

CITY OF NOTTINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

HIGH PAVEMENT GRAMMAR SCHOOL OFFICIAL

OPENING OF NEW BUILDINGS

BY

SIR RONALD GOULD, M.A.

5TH OCTOBER, 1955

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(MUNICIPAL YEAR 1955-56)

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Headmaster

H. DAVIES, M.A.

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FOREWORD

In the following pages the history of the High Pavement School is briefly traced from its early origins until the present day. It will be abundantly clear to the reader that this School has played a notable part in the story of the development of the educational system of this country, and that the citizens of Nottingham have every reason to feel proud of and grateful for the contribution which it has made to educational progress generally and to the life and well-being of this city in particular.

It will be observed that it is twenty-one years since the Education Committee first envisaged the need for new, up-to-date buildings for this rapidly growing school, and it was a grievous set-back to their hopes and desires when the outbreak of war put an abrupt stop for an indefinite period to their plans to provide staff and pupils with better conditions under which to work. It is therefore an occasion for special rejoicing that at long last the school has been able to move into its new home, set on a hillside looking southwards across the city, with its playing fields ready at hand. The Committee extend to the Head Master, Mr. H. Davies, and his staff their most cordial good wishes for happy years of successful work in their new surroundings.

The Committee warmly welcome to this ceremony Sir Ronald Gould, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, who holds a high place in the sphere of education by reason of his statesmanlike and inspiring leadership of the vast majority of the teachers of this country. The Committee are deeply grateful to him for his ready acceptance of their invitation to perform the opening ceremony of these new buildings.

To bring such a scheme as this to fruition needs the skill and energy of many people. The Committee wish to pay special tribute to the City Engineer, Mr. R. M. Finch, O.B.E., M.I.C.E., M.T.P.I., F.R.S.L., and the members of his staff, particularly Mr. J. R. Sketchley, A.R.I.B.A., A.M.P.T.I., Chief Architectural Assistant, and Mr. A. W. L. Hall, F.R.I.C.S., Chief Quantity Surveyor, for their work in planning and directing the erection of the new buildings, and to all those who laboured in their construction.

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

The High Pavement School was founded in 1788 in connection with the Chapel of the " Society of Protestant Dissenters assembling at the High Pavement," and the story both of its early days and its subsequent career forms an interesting chapter in the history of education in England.

In the eighteenth century such Primary Education as existed was largely in the hands of Charity Schools controlled by the Church of England. The members of the Unitarian congregation of the High Pavement Chapel sent their children to the Bluecoat School near Weekday Cross until towards the end of the century, when friction, accentuated by political quarrels, arose between the Anglican and dissenting subscribers to the school.

The High Pavement congregation therefore decided to establish a school of their own in opposition to the Bluecoat School, and this new school was to be " open to the children of all denominations." So the High Pavement School came into being-the first unsectarian school in England.

The original classes were held at the house of the first Headmaster, a Mr. Wheatcroft, who lived at the corner of Willoughby Row, Fisher Gate, until " spacious rooms adjoining the Chapel " were built. The earliest Headmasters included a watchmaker and a tailor, who apparently took to teaching in the intervals of their ordinary labours. By 1853, a number of more experienced men having been appointed, the School was in what was at that period a most flourishing condition. There were 80 boys and 90 girls on the books. The expenses were met by annual subscriptions, the proceeds of a collection at an annual sermon, the interest on a legacy of seven hundred and twenty pounds, and by fees paid by the parents of the pupils. The Headmaster was assisted by one Master and one Mistress, and their combined salaries amounted to one hundred and forty pounds per annum.

In 1861, the School attained the official status of " British School " with Government inspection, but it received little assistance until after the passing of the Education Act of 1870, after which date it was recognised as a " Higher Grade Co-educational School." Up to this time the curriculum was only Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, with the addition of Needlework for the girls, but after 1876 the curriculum rapidly expanded. It is particularly noteworthy that the study of Science was organised in the School as early as 1880 : indeed High Pavement can claim the distinction of being the first school of its kind in England in which the teaching of practical Science was undertaken. The School was transferred to the School Board in 1891, and in 1902 the City Council undertook responsibility for its maintenance as a Secondary School.

With the rapid progress of the School after 1870 the accommodation in High Pavement became inadequate, and the School was removed in 1895 to premises in Stanley Road, which at that time were surrounded by fields. In 1931, a volume of the School's history was closed, for with the growth of the City, it was found desirable to build a secondary school for girls to which the High Pavement girls were transferred and so the School is now one for boys only.

HEADMASTERS OF THE SCHOOL

Thomas Wheatcroft	1788-1805	Edward Francis	..	1905-1918
George Milnes	1805-1812	William Catteral Edkins		1918-1920
John Malbon	1812-1815	Harry J. Spenser	1920-1928	
John Taylor	1816-1861	Gilbert J. R. Potter	1929-1947	
John James Taylor (his son)	1861 (a few months)	Harry Davies	..	1947
William Hugh	..			
	1861-1905			

THE NEW PREMISES

In 1934, the Education Committee submitted to the Board of Education a formal proposal for the transfer of the School from Stanley Road to a new site with playing fields at Bestwood, where the City Council were planning housing developments. By December, 1935, the Board's preliminary approval to sketch plans had been sought.

During 1936-37, the proposed development of the Bestwood area, including the allocation of sites for new schools, was held up by arbitration proceedings on the mineral rights. It was, therefore, not until July, 1937, that the City Council finally appropriated to the Education Committee the site of 27.150 acres' on which the new buildings and playing fields now stand.

By July, 1938, a detailed scheme had been prepared. Three months later, the Board of Education returned the plans and asked the Committee to reconsider them in the light of a recent circular on the development of technical subjects. In July, 1939, the Board asked the Authority to submit a fresh scheme, effecting substantial reductions in cost.

The outbreak of war postponed the scheme indefinitely, and subsequently the site was used for food production.

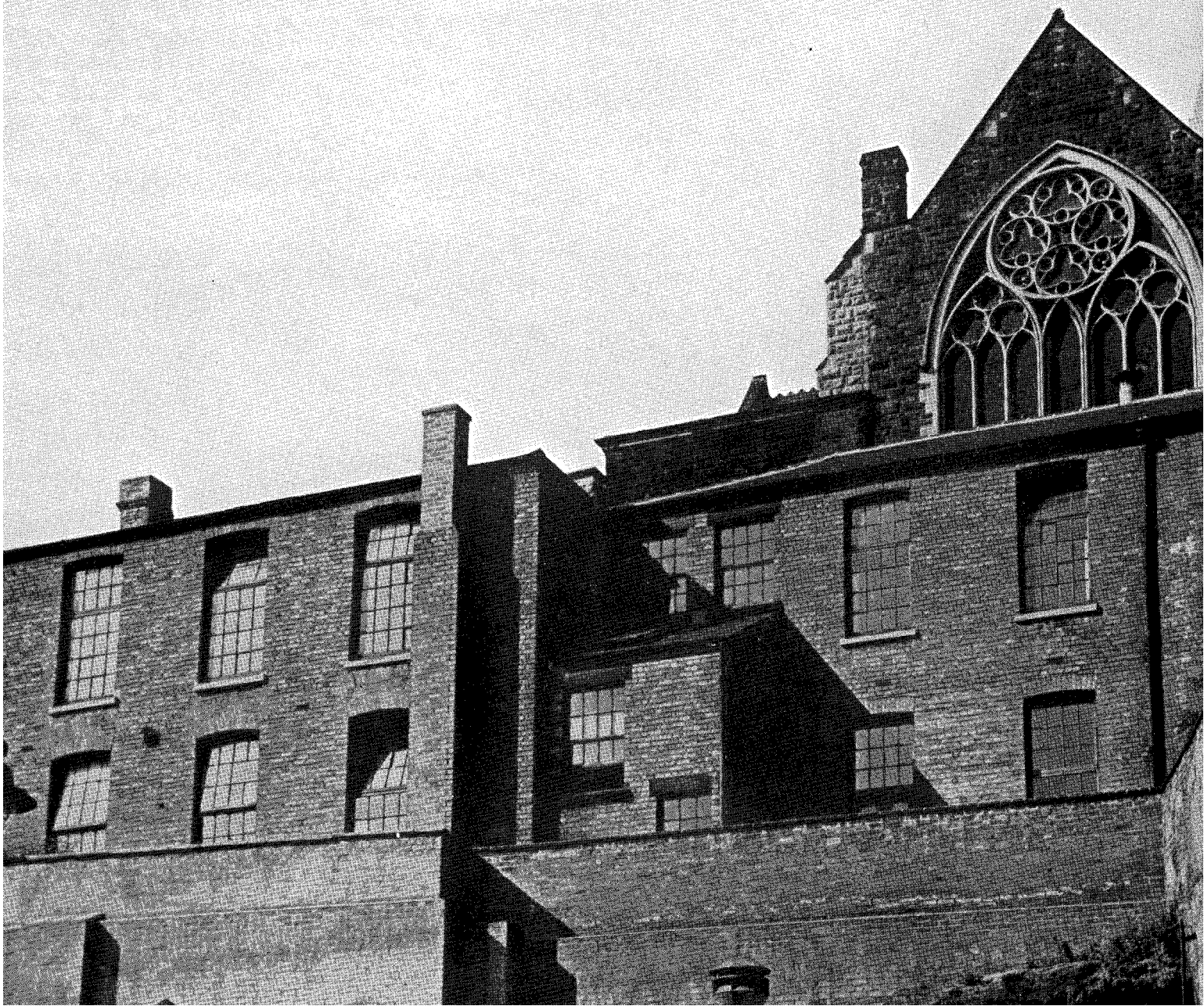
In the immediate post-war years, the Ministry of Education, concentrating on the building of Primary Schools and the accommodation urgently needed owing to the raising of the school leaving age, did not permit the planning of the project to be resumed until 1950, when agreement was reached on the erection of a first instalment.

Work on this began in September, 1952, as part of the 1951-52 Building Programme. Approval was obtained to include the remainder of the school in the 1952-53 Building Programme, so that the whole building could be carried through as a single project.

The main contractors for the erection of the premises were Messrs. G. A. Pillatt and Son, Limited, Nottingham.

The Committee's scheme for the layout of the playing fields, which was a task of some magnitude owing to the sloping nature of the site, was approved by the Minister of Education in July, 1950, and the work was put in hand soon afterwards. The fields became available for use by the School in 1954.

The Education Committee have now provided new premises for thirty-eight schools since the war.



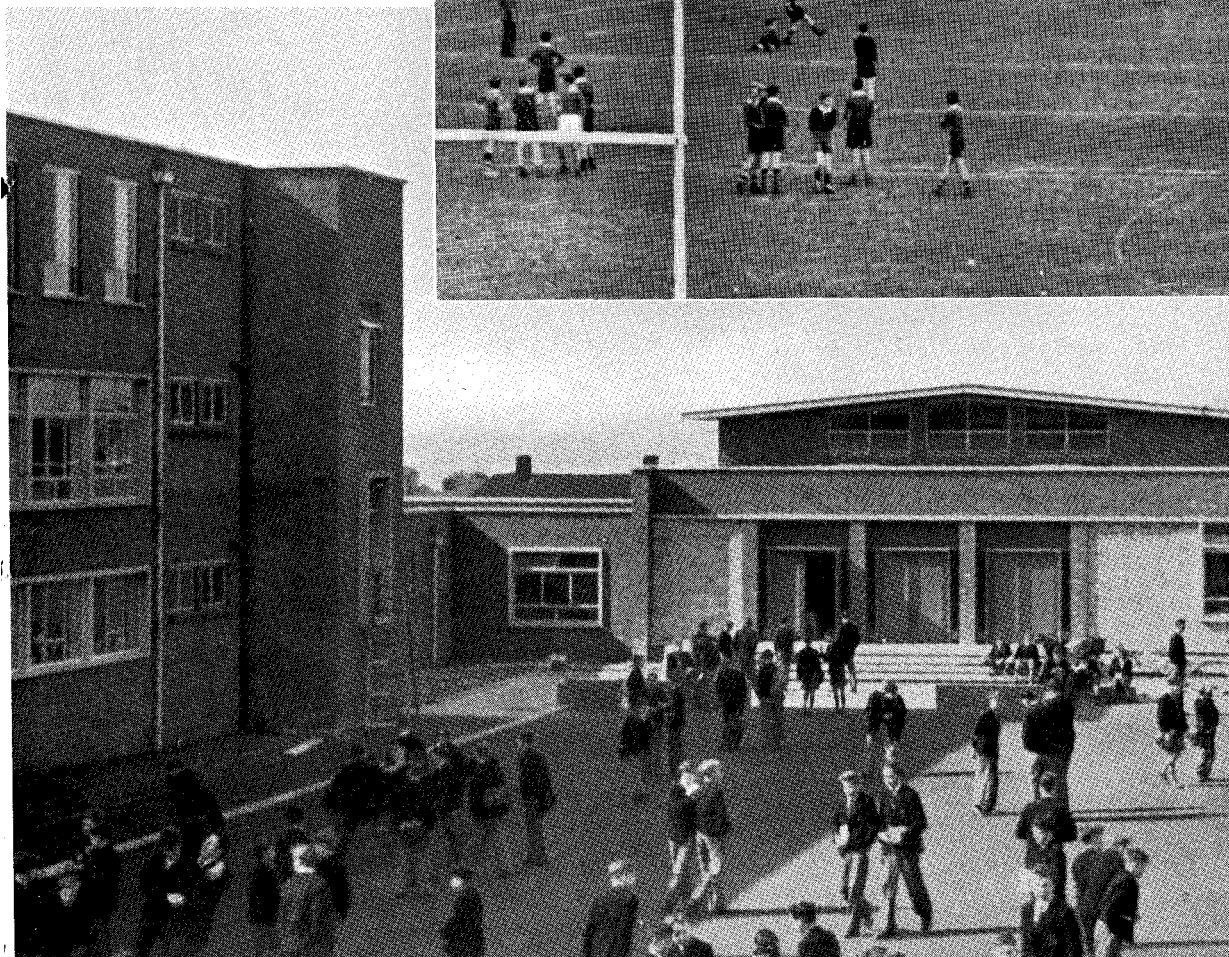
High Pavement School, High Pavement, 1805-1895



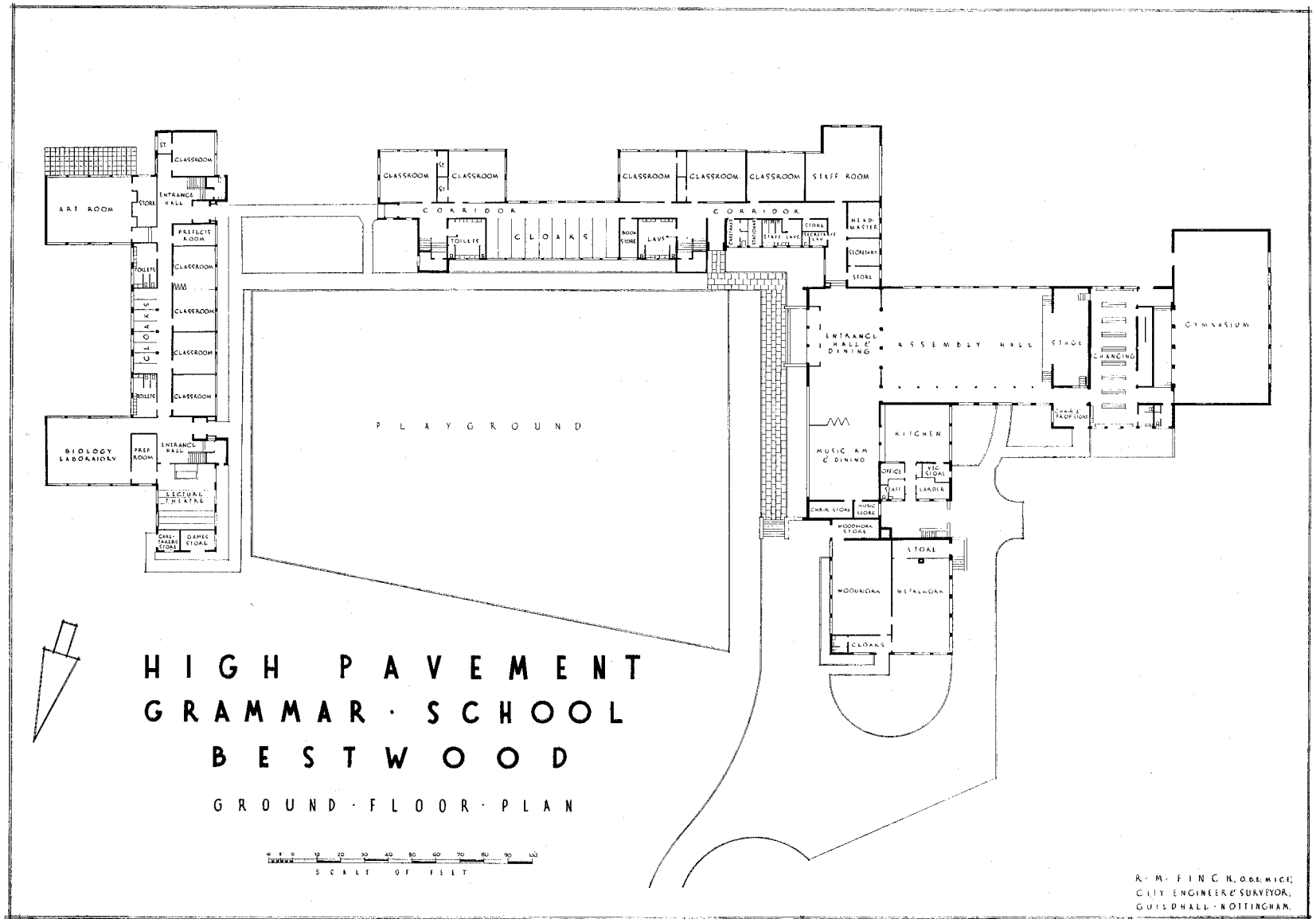
High Pavement School, Stanley Road, 1895-1955

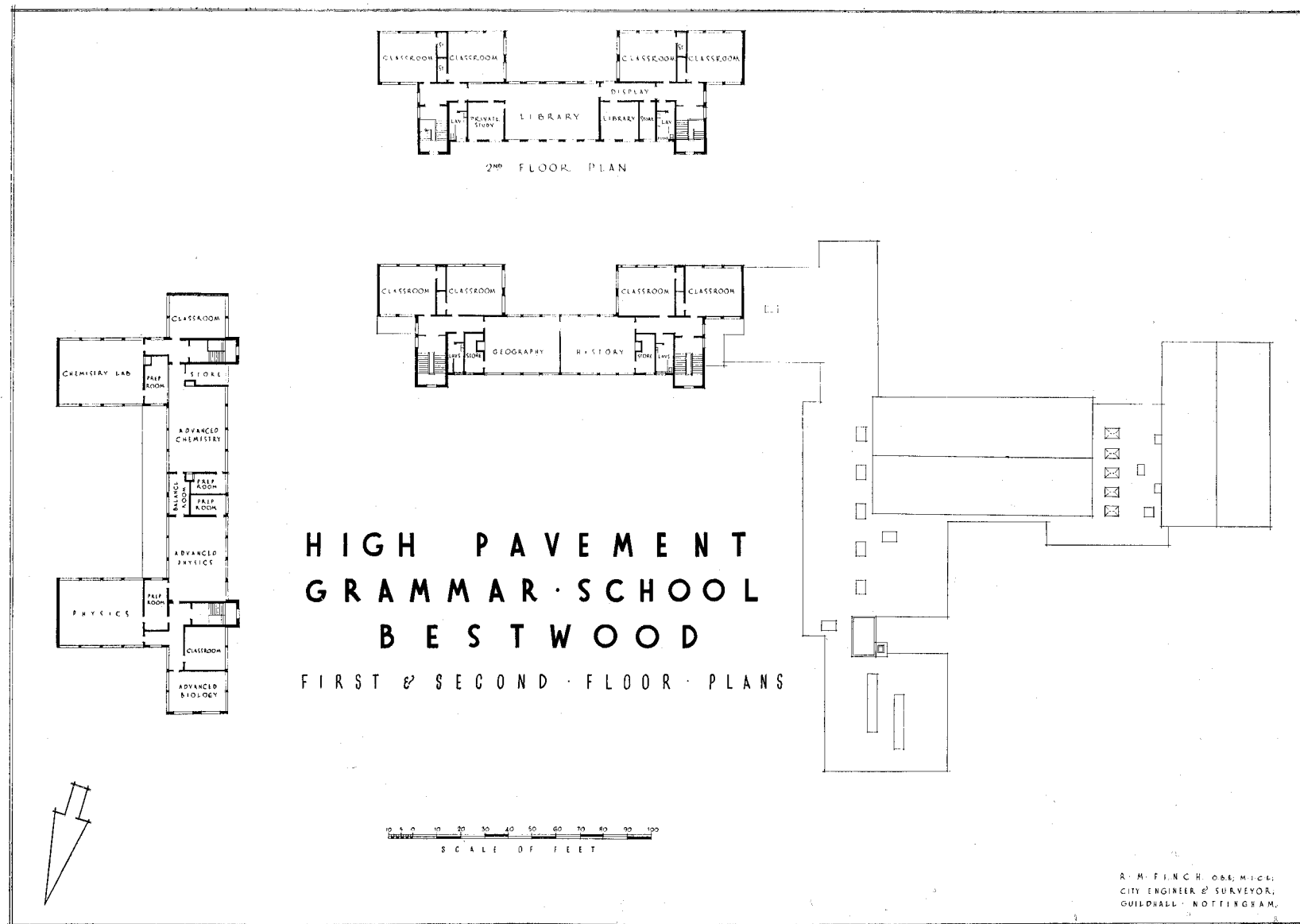


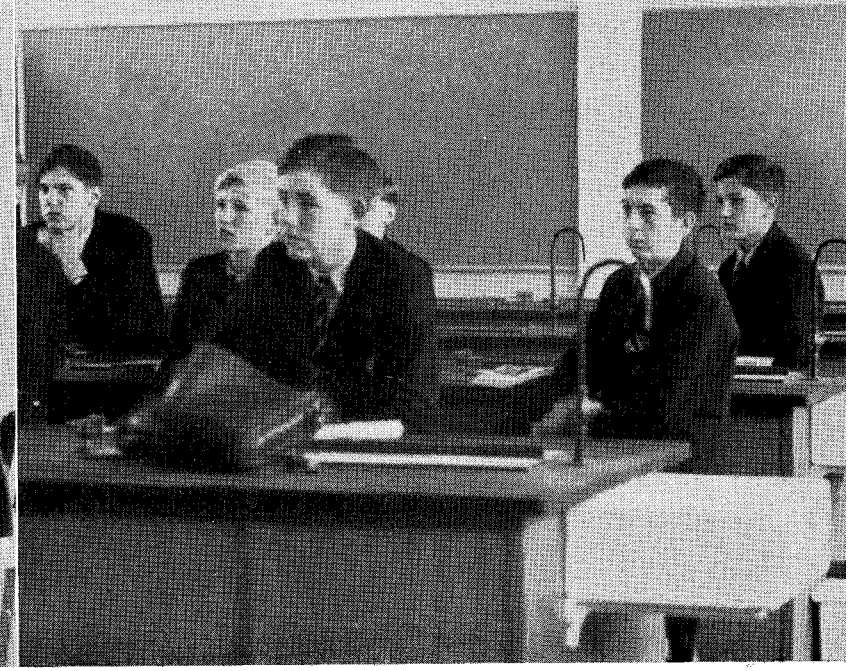
High Pavement School, Gainsford Crescent, 1955



Playing Field and Playground at
Bestwood
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First days in the new premises