in both schools. There were nineteen schoolmasters who served the Coopers' School from 1554 to 1663, with some intermittence. Apart from two masters whose period of service is unsure, the average length of their service is about five years six months. This figure is somewhat biased by Tobias Randall who served as long as twenty-eight years from 1635 to 1663 until his death. In fact, ten masters out of nineteen were in service for less than 3 years.¹⁴ For the ushers, twenty-four can be identified from 1554 to 1662, two of whom were promoted to the master afterwards.¹⁵ Excluding the early ushers whose tenure cannot be traced, the average term of the usher's office is around four years five months. As with Owen's School, there were eight schoolmasters from 1613 to 1665 whose average length of service is about six years six months.¹⁶ It is inflated, however, by Peter Vowell, the equivalent to the master Randall in the Coopers' School, who engaged in Owen's School as long as twenty-six years from 1628 to his death in 1654. Actually, the median of the length is three years.

Hence, the level of the teachers' mobility in both Coopers' and Owen's Schools was as high as those of the poorest endowed schools, like Wenhaston school in Suffolk, whose yearly stipend was only £7, housing 10 teachers in 37 years between 1597 and 1633.¹⁷ Let us discuss such mobility further by illustrating a couple of teachers' careers in both schools that can be identified. Samuel Wilson, a master of the Coopers' Company's School from 1616 to 1618, was a native of Bedford. Being 15 years old in 1600, he matriculated Oriel College, Oxford. After about four-year study, which was normal terms of the completion for undergraduates then, he proceeded to BA at Brasenose College in 1605. Then, he proceeded to MA at Brasenose in 1611, taking slightly longer time than the three-year requisite.¹⁸ On 30 April 1616, he was chosen to be a schoolmaster by the Coopers' Company, winning over at least one other applicant, Mr Shawe of Christ College, Cambridge.¹⁹ Immediately, on the same day, he was brought with the company to be presented to Bishop John King of London. After the bishop's approbation, Wilson was placed in the school on 2 May 1616.²⁰ He might have had connections with the bishop or at least satisfied the bishop who had disallowed the former two schoolmasters. This good relationship with the bishop, however, does not seem to lead to stability as the schoolmaster. As early as 21 December 1617, he was ordained as a deacon and priest at the same time by the bishop's dispensation.²¹ Perhaps within a short period, according to the customary manner,²² he made a prior notice of resignation well in advance of his actual departure on 19 June 1618. Given this quick ordination after the service of less than two years and his subsequent voluntary departure from the schoolmaster's post, it is reasonable to think that he had intended a career in the church in the first place. Successfully, he returned his hometown being rector of the parish of St Peter Martin, Bedford, in 1621.²³

In addition to such youths with postgraduate degrees who were intending or advancing careers in the church, the teaching posts were sometimes filled by those who were still at the stage of

building an academic career. When John Payne was chosen as an usher of the Coopers' Company's School in 1618, he had just acquired a BA, possibly at Jesus College, Oxford, in the previous year. Less than half a year later, he departed from the office to come back to the college where he proceeded to MA in 1622.²⁴ Although the circumstances of his departure are unknown, we can reasonably assume that he might have undertaken the usher's office as a seasonal labour between undergraduate and postgraduate, making money to be allocated to the prospective expenditure.

As far as we have analysed, these careers of individual teachers appear to underline the interim or temporary nature of teaching jobs undertaken by those who intended other economically more advantageous careers, especially that in the church, as generally suggested.²⁵ However, some teachers show different types of career building. For example, Richard Edwards, master of the Coopers' School from 1620 to 1625, started his teaching career as a private tutor in the house of Edward Bathurst, gentleman, at Goudhurst, Kent, in 1607. Then, he probably ran a private school in the same village. Soon after he was chosen to be an usher of Sutton Valence School that was governed by the Clothworkers' Company of London. There, in place of its pensioned ex-schoolmaster Robert Sharpe, Edwards virtually worked as a schoolmaster until his dismissal in 1617. On 18 May 1620, he approached the Coopers' Company requesting the schoolmastership on next vacancy. Three months later, he was successfully chosen and placed, staying in his office until he died in 1625.²⁶ This case illustrates the way of building the career of those who mainly lived in the teaching field. Similarly, George Lovejoy, who was a master of Owen's School from 1654 to 1665, transferred to the King's School, Canterbury, where he served until his death around 1694.²⁷ In the same era, William Speed, a master of the Coopers' School, after his nearly 10 year service, likewise transferred to the master of Oundle School, Northamptonshire, which was governed by the Grocers' Company of London. Later, in 1688, he departed from Oundle School, coming back to the suburbs of London to run his private school at Hampstead.²⁸

In this way, both schools offered the posts to those who mainly pursued teaching career. Of course, we should be careful not to assume there was a solid teaching profession independent of other callings, especially clerics. Indeed, while Edwards was recorded to give a sermon when he held the schoolmaster's office,²⁹ Lovejoy was once presented as a curate of Islington rather than schoolmaster at the episcopal visitation.³⁰ Nonetheless, their life histories seem to have had different tendency from those of the above-mentioned teachers who apparently intended careers other than teaching. For the teachers, like Edwards, who were in office until their death, both schools might be considered to provide them with ultimate and satisfactory posts. Two of nineteen masters and three of twenty-four ushers of Coopers' School died in their service. Although it is not an enormous number, the rate would have increased if we excluded the obscure cases. Three of eight masters of Owen's School died in office, which seems considerable. On the other hand, some teachers, such as Lovejoy and Speed, were not fully satisfied with the

positions of both schools getting posts in other schools to advance their teaching career. Whether both schools offered terminal posts to them or not, they stayed in the office for relatively longer period.

Salaries of the Teachers: Were They Enough?

From these analyses of the life histories of the teachers in both schools, we find that not every teacher regarded his job as an interim one. Rather, some tended to pursue their career in education serving the post longer. Hence, did the high mobility of teachers of both schools resulted from those who regarded teaching as a stepping stone to well-paid clerical careers? It is also suggested that church benefices, generally improving in value during the period up to 1660, were more favourable than the basically fixed stipend of the school in terms of keeping pace with inflation.³¹ However, we should note that there was a huge diversity of the value of benefices among livings. The analysis of the 'Valor Ecclesiasticus' indicates, while 4503 of 8803 rectories and vicarages were estimated at less than £10, only 392 livings were more than £30.³² Although this is based on the data in 1535, and thus precludes the later increase of value, the yearly stipend of the teachers of both schools, that is, £10 from its start in the early sixteenth century and £23 6s. 8d. from 1596 onwards for the Coopers' schoolmaster, £6 13s. 4d. from its start and £9 13s. 4d. from 1596 onwards for the usher, and £20 for the Owen's schoolmaster from its start in the early seventeenth century,³³ do not seem to have compared unfavourably with the value of the majority of livings. In fact, comparing the value of their stipends with that of Wenhaston school, the level of their mobility seems to have been disproportionately high, which requires a further examination of sufficiency of teachers' stipend to live in London, taking account of inflation.

According to figure 1 which compared the teachers' salary of both schools with the estimated cost of living in London from 1574 to 1670, a couple of points become very clear. First, as with the schoolmaster of both schools, his stipend was sufficient to meet his least cost of living regardless of its inflation during the period. The rise of the master's stipend of the Coopers' School mainly by the company's decision seems to have been timely to offset the long-term effect of inflation. When the master had a family, their total income was enough to sustain their living as shown in figures 2 and 3. Secondly, the usher, on the contrary, was much more susceptible to inflation with both short and long terms. If he had dependants, the hardship of his family became severer even if the dependants contributed the family budget. Unlike the schoolmaster's case, the rise of usher's salary in the 1590s does not seem to have been sufficient to constitute a livelihood, especially as our period advanced. In other words, the usher must have needed another source of income other than the stipend and the dependants' earnings to make ends meet.

In addition, teachers' financial conditions could have exacerbated by competition with other teachers in the area. Unlike the case of late medieval Hull, where the town corporation had

guaranteed the monopoly of Latin teaching for the schoolmaster within the borough to induce an applicant,³⁴ there were a host of rivals in the capital during our period, as J. P. Anglin clarifies concerning the reign of Elizabeth I. Some clergy in and around the City of London were involved in education even though its rate was lower than the rural counterparts. Also, university graduates who could not get the post of the endowed school sometimes opened their own schools to earn their bread until getting benefices. Likewise, those who pursued the career in education sometimes ran their own schools as they did not always acquire the job at the endowed ones.³⁵ Along with those who could have become teachers in our schools, other sorts opened schools as well. Tradespeople did in the intervals of their work. Some parish clerks did so to supplement their meagre income. Aliens and scriveners took advantage of their skills to teach foreign languages and writing respectively.³⁶ These freelance teachers had the potential to earn more money than those in the endowed schools, as in the case of Edward Powell in later years. He succeeded in running a boarding school in Wandsworth in 1714, worked as a writing master there and was said to earn nearly £1000 a year.³⁷

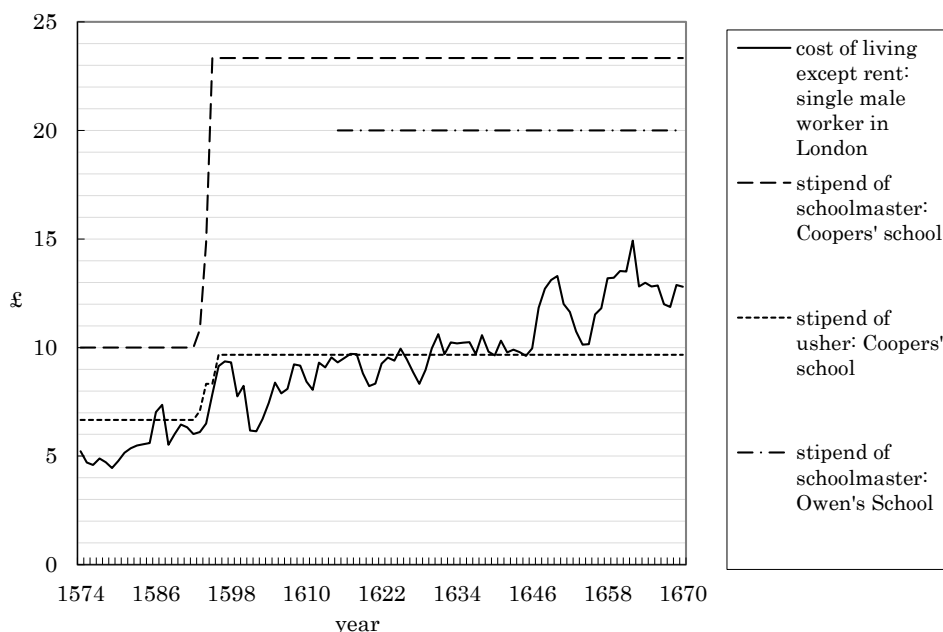


Figure 1: Stipends and the Cost of Living, 1574-1670

Notes: To estimate a dietary budget, Archer uses hospital diet sheets from Bridewell in 1600 that allotted meals of different quantity to different classes of inmates: non-workers, spinners and workers at the mill. For the assessment of dietary requirements of the schoolteacher here, we adopt the diet of the mill workers, which comprised 24 ounces of bread, 1 pottle of beer, 4 ounces of beef and 0.83 ounces of cheese or 0.42 ounces of butter

as daily average over the year. To calculate the cost of the diet, we apply Boulton's commodity price indices and the average prices for 1601-10 for each component of the diet. Following Boulton, since neither beer nor cheese price series is available, we presume people always had ale and butter rather than beer and cheese. For fuel, we follow Boulton's weightings for Archer's budget: candles and faggots are 10 per cent each while coal shares 80 per cent of the total fuel expenditure. The calculated price movement of the fuel is to be adjusted to being 12s. a year in the mid-1590s as Archer estimates. As to clothes, as Boulton remarks, the cost of retailed clothing in early modern London is little known. So, we here tentatively appropriate the price series of the diet of the mill worker for the clothing budget that is adjusted to being 14s. a year in the mid-1590s as Archer estimates. In consequence, clothes are to comprise approximately nine per cent of the total expenditure, which might mean we underestimate the calculated cost here, given that textiles comprise 12.5 per cent of the total disbursement in Phelps Brown and Hopkins price series.

Sources: GL, MSS 5491/1-2; 5606/2-3; Archer, *The Pursuit*, pp. 190-197; Boulton, 'Food Prices', pp. 455-492.

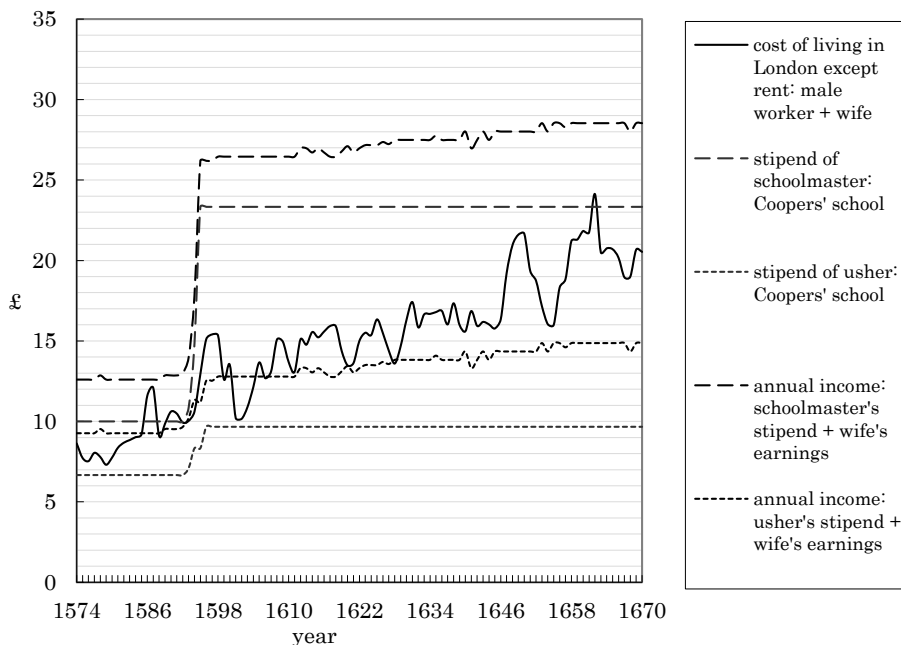


Figure 2: Budget of Coopers' schoolteachers' household (with wife)

Notes: While Owen's schoolmasters were required to be single by the founder's regulation, we can identify at least six married teachers at the Coopers' school. For the diet of a wife,

we adopt the diet of spinners in Archer's diet sheets, which consisted of 16 ounces of bread, 1 quart of beer, 4 ounces of beef and 0.83 ounces of cheese or 0.42 ounces of butter as daily average, because we assume here the teacher's wife also worked to support the household. As for the earnings, Archer estimates a woman earned 52s. per year both in the early 1580s and the mid 1590s while Boulton's annual wage rate series for London labourers slightly rises from 10 in the early 1580s to about 11 in the mid 1590s. Here, we assume the early 1580s are base years. Hence, to calculate the original wage (d.) in given year, Boulton's wage rate number in a given year is multiplied by 624 (d. = 52s.) divided by 10 (= Boulton's wage rate in the early 1580s).

Sources: GL, MSS 5602/1; 5602/4; 5606/2-3; Archer, *The Pursuit*, pp. 190-197; Boulton, 'Wage Labour in Seventeenth-century London', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 49-2 (1996), pp. 268-290; Boulton, 'Food Prices', pp. 455-492; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* under Edward Howes.

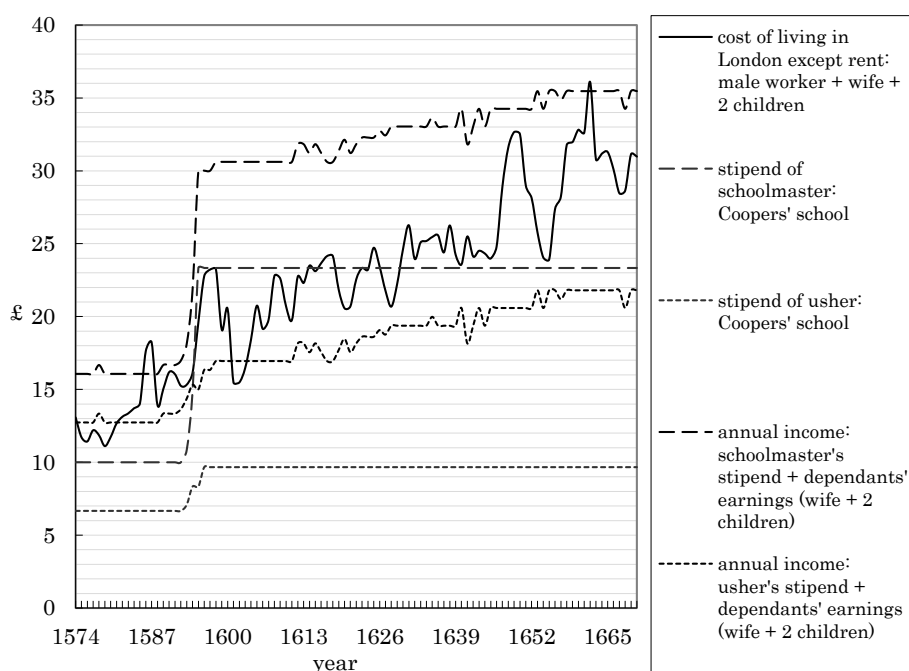


Figure 3: Budget of Coopers' schoolteachers' household (with wife and two children)

Notes: Richard Mitchel, usher of the Coopers' School from 1636 to 1643, left a son and a daughter at his death in office, the largest family identified among the teachers in question. Hence, here we reconstruct the budget of the teacher's household in the case that he had a wife and two children. Child diet cost 34s. 8d. in the early 1580s and rose one and a half times as much in the mid-1590s according to Archer's budget. Among Archer's

diet sheet, non-worker's one rose from the early 1580s (the average of 1581, 1582, 1583) to the mid-1590s (the average of 1594, 1595, 1596) at the rate of 1.5 approximately when calculating upon Boulton's price series. Hence, we estimate price movement of the child diet by adjusting the series of non-worker's to being 34s. 8d. in the early 1580s. As to the earnings, a child is estimated to have gained 34s. 8d. per year in the early 1580s, which are set as base years here. Hence, to calculate the child's wage (d.) in a given year, Boulton's wage rate number in given year is multiplied by 416 (d. = 34s. 8d.) divided by 10 (= Boulton's wage rate in the early 1580s).

Sources: GL, MSS 5602/3, fo. 26v; 5606/2, fo. 376v. See also sources for Figure 2.

Competition against Local Rivals

Given such an overall trend, to what extent did the teachers in both schools face competition from rivals locally? The ecclesiastical authority exercised visitations and required all educators in theory in the diocese to present themselves as well as their licenses. Although some teachers escaped ecclesiastical attention, the visitation records could still show the trend of the number of the known teachers within a given parish. The records of the episcopal visitation from 1554 to 1637 are extant and, in 1664, the first visitation was held after restoring the church authority. Concerning the parish of Stepney, there were no entries of the teachers including the teachers in the Coopers' School until the round in 1586 when Mr Yomans, Coopers' schoolmaster, presented himself with his licence.³⁸ Also in the next session in 1589, the only entry in Stepney was George Turner, a master of the Coopers' School. In the round of 1592, a teacher other than the Coopers' one appeared in Stepney for the first time.³⁹ In 1598, as many as five teachers were found along with the teachers of the Coopers' School. Since then, apart from the visitation in 1612, the number of the freelance teachers in Stepney did not fall below the level of 1598 though their line-up mostly altered at each visitation. In 1637, it peaked at eight not counting for the Coopers' schoolmaster.⁴⁰ In this way, the number of freelance teachers in Stepney by and large increased as time went on. Although the parish of Stepney was spacious and we cannot always know in which hamlet in the parish each teacher was active, the records sometimes indicate that a couple of teachers did their business in the hamlet of Ratcliff or Limehouse, that is, within reasonable walking distance of the Coopers' School.⁴¹ As for the trend during the Civil War, there are not any available records. However, the visitation of 1664 revealed four freelance teachers in Stepney other than William Speed, a master of the Coopers' School. One of these four was probably David Emott, a scrivener and schoolmaster, who showed the testimonial of local inhabitants in 1664 telling he had lived in the hamlet of Ratcliff in the parish of Stepney for 'these sixteene yeares or thereabouts',⁴² which suggests the teachers of the Coopers' School faced competition from local freelance teachers even during the Civil War.

Such incessant competition from local rivals would never have a good impact on the finance of the teachers of the Coopers' School if we consider the petition of usher Gateward for augmentation of his salary in 1658. The Coopers' Company admitted his statement of difficulty in managing his life and understood that smallness of his income was caused by 'some other schoole-masters seating them selves neere to the sayd schoole'.⁴³ Here, it is worth noting that the company tried to regulate the teachers in 1652 concerning the admission of fee-paying learners of Latin as well as English reading and the tuition for teaching arithmetic, casting accounts and writing.⁴⁴ Such extra earnings from fee-paying students must have contributed to the teachers' budget. Especially, as shown above, the poorly endowed usher's livelihood did not suffice without such extras, so that the local competition was taken serious as Gateward did.

Similarly, in the vicinity of Owen's School, we can find contemporary freelance teachers. At the episcopal visitation in 1589, two schoolmasters were known in the parish of Islington, which was the first appearance in the records. Since then, two or three teachers were found in the parishes of Islington or Clerkenwell at every visitation until the foundation of Owen's School. Owen's schoolmaster first appeared at the visitation in 1612, which caught other three teachers in Clerkenwell and one teacher in Islington. At the next visitation in 1615, the number of freelance teachers reached its peak of five in total in two parishes. At the following three visitations before the Civil War, there found one local rival at least. In the mid-seventeenth century, Thomas Singleton, a former usher at Eton, ran a school for 300 boys at Newcastle House in Clerkenwell. After the Restoration, the visitation in 1664 caught one freelance teacher in Clerkenwell other than the Owen's.⁴⁵

There were not any direct references to competition between these freelance teachers and the Owen's. However, when the Brewers' Company tried to regulate the master of Owen's School in 1652, they inquired of him about 'what Scollers he hath in his Scoole and who placed them there' and ordered to set up the table of orders as a result. Given the orders prohibited him from accepting free scholars as well as any other students without the company's permission, the Owen's masters could have hitherto admitted fee-paying students without the company's knowledge.⁴⁶ Moreover, when the company decided to employ an additional instructor who taught writing, cipheryng and casting account in 1660, they ordered the schoolmaster to take care that the poor students nor their parents paid anything any further for these instruction,⁴⁷ which implies the schoolmaster could have made a small fortune for teaching these subjects so far. Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that such an extra income of the Owen's teacher would be diminished by the existence of local freelance teachers who took away his potential customers, just as those of the Coopers' School suffered.

Competing for these potential fee-paying students against local freelance schoolmasters in the vicinity of the school would shrink the teacher's income additional to his fixed stipend and destabilise the teacher's standard of living. Nevertheless, we should not overlook that there was

no lack of those who applied for the teaching post in both schools once it was vacant. The post was sometimes sought by more than one suitor. For example, after the discharge of schoolmaster Hudson in 1616, as many as six people wished for the mastership of the Coopers' School, three of which, including the successful one, Andrew Hughes, were said to have a master's degree.⁴⁸ Similarly, there were at least two applicants to replace schoolmaster Baker in 1634. After Randall was chosen, the unsuccessful one, William Rowland, sued the Coopers' Company.⁴⁹ Even poorly-paid ushers' positions were sometimes wanted by more than one person. For instance, after the departure of usher Newport in 1631, there appeared three suitors from whom George Harris was chosen.⁵⁰ Similarly, upon the warning of dismissing usher Tyne in 1649, two people made a petition to the company for the usher's place.⁵¹ The mastership of Owen's School also became a competitive position. As an illustration, after the decease of master Lymer in 1624, more than one applicant was judged by Mr Downing, examiner.⁵² In 1626 and 1654, the schoolmaster was chosen from three candidates, likewise.⁵³

The applicants sometimes marketed themselves to the company before the post was actually vacant. Richard Edwards had approached the Coopers' Company offering himself for the next vacancy before the post was vacant by the resignation of the former schoolmaster Lawnds, and he was successfully chosen instead.⁵⁴ Even for the usher's place, John Lynwood had made a petition in 1648 before it actually needed a substitute by the warning towards usher Tyne. Lynwood was not however chosen in the following election.⁵⁵

We have already mentioned the schoolmaster's stipend in both schools seems to have been sufficient to sustain modest life in London regardless of inflation. In addition, what has to be noticed here is the significance of the rent-free accommodation which the teachers of both schools enjoyed. It was all the more because the rent in the capital would have been very high and occupied a considerable part in the living expenses of Londoners during our period. According to Archer's reconstruction of the household budget of the indigent in late sixteenth-century London, from 10 to 18 per cent of the total disbursement was allocated to rent. Although its trend over time is little known, Jeremy Boulton reasonably assumes that London's long-term population growth throughout the seventeenth century would have functioned as upward pressure on rent.⁵⁶ This unusually high standard of rents must have struck teaching trades then. To take an example, Andries Minet, who was employed by the Dutch congregation in London in 1646 to teach Dutch, French, writing and ciphering to the children of the congregation, had to pay an annual rent of £20 for the schoolhouse in Fenchurch Street from his yearly salary of £50. As he wanted more spacious schoolhouse soon after, the alternative one in Little Moorfields was found by the consistory, which cost him as much as £36 per annum.⁵⁷ It clearly suggests that the rent would be a burden to those who were involved in teaching business without being allowed the venue and that the teachers of both schools obtained an advantage in that terms.

Moreover, although freelance teachers might have made their fortunes in successful cases as

mentioned, the majority were economically distressed and lacked the security of even minimum wages. By comparison, the teachers in both schools were securely and continuously given a fixed stipend even during the hardships of the Civil War. Unlike some schools which failed to collect the rents of the endowed property and consequently to supply the teachers with full stipends during the war,⁵⁸ the Brewers' and the Coopers' companies securely paid their teachers' salaries then. In this term, for both those who pursued a career in education and those who did not, the posts in Coopers' and Owen's Schools could have been attractive.⁵⁹

Livery Companies' Authority over the Teachers

So far, we have discussed economic conditions of the teachers in both schools which would affect their mobility. Added to this, examination of the circumstances of the teachers' departure suggests another important factor of encouraging mobility. Out of eleven masters of the Coopers' School whose circumstances of departure were clear, two were rejected by the bishop, which caused their quick departure from the office. The discharge of other two by the company also involved in the bishop. While three more were dismissed by the company's consideration, two resigned voluntarily. The remaining two died in office. As for the usher, three of eighteen died in office. Two were promoted to the schoolmaster. Notably, while four resigned for their own reasons, as many as nine were dismissed by the company. About Owen's School, one of six was dismissed by the company. Two resigned and three died in office.⁶⁰

From these remarks, it is clear that teachers' own convenience and motivation did not always determine their mobility. Rather, the company's decision of dismissal seems to have played a considerable role. It opens up the issue of relationship between the teachers and the companies as school governors, which is taken up in the rest of the article.

First of all, the schoolteachers were supervised under the authority of the governors of the schools, that is, the leading members of the companies. The governors were not just responsible for appointing and placing the new schoolteacher but also securing his performance by their regular visitation, yearly for Owen's and twice-yearly for the Coopers' School.⁶¹ For instance, in 1657, after the visitation, the court of assistants of the Brewers' Company unanimously decided to give £5 gratuity to schoolmaster Lovejoy considering his pains and industry.⁶² It is also important to note that their visit to the schools was not confined to the official visitation, which will be discussed later.⁶³

The governors also exercised their authority through judging schoolteachers' petition. In 1656, schoolmaster Lovejoy asked the Brewers' Company to supply necessities as his predecessors had enjoyed. Then, some wardens of the company went to the school to check what goods needed to be supplemented. At the occasion of the coming visitation, the company gave the schoolmaster sheets, blankets and pillows.⁶⁴ In 1598, usher Doughty pleaded with the Coopers' Company to

compensate him for the loss of his chamber, withheld on account of the refurbishment. In response, the company sent the surveyors to consider the remedy, though they do not seem to have offered any compensation as a result.⁶⁵

The greatest authority of the governors to exercise on the schoolteachers was that the governors could discharge the teachers when the former thought the latter unfit. In 1570, when the master, wardens and a couple of other liverymen of the Coopers' Company paid the salary of schoolmaster Ward, they reprov'd him for his misdemeanours and slanders against the company and its master. His attitude to their reproof convinced them of his misbehaviour, they decided to warn him that he should depart from his office within six months.⁶⁶ In 1605, the Coopers' court summoned usher Doughty to inquire about his insults to the company and some of its members. In consideration of his admittance of the allegations, apology and submission, they allowed him to stay in office as long as he kept good conduct, but cautioned him that he would be discharged at the next occasion of his misdemeanour.⁶⁷ Similarly, in 1612, the court summoned schoolmaster Turk to accuse him of his negligence of his office and of causing discord between the almspeople by his unadvised speech, despite several previous admonitions. At the same time, they emphasised their authority, reading out the initial condition in his appointment that he held office during the company's pleasure. After he submitted to the company promising reformation, they pardoned him and withdrew his dismissal which 'they maye lawfullye doe'.⁶⁸ Similarly, upon the complaints of the ancient company members, the Coopers' court summoned schoolmaster Baker in 1631. After he apologised for his offence, the assistants and ancient members forgave him and allowed him to continue his job 'during the Comp' pleasure'. Unless he behaved well and orderly, he should be warned to avoid the post.⁶⁹

The ushers were likewise subject to correction and dismissal. Mr Watts, employed as an usher for trial in 1625, was displaced by the Coopers' court next year upon their dislike.⁷⁰ Similarly, after about the five months' trial, the Coopers' court dismissed John Storr in 1630 for his absence and neglect of the office.⁷¹ Two ushers, Hutchin and Allen, were displaced by the company for their sickness in 1629 and 1635 respectively.⁷² Along with these, five ushers were discharged by the company though the reason was not stated. At Owen's School, though the circumstances are not clear, the court of assistants of the Brewers' Company decided to dismiss schoolmaster Jones in 1620 giving him 20s. by way of settling all claims he could make from the company.⁷³

However, it was not always easy for the company to exercise their authority and to dismiss the schoolteachers. It seems to be typically shown by the following case of schoolmaster Turk's dismissal. Turk, who had once been reproached and forgiven by the Coopers' court in 1612, was again accused of negligence in the following year. In response to grievances expressed by parents and local people, the company sent some learned men to the school to assess the attainment level of the students. As a result, the company found that the pupils under the schoolmaster, whose number was less than 10, learned little or nothing while those under the usher did better despite

their large number of more than 40. On the ground that Turk had not fulfilled the promise of reforming his defects in 1612, the master and wardens of the company with the advice of the assistants and other members decided to demand his departure from his office within six months on 25 Jun 1613. On 18 Jan 1614, displacing Turk from the school and the office, the company chose the new master Hudson whose sufficiency had already been certified by the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, after Hudson's placement and instruction for some time, he was inhibited from teaching by the bishop of London. Meanwhile, Turk, the former schoolmaster, had intruded himself into teaching in the school without the company's authorisation. Hereupon, with the advice of the legal counsel, the Coopers' court decided to take legal means to remove him from his house at the west end of the school and from the school building. On 22 February, the company sent him a sealed letter ordering the dispossession of both buildings, which were then leased to the new schoolmaster Hudson on 1 March with the attorney's assurance. As Turk did not submit, this went to the Court of Common Pleas. After hearings in the first half of 1615, the case was referred to the bishop of London. After the inquiry had lasted more than half a year, Turk's removal was sanctioned by the bishop on 26 Jan 1616 in exchange for the company's allowing him the yearly pension of £10 and two rooms of his choice for residence for life as well as £26 13s. 4s. for a year's salary and £20 for two years' pension that were certified as outstanding. At the same time, the bishop showed his discontent with Hudson's continuance ordering the company should choose new schoolmaster who was then to be checked and approved by the bishop. Eventually, with the consent of the bishop, Turk was discharged on 1 Feb 1616 while Hudson was displaced 22 Feb.⁷⁵ In this case, to secure the schoolmaster's dismissal, the company had to spend not only a large sum in compensation but also more than two years of time. The cost and pains concerning the legal battle were also enormous.

Teachers as Co-managers of the Charities

Considering such a case where the company had difficulty in dismissing the schoolmaster, costing a lot of time and pains if the masters did not accept it, the companies' authority over the teachers might be considered to be limited. The relationship between the company and the teachers could be rather complicit given that the latter was originally expected to work as a deputy of the governors on school management as shown in the order of Owen's School. Owen's schoolmaster was to be a candidate for the custos of the school and almshouses on the same site.⁷⁶ In fact, from 1658 onwards, the schoolmaster started to serve as a custos, whose office the company's clerk had hitherto taken.⁷⁷ Regardless of being custos, the Owen's schoolmaster was responsible for keeping a register of the pupils who entered into the school. He was also supposed to let almspeople and pupils keep order on the site by various means, such as choosing sweepers from the pupils and inculcating the order whose copy he kept. He was even expected to

pay attention to the pupils' state of faces, hands and hair.⁷⁸ Following the trend of Elizabethan and early Stuart schools,⁷⁹ morning and evening prayers were exercised by the schoolmaster.

As to the Coopers' School, although the founders did not clearly state the pastoral duties of the teachers, the company certainly expected them to play such a role as specified at the appointment of schoolmaster Petit in 1571 'for the good guiding of the scollers there'.⁸⁰ By 1564, at the latest, the school held a Bible and service books to be read in daily prayers by the schoolmaster and pupils within the school. Later, around 1592, the company built the chapel next to the schoolhouse where a Bible and a service book were furnished at the company's cost.⁸¹ In addition, the Coopers' schoolmaster seems to have lead his pupils to the Stepney church for Sunday sermons.⁸² Like Owen's School, the register of the pupils was probably kept by the teachers in the Coopers' School.⁸³

Along with these duties of controlling its members, the teachers of both schools also shared responsibilities of caring the members with the company. In the summer of 1570, on the report of schoolmaster Ward that the plague visited Ratcliff, the Coopers' court permitted him to close the school for 37 days considering the infectious season and pupils' health.⁸⁴ In 1641, schoolmaster Vowell reported to the Brewers' Company that there was a lack of fuels for the almswomen and pleaded their poverty as well as fuel's expensiveness. In response, the company provided two chaldrons of coal for them.⁸⁵ Turk, the master of the Coopers' School, received 4d. from the company in 1596-7, so that he could provide faggots for the almspeople there.⁸⁶ He was also paid 20d in 1606 by the company to allocate for cleaning the sink and mending the lock of almswomen Stevens.⁸⁷

This last example points to another task that the schoolteachers were involved in: They often paid for repairs, temporarily, on the company's behalf. For example, schoolmaster Turner in 1591-2 was paid the money for mending the pump there by the Coopers' Company.⁸⁸ In 1599-1600 and 1601-2, the company compensated schoolmaster Turk for the expenses he had laid out for nails, laths and so on.⁸⁹ Similarly, in 1655-6, schoolmaster Randall was repaid the 9s. that he had paid to the glazier.⁹⁰ The reimbursement was sometimes large, like the case of Randall who received as much as £35 in 1639 for the school and his house.⁹¹ Owen's schoolmasters also played the same role. As an illustration, in 1619, schoolmaster Jones was given 21s. by the Brewers' Company according to the bill for reparation of the school and almshouses.⁹² The company frequently gave schoolmaster Vowell money ranging from 6s. 6d. to £4 5s. 9d. from 1629 to 1651 to pay for mending the pump, glazing the windows, building his study and so forth.⁹³ Not only schoolmasters but also ushers undertook this bursarial task. In 1601-2, the Coopers' Company paid usher Doughty 16d. that he had disbursed for a bundle of laths and drink for the workmen.⁹⁴ Similarly, in 1637-8, usher Mitchel was given 2s. by the company for the smiths' work. In 1645 and 1655-6, the ushers paid the bill of glaziers.⁹⁵

From these reflections, it can safely be said that the schoolteachers shared the responsibility

for school management with the companies. The ambiguity of the location of authority over the school is demonstrated most clearly in the following disputes over control of pupils' admissions. In 1652, the Brewers' court directed schoolmaster Vowell to appear at the next court and to show what pupils he had and who placed them in the school. After the inquiry, the company made sure that the court of assistants should hereafter appoint all free scholars in Owen's School and, in its interim or vacancy, the master and wardens for the time being, or any two of them should do. They also decided that the table of the orders concerning the schoolmaster should be set up in the school. To write, engross, frame, carry and set up the orders, the company spent £1 7s. 6d. in total.⁹⁶ In fact, all thirty free scholars of Owen's School were supposed to be chosen from the parishes of Islington and Clerkenwell at the company's discretion according to the founder's orders.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, this company's reaffirmation of their right in 1652 implies that the schoolmasters had accepted free scholars without the company's consent.

Correspondingly, in 1654, the Coopers' court issued the following directions to the master and usher of the school, being concerned at its deviation from the founder's intention. First, schoolmaster Randall should inform the master and wardens of the company how many free scholars the school had then, what kind of rewards he and the usher or either of them received from the free scholars at the first entrance and what they usually took yearly afterwards for teaching the free scholars to read and learn grammar. Secondly, the schoolmaster henceforth should not neglect or refuse to teach the free scholars so that they would keep their supposed number of 30. Thirdly, both teachers should not admit any free scholars without the consent of the master and wardens of the company. Fourthly, until or unless the number of free scholars reached thirty, both teachers hereafter should not accept any other pupils to learn reading and grammar. In the interim, only the master of the company could permit the entrance of such pupils, whose parents or friends were able to pay for their schooling, through his interview with the candidates. Fifthly, upon the entrance of the free scholars, both teachers should not take money or anything more than the sum or value of 18d. Neither did they take money or anything after the admittance except that which was freely given. Sixthly, both teachers hereafter should submit the list of the free scholars in the school to the master and wardens of the company at any time of their request in order for them to check how these present orders were observed. In its place, at the same time, both teachers were allowed to take reasonable recompense for teaching the free scholars the science of arithmetic, casting accounts and writing.⁹⁸

These Coopers' lengthy directions suggest a couple of notable points. First of all, like the Brewers' order in 1652, the teachers had presumably accepted the free scholars as well as other paying pupils without consent of the company. Next, they had possibly levied not only the admission fee but also tuition on the free scholars against the founders' will. At last, the number of the free scholars seems to have been stagnant then. Although it is not sure whether this was caused by admitting as well as favouring fee-paying students and collecting tuition even from the

free scholars, the company thought so and tried to regulate the teachers' discretion.

Micro-politics on the School Site

In this way, although being under the company's supervision, the schoolteachers seem to have had some sort of discretion and authority within the school. So, to what extent did they exercise their authority? We will examine the relationship between the teachers and other members on the site. There are a couple of examples of conflict between schoolmaster and usher at the Coopers' School. In response to the discord between schoolmaster Baker and usher Harris in 1632, the Coopers' court summoned both teachers and found that Baker not only beat Harris but also maligned the company. Then, the company commenced proceedings of dismissing Baker. Harris was also put out about five months after the hearing.⁹⁹ Of course, their relationship does not seem to have always been antagonistic. In fact, the appointment of the usher was sometimes due to the schoolmaster's voice. For instance, just a week before the appointment of Edward Howse as an usher in 1643, the members of the Coopers' company met schoolmaster Randall to hear from him about the usher's place. Having obtained Randall's consent and liking, the Coopers' court unanimously chose Howse to be an usher.¹⁰⁰

Hence, whether the schoolmaster did use violence or not, can we regard him as a paternalistic tyrant within the school as John Brinsley observed in 1612?¹⁰¹ It is still a debatable point if we consider not just the relationship between the schoolmaster and the usher but the company as the third player intervening between both teachers. We have already seen that not only the schoolmaster but also the usher demanded the reimbursement from the company and that their claims were not always made at the same time. It implies there was room for the usher's decision on expenditure independent of the schoolmaster.

Furthermore, the chain of order on the school does not appear to have been vertical. In other words, directions from the company to the usher were not necessarily informed via the schoolmaster. As an illustration, on December 1616, the members of the company twice went to Ratcliff to confer with not only schoolmaster Wilson but also usher Martin 'about better attendinge the Schoole'. They also had a discussion on September next year.¹⁰² Here, the company directly urged both teachers to better the school. Actually, the members of the company visited the usher no less frequently than the schoolmaster. For instance, in 1610, the members of the company had a dinner in the usher's chamber at Ratcliff when they paid the pension to the almspeople there for the Michaelmas quarter and dealt with the timber for the school and almshouses while, at the next occasion of paying the quarterly pension on 22 December in the same year, the schoolmaster's house was chosen as a place for dinner.¹⁰³ Similarly, in 1644 and 1645, when distributing the pension for Midsummer quarter, the members of the company visited the houses of both teachers while in other two quarters they seem to have visited

schoolmaster's.¹⁰⁴

In this way, by the company, the usher was regarded as no less important than the schoolmaster for the betterment of the school. In fact, the usher could be a crucial collaborator with the company. In legal battles to dismiss defective schoolmasters that we have examined, the company asked for the usher's co-operation. During the procedure of evicting schoolmaster Turk from 1614 to 1615, usher Doughty presented himself to Chancery at least three times in the company's behalf.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, in discharging schoolmaster Baker from 1634 to 1635, usher Gill attended the trial and wrote diverse articles against Baker in the company's behalf.¹⁰⁶ The usher thus functioned as a witness to support the company's accusation of defects against the schoolmaster. It clearly shows, while the schoolmaster supervised the usher, the latter could have monitored the former. Moreover, here, we may recall that the company compared Turk's achievement to Doughty's in the denunciation of Turk. In other words, whether the usher actively acted as an observer for the company's sake or not, the existence or activities of the usher would challenge the schoolmaster's authority and discretion within the school, which seems to have been encouraged by the frequent contact with the company.

As for the relationship between the teachers and almspeople, while there were examples of schoolmasters' caring for the almspeople as seen, it was not always harmonious. For instance, from 1619 to 1620, there happened a controversy between the usher Baker and the almswoman Joan Resebridge. She was in drink and reviled other almspeople as well as Baker and his wife. Upon the first notice of her offence, the company forgave her after a brief expulsion, her submission to the company and a promise of reform. Notwithstanding, it was reported that she repeated the bad behaviour. Although she again promised to reform, the company commenced the procedure of displacing her and eventually purged her in 1622. Two things were decisive in the company's judgement. One was the complaint and petition of the other almspeople who reported that her behaviour became worse and desired 'some ease of her abusing them'. The other was the testimony of usher and his wife who presented themselves to the Coopers' court and said that Resebridge not only maligned them but also swore at the company, 'bidding the Company goe hange w'th other unseemly speeches', in the usher's hearing.¹⁰⁷ It suggests that, while the teachers functioned to some extent as an agent of the governors of the almshouses informing the company of the problem, the almspeople themselves could have directly noticed and called on the company to better the situation. In that sense, it can be said that the almspeople were not always under the teachers' control.

Conclusion

From these observations, a couple of points may be made. On the one hand, the schoolteachers can be considered as subject to the authority of the company that held the power to appoint,

supervise, dismiss and finance them. On the other hand, such an authority was mitigated by the very characteristic of the teachers' office, sharing the responsibility of finance and management concerning the school with the company through daily practices as well as according to the founders' initial settings. In other words, the teachers, who shared the authority over the school, could enjoy certain discretion as typified in the disputes on pupils' admission.

Nonetheless, we should not ignore that the teacher's authority within the school could have been challenged by the subordinate members on the site who had a chance to contact the company directly, which was guaranteed by the company officers' frequent visits to the school more than at the official visitation. Another notable point is the company successfully dismissed the teachers in the end whom they thought problematic, even though sometimes suffering a huge trouble and expense. It seems to illustrate the livery company's capacity of controlling those who lived in the suburbs within the growing metropolis.

Teachers at the Coopers' and Owen's Schools in the early modern suburbs of London were not economically-advantageous posts compared to the upper clerical positions. The usher was especially poorly-paid, vulnerable to inflation and competition. Even so, they were securely and continuously given a fixed stipend and rent-free accommodation even during the period of disturbances as long as they satisfied the governors, which could have made their positions attractive and encouraged some of them to take the office longer.

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- 56 Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 194; Boulton, 'Food Prices and the Standard of Living in London in the 'Century of Revolution', 1580-1700', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 103-3 (2000), pp. 477-478.
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- 58 Vincent, *The Grammar Schools*, p. 154; Vincent, *The State and School Education, 1640-1660, in England and Wales: A Survey Based on Printed Sources* (London, 1950), pp. 40-41. See also Archer, *The History of the Haberdashers' Company* (Chichester, 1991), p. 83.
- 59 While admitting the finance of freelance teachers was worse than those in endowed schools, Anglin doubts the movement from the former to the latter on a large scale pointing out the latter's finance was also tight, which we should discount especially concerning the schoolmasters' according to the analysis above. Anglin reckons 15 freelance teachers in the Elizabethan period who accepted posts in endowed schools. Vincent gives a couple of examples in later years that freelance teachers closed their schools to take posts in endowed schools. Anglin, p. 68; Vincent, *The Grammar Schools*, p. 168.
- 60 GL, MSS 5445/12-19; 5491/1-2; 5602/1-4; 5603/1, 3, 4; 5606/1-4.
- 61 GL, MSS 5480A; 7696, fos. 118-119.
- 62 GL, MS 5445/18, 5 May 1657, 5 Nov 1657.
- 63 As to Owen's School, for instance, see GL, MS 5445/18, 5 Nov 1657, 26 Nov 1657. For the Coopers' School, see discussion below.
- 64 GL, MS 5445/18, 1 Apr 1656, 6 May 1656.
- 65 GL, MS 5602/2, fo. 10v.
- 66 GL, MS 5602/1, 3 Oct 1570.
- 67 GL, MS 5602/2, fo. 65v.
- 68 GL, MS 5602/2, fos. 123v, 138.
- 67 GL, MSS 5603/3, 22 Sep 1633; 5606/3, fo. 289.
- 70 GL, MS 5602/2, fos. 237, 247v.
- 71 GL, MSS 5603/3, 7 Apr 1630; 5606/3, fo. 273v.
- 72 GL, MSS 5606/3, fos. 275v, 334v, 335; 5603/4, fo. 41.
- 73 GL, MS 5445/14, 5 Oct 1620.
- 74 GL, MSS 5602/2, fos. 137v-138; 5606/3, fo. 39.
- 75 GL, MSS 5602/2, fos. 139, 139v, 149, 157v-158, 158v; 5606/3, fos. 79v, 81, 81v.
- 76 GL, MS 5480A.
- 77 GL, MS 5491/2.
- 78 GL, MS 5480A.

- 79 Green, pp. 280-282.
- 80 GL, MS 5602/1, 7 Apr 1571.
- 81 GL, MSS 5602/1, 16 Nov 1592; 5606/1, fo. 276; 5606/2, fos. 189v-191; 5606/3, fo. 268v.
- 82 LMA, P93/DUN/327 (Saint Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney: Vestry Meeting Minute Book, 1579-1662), fo. 116. Green, p. 283.
- 83 GL, MS 5606/2, fo. 189v.
- 84 GL, MS 5602/1, 13 Jul 1570.
- 85 GL, MS 5445/16, fo. 161.
- 86 GL, MS 5606/2, fo. 226v.
- 87 GL, MS 5606/2, fo. 323.
- 88 GL, MS 5606/2, fo. 184.
- 89 GL, MS 5606/2, fos. 257v, 277.
- 90 GL, MS 5606/3, fo. 493v.
- 91 GL, MS 5606/3, fo. 369.
- 92 GL, MS 5491/1, 1618-9.
- 93 GL, MS 5491/1, 1629-30, 1631-2, 1632-3, 1635-6, 1638-9, 1640-1, 1641-2, 1643-4, 1644-5, 1645-6, 1646-7, 1647-8, 1649-50, 1650-1.
- 94 GL, MS 5606/2, fo. 277.
- 95 GL, MS 5606/3, fos. 362, 409v, 493v.
- 96 GL, MSS 5445/17, 9 Feb 1652, 17 Aug 1652; 5491/1, 1651-2; 5491/2, 1651-2, 1652-3.
- 97 GL, MSS 5462A, fo. 26; 5480A; *VCH Middlesex*, vol. 1, p. 310.
- 98 GL, MS 5602/4, fos. 20-20v.
- 99 GL, MSS 5603/3, 12 May 1632; 5603/4 fo. 3v. Although it is not clear, it is reasonable to assume the relevance of the dispute to Harris's dismissal considering the normal duration of warning prior to the dismissal. For other examples of conflict, see MSS 5606/2 fos. 68-68v; 5606/3 fo. 167v.
- 100 GL, MSS 5602/3, fo. 27v; 5606/3, fo. 398v. For other examples, see MSS 5602/1, 12 February 1595/96; 5602/3, fos. 75, 138v, 140; 5606/1, fo. 240v.
- 101 John Brinsley, *Ludus Literatus, or the Grammar School* (London, 1612), pp. 270-271.
- 102 GL, MS 5606/3, fos. 114v, 130(2).
- 103 GL, MS 5606/2, fos. 375v, 376v.
- 104 GL, MS 5606/3, fos. 402v, 409v.
- 105 GL, MS 5606/3, fos. 61v, 80, 82.
- 106 GL, MS 5606/3, fos. 325, 325v.
- 107 GL, MSS 5602/2, fos. 196-196v; 5606/3, fos. 170v, 208, 220.

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