

School History

A brief history of Slough and Eton Church of England Business and Enterprise College

The school was first opened in October 1940 and historical documents show differing names such as St Mary's and St John's Church of England School, St Mary's and St John's Slough & Eton Church of England School or Eton & Slough C of E Mixed Senior School. After a few years the board of Governors agreed the school would be named Slough & Eton Church of England School. The original buildings were of wooden construction favoured at this time during the 2nd World War. The original site featured air raid shelters as well for the staff and children which were put to good use during the early war years. Indeed there is a record of a bomb falling on an area known as the quadrangle on site during one particular school day in 1941. There is no record of what damage it caused but apparently the children at the time thought it was very exciting!

Within 14 years the governing body were urging the Ministry to include the school in rebuilding and redevelopment plans as the school enrolments were outgrowing the capacity. The Governors had an architect draw up sketch plans but by 1959 the Ministry still had not made any commitment to rebuild. In the late sixties rebuilding work eventually took place and the school footprint was extended from 12,000 sq ft to 22,000 sq feet to accommodate 450 pupils. In those days the long term forecast was for a pupil count in excess of 800!

Provision was made for a Library, Proper Laboratories, metalwork room, 2nd permanent Housecraft room, conversion to oil fired boilers (previously coal), demolition of old shelters, new Gymnasium and remodelling of existing gym for Kitchen and dining facilities for 400 in 2 sittings and real classrooms to replace existing huts. It was also decided to make provision for a full size swimming pool to be provided later.

The buildings were constructed in timber (Canadian Cedar) and the walls and roofs were clad mainly out of wood shingles or tiles. Only one building remains on site of the original cladding and this is the Art block which had previously been built as the new gymnasium and sports hall.

On the late evening of 19th February 1973 a fire broke out at the school and despite the efforts of over 100 firefighters the bulk of the building stock was lost. The only building saved was the Gymnasium which stands today as the Art Block. It was some years before temporary buildings erected on site were replaced with more solid structures.

The rebuilding started in 1976 and progressed only as much as the County budget could afford each year. In 1999 an agreement was reached between the Oxford Diocese, Board of Governors and Powerleague Limited to lease a portion of the school land for the development of a Powerleague 5 a side football franchise. During this phase of development the swimming pool was filled in (becoming a giant soakaway), a new sports hall was built and 10 x 5-a-side pitches were commissioned along with a Pavilion social and wet/dry changing facility. The school enjoys a facilities sharing agreement with Powerleague and the pitches are used extensively by Powerleague customers in the evenings and at weekends.