

Bournemouth School

1901



2026

In the Beginning...

Bournemouth School opened at 9.00am on Tuesday, 22 January 1901. Fifty-four boys assembled in the hall of their brand-new school in Portchester Road under the watchful eyes of the headmaster, Dr Edward Fenwick, and his two full-time and two part-time members of staff.



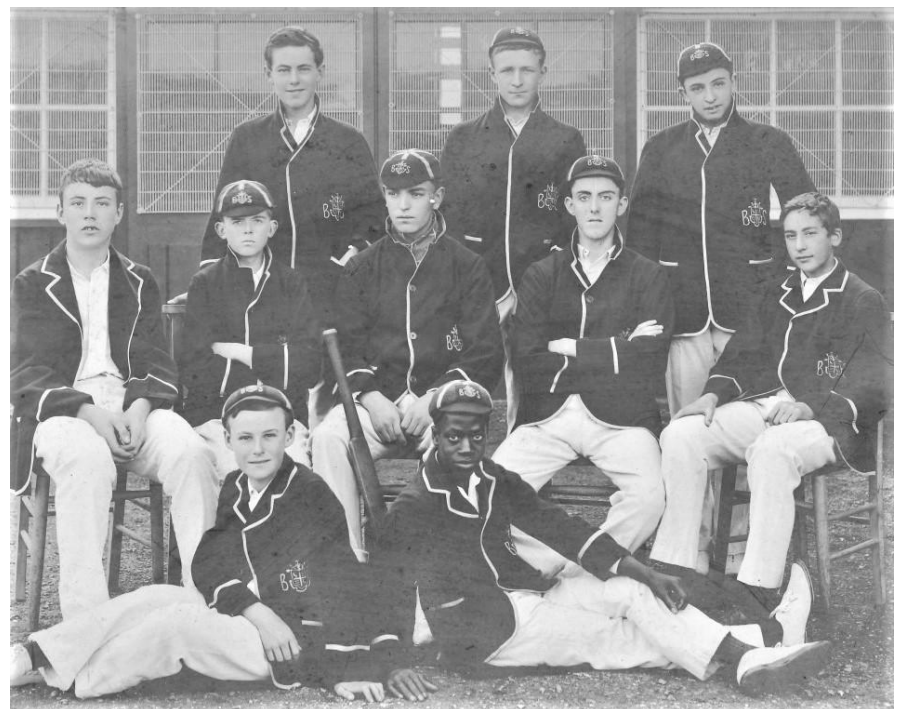
Dr Edward Fenwick with his first staff (of just four teachers) together with the first intake of pupils, 1901

Then officially known as “Bournemouth Secondary and Technical School,” Bournemouth School was controlled jointly by Hampshire County Council and Bournemouth Borough Council. Some of the pupils came from Hampshire and travelled by train from places as far afield as Lymington and Ringwood. The school’s 1906 prospectus declared as its aim: *To provide for boys of between 8 and 18 years of age a sound general training, moral, mental and physical, and at the same time to give such an education as will thoroughly prepare them for professional, commercial or scientific life.*



Bournemouth School in Portchester Road

Over time, Dr Fenwick introduced the features which Bournemouth School students now take for granted. As a keen sportsman himself, he encouraged cricket, football and athletics and Bournemouth School’s teams were soon competing on equal terms with other older and more established schools in the county. (In contrast, rugby appeared as a school sport for the first time in the Autumn Term of 1935.)



The First XI, 1903

In 1908, the first division of the school into houses took place. Over the years, house names have come and gone; the first houses were named after their housemasters: Barraclough, Ord, Sewell and Taylor.



Dr Edward Fenwick, with students who achieved outstanding academic results (C.A. Kershaw, N. Wragg and D.C. Colborne), 1916

Dr Fenwick served as headteacher from 1901 to 1932.



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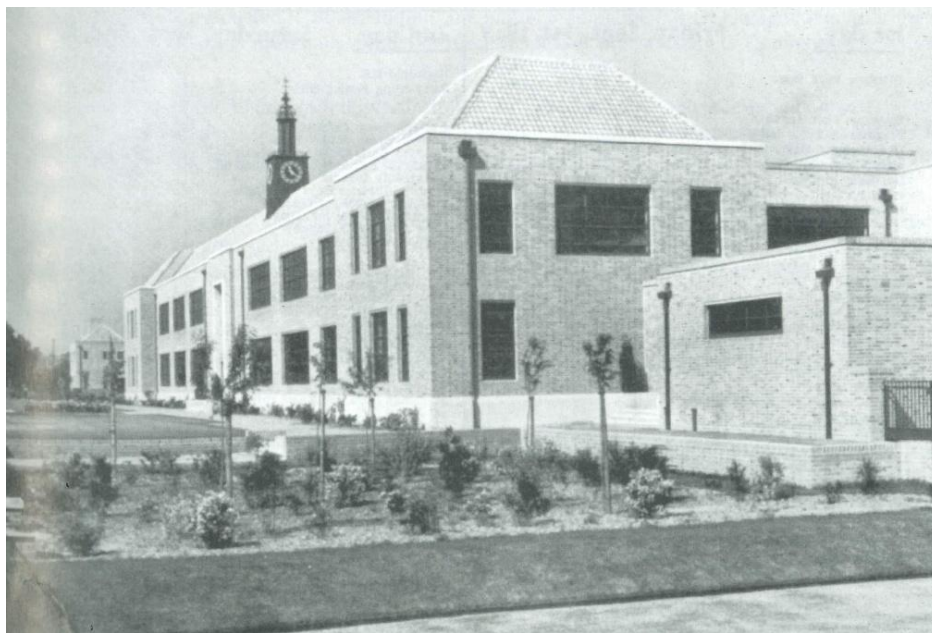
Moving to East Way

At the beginning of the Autumn Term of 1932, the school welcomed its second headmaster, Mr Parry. Those who remember him describe him as a small man with a pronounced Welsh accent who always wore his academic gown and mortar board in school.



Mr J. E. Parry

In the Spring Term of 1935, the school's governors resolved to proceed with the building of new facilities. The proposed site was in East Way, overlooking the new playing fields and the Stour valley. Mr Parry hoped that it would "rank with the greatest and finest education institutions in our land, and thereby enhance the glory of our borough".



The new Bournemouth School in 1939, as war broke out

Bournemouth School, on its current site, opened its gates exactly at the time of the outbreak of the Second World War. The first pupils to walk into the new buildings were not, as expected, Bournemouth boys but those of Taunton's School, who had been evacuated from Southampton. During the war years the school's buildings served students from both schools, resulting in a relationship between both sets of past students which prevailed for more than 70 years.



The photograph above, taken in Southampton, shows the boys of Taunton's School being led to the station to be evacuated to Bournemouth.

Mr Parry decided to retire in 1957, after twenty-five years at the helm. He had presided over two major events: the transfer from Portchester Road to East Way and the difficult war years.



Mr Parry and the school prefects, April 1946



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Into the Swinging Sixties

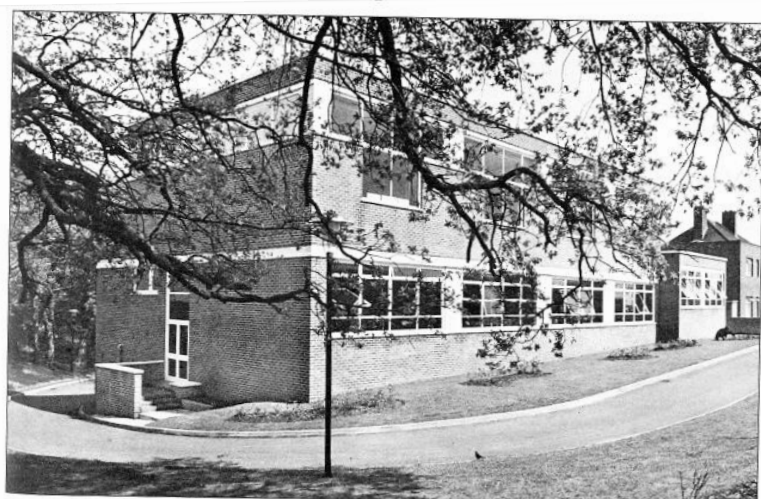
When Mr Bennett, the school's third headmaster, took office in 1957, there had been virtually no changes to the building or the school's way of life since the boys had moved to East Way in 1939.



Mr E.G. Bennett

Just one year after Mr Bennett had taken up the reins of office, in the Autumn Term of 1958 the editor of *The Bournemouthian* was to write: "No September has brought quite a such a 'new' feeling to the school as this one". There was a new timetable, six new members of staff, a new organisation of forms with a new method of naming them and 170 new boys, bringing the total on roll to 956.

In 1960, Bournemouth School for Girls opened its new buildings at the bottom of East Way, relocating girls and staff from the old premises at Lansdowne. However, girls and boys were severely discouraged from meeting; a forlorn editorial in *The Bournemouthian* commented that, "For all the difference it has made, they might just as well still be at the Lansdowne".

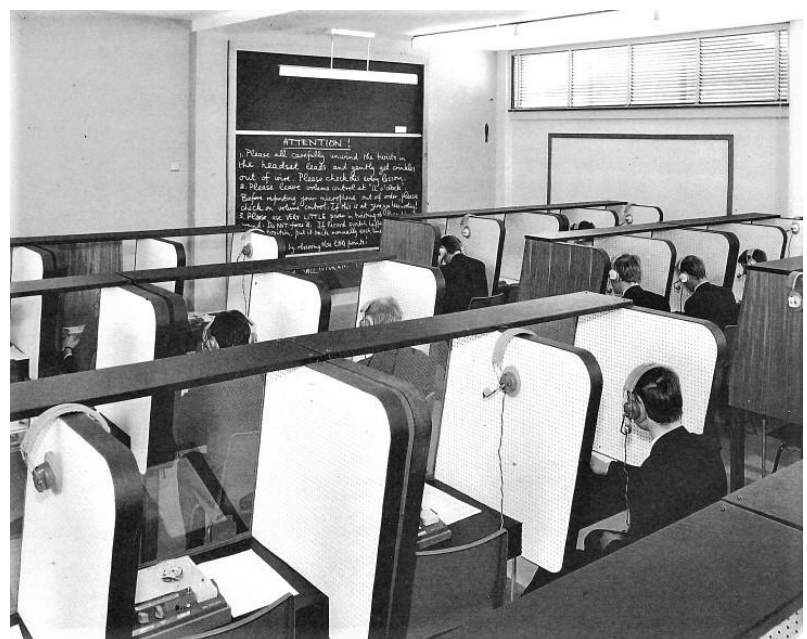


**The new sixth form block, opened
by Sir Edward Boyle, May 1968**

In 1966, work began on the biggest transformation to Bournemouth School since it moved to East Way – the construction of the sixth form block, which was opened in 1968. The new facility comprised a magnificent library, a state-of-the-art language laboratory, a suite of sixth form rooms and, ingeniously using the sloping site leading down to the copse, a large lecture theatre capable of holding a full year group at one time.



The sixth form library, as it was then called, 1968



The language laboratory, now an ICT suite

Academic excellence at Bournemouth School attained new heights under the headmastership of Mr Bennett, with it becoming the expectation that virtually every sixth former would leave the school to enter university.



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The School Under Threat

During the 1970 summer holidays, Mr Bennett suffered a heart attack which resulted in him deciding to retire. He was succeeded by Peter Harper, who became the school's fourth headmaster on 1 May 1971.



Mr H. P. Harper

Mr Harper's declared intention was to make the school a happy place for both staff and boys. Times were changing and his relaxed style of leadership was appropriate for the difficult and turbulent decade ahead.

One dramatic summer night in May 1973, the school hall, which had been built in 1939, was completely destroyed by fire. Fortunately, the fire was contained: it destroyed the hall and the stage, but nothing more. The present hall was ready for use by September 1975.



The ruins of the School Hall after the fire in 1973

The opening of the new hall coincided with deep political movements, too, which inevitably had unsettling effects on the life of the school. Under the Local Government Act 1972, which came into effect in 1974, Bournemouth lost its County Borough status and this part of Hampshire was incorporated into a new, enlarged county of Dorset.

Both Bournemouth and Poole strongly resisted the movement to remove grammar schools from the local educational landscape, with the result that Bournemouth School, Bournemouth School for Girls, Poole Grammar School for Boys and Parkstone Grammar School for Girls remained as the only four grammar schools in Dorset.

The election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party, in May 1979, released Bournemouth School from the threat of becoming a comprehensive school. There remained, however, significant challenges for the school's leadership. In a very revealing final letter to the school in *The Bournemouthian*, Mr Harper's words spelled out the situation with heartfelt sadness:

"The past year is one over which we could be very gloomy... Financial cuts have led many schools to the edge of desperation and much of education service painfully built up over many years has been dismantled at a stroke. Purchasing power has been cut to a ludicrously low point, only structurally essential repairs are carried out to buildings, redecorating is a thing of the past. Most hurtfully, Bournemouth School has had to accept a cut in ancillary staffing of well over thirty percent. This at a time when we have the largest sixth form on record."



Bournemouth School Staff in 1976

Mr Harper retired at the end of the Autumn Term of 1981.



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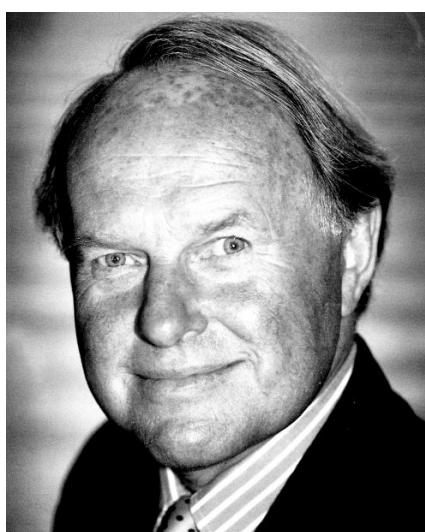
Changing Times...



Mr J. A. B. Kelsall

John Kelsall was appointed as headmaster in the Summer Term of 1982 after two terms as acting headmaster; he had joined the school in the Autumn Term of 1978 as deputy headmaster. His energetic leadership maintained standards to be proud of, even in the face of financial difficulties.

In July 1987, John Kelsall bade farewell to Bournemouth School after nine years of positive contribution to its wellbeing: three and a half years as deputy head and five and a half as headmaster. In the entire history of the school, he was the first head to move on to another post: all his predecessors had left only upon retirement.



Col A. F. P. Petrie

Colonel Allan Petrie arrived as headmaster in September 1987 from the Duke of York's Royal Military School in Dover. He had an absolute insistence upon the expectations of both the students and the staff. Under his leadership, the school made considerable academic progress, entering the newly-imposed world of comparative performance tables in a strong position.

During his tenure, the physical fabric of the school was enlarged and improved almost beyond recognition.

In 1990, the school gained Grant Maintained status. By 1992 it was decided to replace the traditional lower school, middle school and sixth form setup with a new vertical pastoral system which would also embrace the activities of the old house system. It was felt that this would help to develop a better sense of belonging and coherence in the growing school. Accordingly, it was decided that the six old houses of Avon, Forest, Hambledon, Portchester, Romsey and Twynham would now be reduced in number to five; their colours would remain, but the names would be new. The choice was to be given to each of the new heads of house and they reflected their interests and a decided Englishness. Darwin, Elgar, Newton, Scott and Turner houses were created (Moore house came into being when the school expanded further to welcome 180 students into Year 7 from 2018).

New science labs were constructed along with a new art and technology block behind the school, with six teaching spaces coming into use in 1996. Two other projects, both the brainchildren of Allan Petrie, came to fruition after his departure: the extensions for the music and modern languages departments and, most prestigious of all, the Sir David English Sports Centre. This latter project was made possible not only by National Lottery funding but also by the generosity of parents.



**The Sir David English Sports Centre,
opened on 26 November 1999**

The centre is named after Sir David English, an Old Bournemouthian who, in the latter years of his life, became a great supporter of the school. Sir David served as a governor and, despite his punishing schedule of work as the editor of the *Daily Mail* and a myriad of other commitments, worked alongside Allan Petrie to negotiate the financial and legal barriers to secure the facilities from which we still benefit today.



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Into a New Millennium



Mr John Granger

John Granger's arrival as the school's seventh headmaster in September 1996 coincided with the introduction of five-form entry, which added weight to the school's various bids for better facilities.

The new Labour Government, elected in 1997, swiftly passed legislation which, yet again, led to a change in the status of the school. This was the third change of status in less than twenty-five years (from being "ruled" by the Bournemouth Education Committee in the years up to 1973; to being under the thumb of Dorset County Council from 1974 to 1990; and having its independence as a Grant Maintained school from 1990 to 1999).

In September 1999 the school became a Foundation School under a newly-reconstituted Bournemouth Borough which now possessed its own local education authority once again.



The 2008-09 Senior Prefects

Through careful management of limited budgets, John Granger was able to continue improvements in the school's infrastructure. Funding streams, including those through acquiring language college status and then becoming a training school, were used to improve ICT facilities and, most significantly, build a new mathematics teaching block in 2006.



Dr Dorian Lewis

Dr Dorian Lewis became the school's eighth headmaster in September 2009. A school mantra of "*hard work, discipline, smart appearance and respect*" was introduced, with the quality of teaching becoming a focus for improvement. The school converted to become an Academy on 1 September 2011 (regaining independence from the local authority). Later that same month, the school was inspected by OFSTED and judged to be "outstanding".

Alongside the continuing efforts to maintain and upgrade the school's accommodation and infrastructure, there were more significant changes ahead. By the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year, a six-period day had been introduced and girls were admitted to the sixth form for the first time (with attempts to develop a joint sixth form with Bournemouth School for Girls having foundered). In September 2017, the pastoral system became year-based rather than house-based, but the house system continued under newly-appointed house leaders, providing a focus for competitions, student mentoring and charity events.



The ever-popular "Splat the Headteacher" charity event



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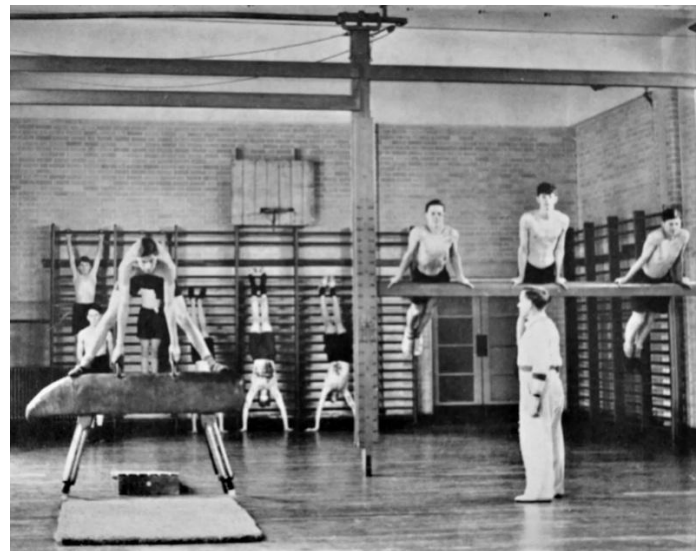


Sporting Endeavours

Bournemouth School students have always enjoyed participating in a range of sporting activities, with different sports enjoying pre-eminence at different times over the last 125 years. A significant number of our former students have gained representative honours in their chosen discipline.



The First XI football team, 1901



A "Physical Training" lesson, 1951



The First XI cricket team, 1960

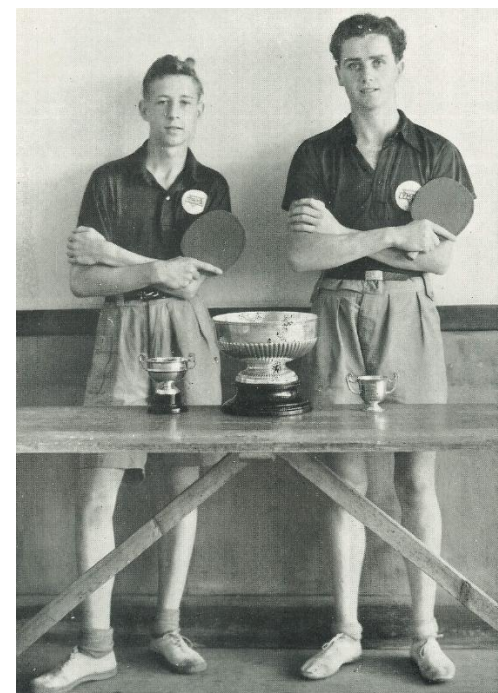


Table Tennis champions, 1950



The First XV rugby team, 1965



National Cross Country champions, 2025



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The Combined Cadet Force

In 1903, the headmaster established the Cadet Corps with 68 members initially. The cadets wore army-style uniforms and became a company of the Officer Training Corps in 1908. At the outbreak of the Second World War, all cadet forces within schools became known as JTCs – Junior Training Corps. The transformation into a Combined Cadet Force (CCF) was completed in 1948.

In 1987, the first girls from Bournemouth School for Girls were recruited. The CCF today numbers more than 300, with around half of the cadets being girls.



Army camp gunnery school, 1971



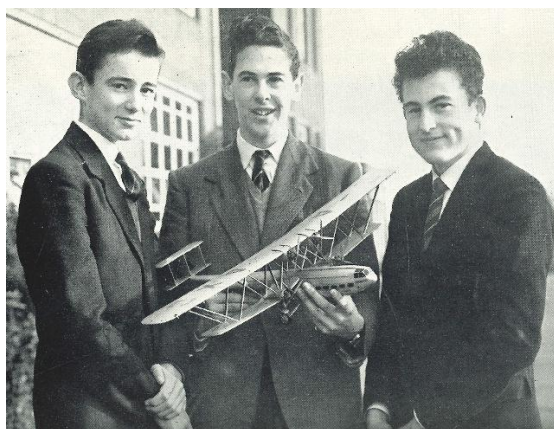
CCF inspection, 1949



Parents' evening display, 1964



The CCF at Bovington, 1952



Aircraft Recognition Team, 1960



CCF inspection, 2010



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35th Sea Scouts – RN Unit 47

The first concrete evidence for a Scout troop at the school is a registration certificate dated 1920, when the Bournemouth Local Association was formed. In 1980, a number of former troop members attending the 60th anniversary celebrations suggested that the troop was established long before 1916. The troop owes its genesis to Mr Frank Lawrence and his wife, who, with Mr and Mrs Little, ran things until the Second World War.

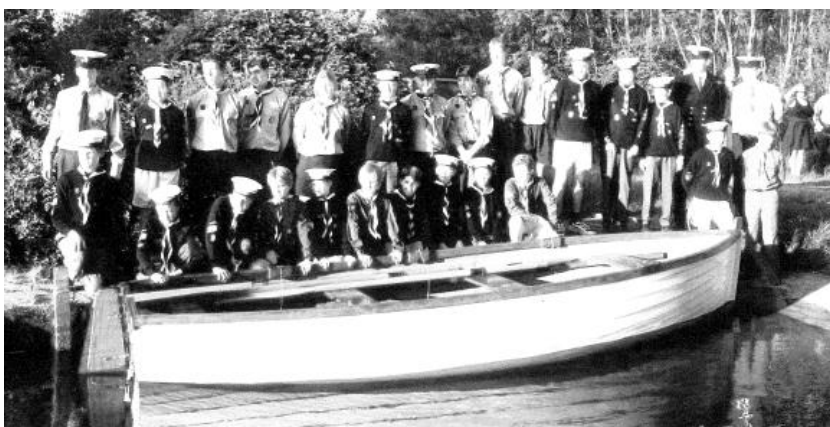


A presentation to Mr and Mrs Lawrence when they retired



Scout leaders in the late 1930s

The first Sea Scout Patrol was formed in 1975, with a naval whaler, *Seagull* purchased for £100 in the following year.



Royal Navy inspection, 1998

The Scout troop continues to thrive using facilities at the school in the winter, and, in the warmer weather, a boating base at Perch Pool, from where scouts access the River Stour on a variety of canoes, dinghies and other vessels.



Interesting fact

The oldest part of the school is the Scout Hut behind the Technology Block. This ancient piece of wooden architecture was originally at the Portchester Road site, before being relocated in 1939.



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A New Building



The highlight of the 2022-23 academic year was undoubtedly the opening of our long-awaited new building. Six new classrooms, additional toilets and a new dining room and kitchen were complemented by a sixth form study centre, with the latter funded from careful budgeting over the preceding ten years. The total cost of the project was £4.5 million (with £3.9 million from the Selective Schools Expansion Fund).

Schools Expansion Fund, enabling it to accommodate increased student numbers from September 2019. The Year 7 cohort increased to 180, with students determining that a new house should be named after the footballer Bobby Moore.

Although the funding was secured in 2019, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and planning delays meant that the plans did not come to fruition until more than three years later. Alex James, perhaps best known as *Blur*'s bassist, was welcomed back to his old school on Tuesday, 10 January 2023 to open the new block.



Alex James of *Blur* opened our new building



Work began in the summer of 2021 with the demolition of the old bike shed beneath the senior playground

The governing body had changed the admissions policy in 2016 to give priority to boys eligible for the Pupil Premium grant who had met the required standard in the entrance tests. The school also determined a priority area to ensure that it provided education for students mainly drawn from the area in which the school is situated. These changes gave the school the opportunity to bid for additional funding through the Selective



The new dining room



The study centre



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