



# St John's Primary Academy



Revised and updated July 2019

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### 'St. John's Values'

**At the heart of all that we do.**

**Respect**

**Kindness**

**Responsibility**

**Co-operation**

**Confidence**

**Honesty**

**Tolerance**

**Self-discipline**

**Trust**

**Fairness**

## How Bracebridge Heath got its school 1878 -1880

(Including extracts from the Bracebridge School Board Minute Book, which is held in the Lincolnshire Archives)

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 (Foster's Act) and subsequent Acts in the 1870's introduced elementary education for all children aged between 5 and 12 years old. By the time our school opened its doors, education was compulsory for children up to the age of 10 years old.

The School Board for the School District of the Parish of Bracebridge first meet on the **11<sup>th</sup> July 1878**. At this time Bracebridge Heath did not exist as a separate parish but was the uphill outpost of Bracebridge. It consisted of three farms, Bracebridge County Asylum (later called St John's Hospital), two public houses, a Primitive Methodist Chapel, smallholdings and some terraced houses.

By September of that year the School Board was faced with a dilemma regarding the fifty children of the 'uphill area' who each morning had to walk down the hill to school and back again in the late afternoon. This walk included using a railway crossing over the Lincoln to Honington railway line. Bracebridge's school was situated on Newark Road on the site which is now the Bud Robinson Community Centre and car park on Maple Street.

The decision to build an uphill school was not without controversy, as can be seen from extracts taken from the minute book. (Shown below).

A meeting of the School Board was held on **28<sup>th</sup> September 1878**. Present at this meeting were Rev. Charles C Ellison (Chairman), Mr F J Clarke (Vice-Chairman), Mr B Best (Treasurer), Mr W C Blatherwick, Mr H Jackson, and Mr Shepherd.

### Extract from minutes

*Do we build up the hill for those 50 children or not. The chairman and Mr Best strongly advocated the building of such a school as an act of justice towards the rate payers there. Mr F S Clarke and Mr W C Blatherwick strongly opposes it on the grounds of the expense.*

The next section of the minutes is crossed out, but can with care, still be read. It shows that a very heated discussion took place which lead to one member of the committee walking out.

Extract from minutes

*After a long discussion the chairman asked for a show of hands 'for' and 'against' where upon Mr F S Clarke rose and declared he would not sit upon the Board, that the whole affair 'looked like a piece of trickery' that Mr Shepherd dare not vote against the chairman being a tenant, that Mr W B Best was nothing but (the chairman's) nominee, that Herbert Jackson and Mr Shepherd 'daren't say their souls were their own', that the chairman did not go straight and so he did not work with him. Mr Shepherd indignantly denied Mr Clark's accusation and Mr Clark left the school room.*

After Mr Clarke left the meeting the resolution for the Clerk to ask the Education Department the following question was unanimously approved.

Extract from minutes – The question the Clerk asked of the Education Board.

*There being 270 children in Bracebridge provided for, 50 of whom live a mile away up the hill and have to pay over a level crossing on the Lincoln and Honington Railway [to attend] the present school ought the Board to provide a departmental school uphill for these or not?*

**October 28<sup>th</sup> 1878.** The School Board met and the Clerk read a letter approving the building of a school up the hill. It was noted that all members of the Board were now in favour of building the new school. At the same meeting it was decided to build extra accommodation at the present school so that it could hold 250 children and the uphill school should hold 90 children.

The School Board wasted no time and at the meeting held three weeks later on **November 18<sup>th</sup> 1878** they approved plans by Watkin and Scorer to enlarge the present school and build the uphill school

The School Board minutes of **20<sup>th</sup> December 1878** indicate that the Chairman had been to the Education Department about the site of the new school, the building plans and how to pay for the Bracebridge school extension and the new school up the hill. The outcome of which was that the Clerk was directed to ask the Public Works Loan Commissioner for a loan of £2750

The New Year (**1879**) saw the plans for the school up the hill altered and finalised to fit the site. Tenders were investigated as to who should build the school and final approval sought from the Education Department.

By the **7<sup>th</sup> July 1879** the minutes state that the board was ready to put out tenders for the building of the school. At that time it was usual to invite tenders by advertising in the local newspapers. Adverts were placed in the Stamford Mercury, Lincolnshire Chronicle and Lincoln Gazette. The Clerk had to receive replies from interested parties by noon on **28<sup>th</sup> July 1879**

**4<sup>th</sup> August 1789.** The extract from the minutes (shown below) shows which tender was accepted by the School Board

Extract from minutes – The accepted tender.

*A tender received from Mess<sup>rs</sup> J Crosby and sons of 15 and 17 Great Northern Street Lincoln offering to erect a new school at upper Bracebridge for the sum of £866 and for making certain additions to the School at Lower Bracebridge for the sum of £1536 was accepted subject to approval of the Education Department being obtained.*

**28<sup>th</sup> August 1879** School Board minutes state that the Clerk submitted the draft conveyance of the land for the uphill school which had been approved by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who owned the land. The **23<sup>rd</sup> September 1879** minutes show that the land was being worked by a Mr Bentley who stated that he would be willing to give up the land provided that he was paid the sum of £10. This was duly agreed to and arrangements were made to take possession of the land for that amount of money and no more.

The public works loan was agreed and signed for by the Chairman Rev CC Ellison on the **26<sup>th</sup> December 1879**. The loan was for a total of £2699, most of which was for the extension of the Bracebridge School. The loan was to be paid back in 100 equal half-yearly instalments, with interest at 4¼ per cent per annum on the principal sum that remained unrepaid

Our school took less than six months to build and was opened on **28<sup>th</sup> June 1880**.

The minutes for **8<sup>th</sup> August 1884** give some indication of how the school was decorated and the fencing around the school

Extract from minutes – Decoration and fencing.

*The Clerk reported that he had received a Tender from Messieurs Walker and Mead offering to paint the palings round the Heath School Yard and distemper and Colour Wash the Lower and Heath Schools for the sum of twenty pounds.*

This tender was accepted. Palings are iron railings with spiked tops. It can be assumed that they were similar to those along the Woodland Walk on Sleaford Road. The original grounds would have been quite small, although their exact size has yet to be determined.

## HISTORY OF OUR SCHOOL

With the original Victorian School building rapidly becoming unrecognisable as it assumes its contemporary guise as an Early Years classroom, it is interesting to look back at some of the earlier pages in the School's history.

We learn from the first School Log Book that on the **28<sup>th</sup> June 1880**, **Bracebridge Heath Board School** opened its doors to admit 38 children of all ages. The structure comprised of a schoolroom complete with galley, the floor of which was destined to be worn thin by the feet of several generations of children before its final removal.



*(The white painted building is the Old Schoolroom. Over the years it has been used as a schoolroom, school hall, youth club and it is now an Early Years classroom.)*

The following items are reflective of the tremendous strides that have been made in official educational thought and social conscience between 1880 and our present affluent society. Exercise books were bought by the children and fees were levied at the rate 5/5d per quarter for two children. It was commonplace for children to be kept at home to assist with the corn and potato harvest as well as to help with housework.

That today's high-spirited young people are no worse than those of that era is borne out by an entry in **1882** complaining about persons entering the School during the evening, ringing the bell and playing the harmonium! Space does not allow the

inclusion of numerous log entries which are in reality the bare bones of local contemporary history.

The 21<sup>st</sup> May **1900** stands out as a red letter day following the granting of a holiday to celebrate the relief of Mafeking. With the passing of the **1902** Balfour Act which abolished School Boards and made it obligatory for Local Authorities to maintain Voluntary Establishments, the school was renamed **Bracebridge Heath Council School**.

Like today, the school was available for lettings and the **28<sup>th</sup> November 1903** entry in the School Board Minute Book gives the hiring costs.

Cost of Letting Council Schools for Meetings, entertainment etc.

- Parishioners 5/- (today's equivalent is 25p)
- Non Parishioners 7/6 (38p)

Of which 2/6 (13p) to be paid to the teacher for cleaning and preparing the room. Rest to the Committee

*Note in 1880's the average wage for a skilled worker was 25/- or £1.25 a week*

At the end of **1906** gas mains were laid in Bracebridge Heath and the School Board passed a recommendation to be connected to the gas supply. The Board directed the Clerk to ask the County Council to sanction the recommendation and for the work to start at once. In February **1907** the County Council declined the recommendation as 'not necessary' and heating continued to be supplied by coke/coal stoves in the classrooms.

A novel teaching situation arose in **1914** when as a result of building alterations lessons were for several weeks conducted in a large tent behind the school. Needless to say, remarkable high attendances were recorded throughout this period!



From 1930 a steady build up in the number of children attending the school from Bracebridge Heath and surrounding villages resulted in the County Authority planning extensions which materialised in the form of four classrooms in **1932**.



*The three 1932 classrooms can be seen in the foreground of the picture above. The classrooms have high ceilings. A first floor window can be seen below the steeply pitched roof furthest away from where this picture was taken. This was where the Head Teacher's office was situated, up narrow steep stairs. The classrooms were not linked to the original schoolroom and all opened straight out onto an open veranda. The school also had outside toilets which often froze in winter.*

An entry for August **1939** strikes an ominous note – Respirator Drill. A few days' later four teachers and forty-seven evacuees arrived at the school. World War II has begun.

In **1956** with the opening of Branston Secondary School the village school was reorganised as **Bracebridge Heath Primary School** catering for the 5 – 11 age groups.

Eleven years later the rapid housing developments in the village necessitated the building of major extensions including the Caretakers house. These were completed in **1969**



*1968 May Queen Picture, taken from the school field looking towards the school. The 2 storey building on the left still has its flat roof and veranda and was one of the new 1960's extensions. You can see St John's church in the centre and just visible in front of it is the old school canteen (now Bracebridge Heath Social Club). To the left of the picture is a temporary portable classroom.*

In the late **1970,s** and early **1980's**, the declining birth rate resulted in a rapid decline in the number of pupils on roll, from 423 to 107. Consequently the original school building, dating from 1880 with the attached new school kitchen and dining room was leased to the youth service and large areas of the school were mothballed.

In **1986**, the Lincolnshire Science and Technology Centre was housed in this school (on the second floor –classrooms 7 and 8) and provided training and professional support for the county's primary teachers.

The old school canteen was sold by the Lincolnshire Education Authority in November **1987** to the trustees of the Silver Sounds Band to provide local youngsters with the opportunity of playing brass band instruments. (In 2019 the building is still there but it is now a social club)

**21<sup>st</sup> November 1990** proved to be the blackest day in the history of the school. **FIRE!!** At 7.10am an electrical fault caused a fire to break out within the school.

Nearly a third of the building was totally destroyed and a further third of the building damaged by the effects of smoke and water.

The following fourteen months were a period of considerable hardship caused by the drastically reduced accommodation, lack of resources and the necessities of rebuilding. (NKDC planning application ref no. 91/0498/FUL) The new build includes a new Head Teacher's study and an administration office

January **1992** saw the building completed. Exciting times for all – children, parents and members of staff.



*(The new school hall and administration area built after the 1991 fire destroyed the original 1960's hall)*

Summer **1992** saw the pitching of all our flat roofs and that, together with the installation of replacement windows in most areas of the school, completed the refurbishment.

September **1993** saw our first intake of 4 year olds.

The Caretaker's house on our site had been standing empty for some time and in **1993** North Lincolnshire College refurbished the property to use it as a Life Skills Centre for their Special Needs students and trainee nursery nurses. This was to only last for a few years. By **1998** our school had appointed a caretaker who needed the house to live in. The house was refurbished and has been occupied as a Caretaker/Estate Manager's house since that date.

On **1<sup>st</sup> January 1995**, the school changed its name to **St John's County Primary School** to avoid confusion with a similarly named school in the City of Lincoln. School Governors had decided on this name after our pupils had held a competition to suggest a new name.

By **1996** with the development of new housing in the village the school had outgrown its premises and had reclaimed the first floor classrooms from the Lincolnshire Education Authority.

**1997** saw the end of an era, chalkboards were replaced by whiteboards as it had been recognised that chalk dust could have a detrimental effect on health especially for asthmatics.



*The picture above shows the Western side of the Victorian Schoolroom just before the Veranda was built. To the left is where the 1930's veranda was until it was enclosed in the 1960s. The old deputy heads room (now the quiet room) has the large glass doors. To the right is the old 1960/70's school kitchen and dining room which the youth club used for a while and is now an early year's classroom. The playground is now an outside classroom (play area) for the early years and looks completely different. In the foreground you can see where the geological garden was situated in the 1990's*

In **1997** the old Victorian schoolroom had been reclaimed from the youth club, refurbished and became a reception/year 1 classroom. The youth club continued to use the school kitchens (attached to the Victorian schoolroom) for a short while longer until our numbers meant we needed it back.

St John's pupil numbers continued to grow and in May **1998** permission was granted for two mobile classrooms to be erected on the school field (NKDC planning application ref no. 98/0462/FUL). This was a temporary measure until the authority was sure that the school needed new permanent classrooms.

This was indeed the case and three years later in September **2001** permission was granted to extend the school and build a two storey four classroom extension on the back of the 1960's two storey building. (NKDC planning application ref no. 01/0810/CCC) The new block included a lift to allow access to the upstairs rooms for those who could not manage the stairs. While this building work was taking place the two mobile classrooms were relocated further away from the main block. They were removed once the new block was completed. The new block was officially opened by Dr Cheryl Berry the Director of Education for Lincolnshire.

The growth of our school during this period was so fast that our school budget allocation was insufficient. The governors had to go and ask permission from Lincolnshire Education Authority to run a deficit budget (go into the red!) so that teachers could be employed to teach our new children and provide them with resources to work with and furniture to sit on.

**January 2004** Burglary!! The school was broken into and computers and other items stolen. The school was closed the next day to allow the police to carry out an investigation. The local community, parents and pupils rallied around and raised money for replacements as the insurance did not cover the full cost. The culprits were caught after the computers were found to be on sale on the internet!!

With the growth of the school it soon became clear that the administrative office was becoming too small. It was also recognised that primary school sites should be completely secure and no unauthorised people could enter the site. This led to a remodelling of the administration area in **2005**. The office was extended and a

secure waiting area was put in. From then on access to the school building was by password or by permission of a school administrator.

For several years after the millennium, the before and after school club (Pandas) had used the school hall, but this was becoming less practical. Also the playgroup which was using the Methodist Hall for its activities needed to move. After a lot of consideration a planning application was put in to have a large temporary (mobile) building erected on our site to the west of the Caretaker's house to house both groups. The planning application was approved in June **2007** (NKDC planning application ref no. 07/0707/CCC). They now have their own fenced area with outside play equipment and Pandas also uses the school field. The temporary building has permission to stay until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. (NKDC planning application ref no. 14/0409CCC).

For many years since the growth of the school in the 1990s it had become obvious that the staffroom located in the 1930's Head Teachers Office was too small and difficult to use due to the steep narrow stairs that had to be climbed to reach it. Alterations had been made on many occasions to try and make it better to use but ultimately it had to go.

In **October 2011** the school was given permission to put a single storey extension on the northern side of its two storey block. The foundations of this classroom have been built to allow for an extension above if it is needed. This extra classroom meant that one of the other classrooms could be altered to become a staffroom. Remodelling of the KS2 entrance to the two storey building meant an extra administration room and medical room could also be created. (NKDC planning application ref no. 11/0810/CCC).



(In the foreground is some of our trim trail. To the left can be seen the Pandas and preschool building and grounds. As you scan right across the picture the west side of the school hall is seen followed by the new KS2 entrance area to the school. The single storey building is the 2011 classroom and behind it is the two storey building comprising of the 1960's and 2001 build)

Over the years there has been many Government initiatives and changes to the status of schools which the Governing Body of St John's thought were not appropriate for our school. However after many hours of discussions and consultations the Governing body of St John's decided that we should become a Primary Academy. On **January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012** we became an Academy and changed our name to **St John's Primary Academy Bracebridge Heath**

At last!! In **2012** we opened a staffroom designed by the staff in one of the 1930's classrooms. A long wait but now the staffroom can accommodate all the staff with a purpose built kitchen, eating and relaxing area, and a working area.

**2013** Technological advances meant that the classroom whiteboard was now obsolete and they were all replaced by smart boards and Wi-Fi across the school.

**September 2014** saw the advent of free school meals for Key Stage 1 pupils and the need for reorganisation of the hall to accommodate this change. **March 2015** saw the installation of new tables that fold away into wall units.

**January 2019** saw the installation of our large sculpture by the main entrance. It is in the form of entwining leaves depicting our 'St John's Values.'

**May 2019.** At last, one of our bids to Central Government for money to improve our facilities has been successful. St John's has been awarded nearly three-quarters of a million pounds from the CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) to replace all its old heating system and associated works. No more oil deliveries! Our school heating will be run on gas with new efficient radiators, and a hall that can be heated independently from the rest of the school. A huge amount of work to be organised and completed by **September 2019**. Contingency plans at the ready just in case the work is not finished in time.

As our village continues to grow further changes will be required to the school buildings. What those changes will be one can only guess at.



*St John's Primary Academy main entrance and Hall*



## The Grounds

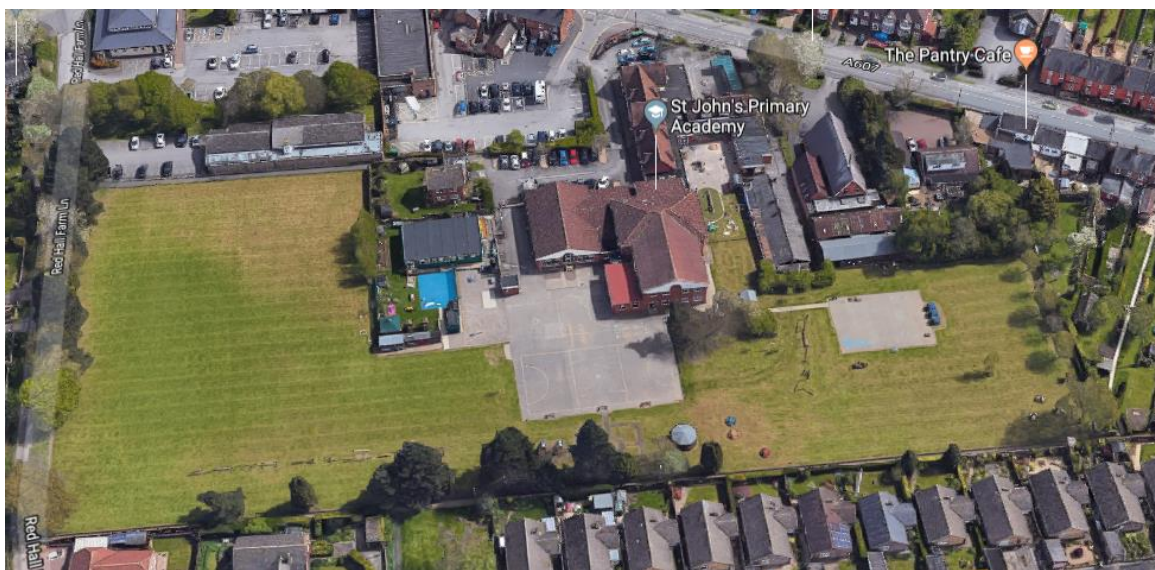
During the history of our school there have also been many changes to the outside areas. The original school field was much smaller but by the **1960's** the playing field was the size it is today. In the 1960's there was a push for schools to ensure that all pupils could swim and a very small swimming pool was installed at the school. This later became our environmental pond. It was situated in the area where the Pandas and Pre-school building now stands.

The **1990's** saw the development of a geological garden where pupils could sit and also learn about the history of the earth. It was well used but over time due to changes in the curriculum and old age it needed replacing. This area (**2016/7**) has now become part of the revamped Early Years playground (outside classroom) and forms a sheltered grass area. The main playground has many exciting areas from mud kitchens to water areas and a large 'fallen' tree trunk for pupils to climb over.



(Part of the school grounds looking north east. The outside classroom and park benches are clearly visible along with our hard standing area which is marked out for netball and other activities)

There is now a push by Government to ensure that school fields are well used and provide an educational purpose, and are not just an open space. Over the last few years there has been a transformation. Room is still available for traditional sports, football, netball athletics etc. but areas have been set aside for different activities. There are two large trim trails (see picture above), seating areas to sit and chat, an outside covered classroom, wigwams to name but a few. There is also a garden area and a few fruit trees.



*Source Google maps*

*Our School – St John's Primary Academy*

This history of our school has concentrated on the changes to the buildings but a school is not defined by its building but by the children and staff that work in it and the community that surrounds it.



(Photograph taken before the wall bars and tiles were removed from the wall so that wall mounted dinner tables storage could be installed)

Our school has endeavoured throughout its life to be a village school to serve the community that it is situated in. We believe that our school has and is achieving this goal and all our four hundred plus children still experience an excellent education within a caring village school community.

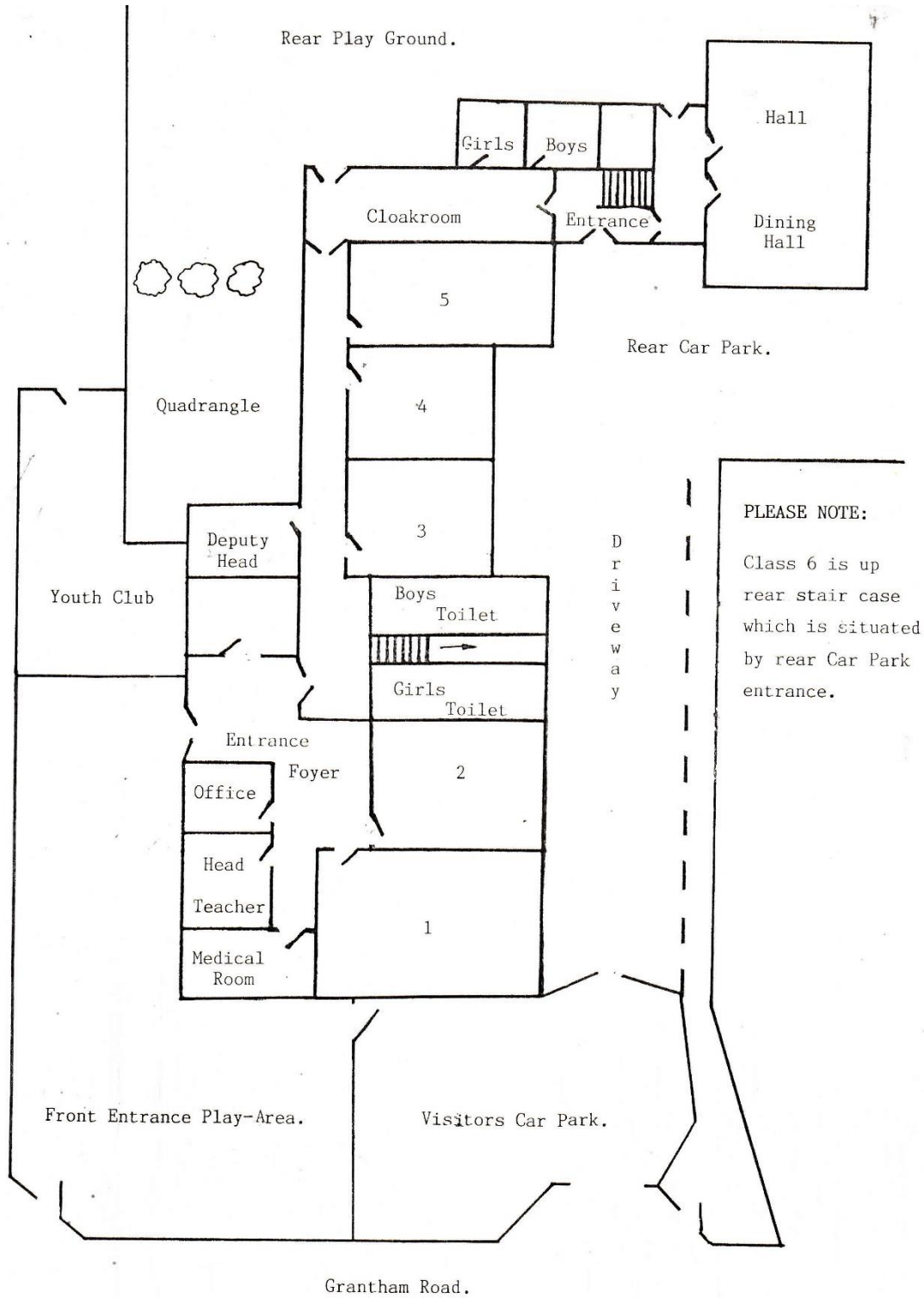
Compiled by

Sue Manders

Chairman of Governors

Plans of the school from different years

**1990**



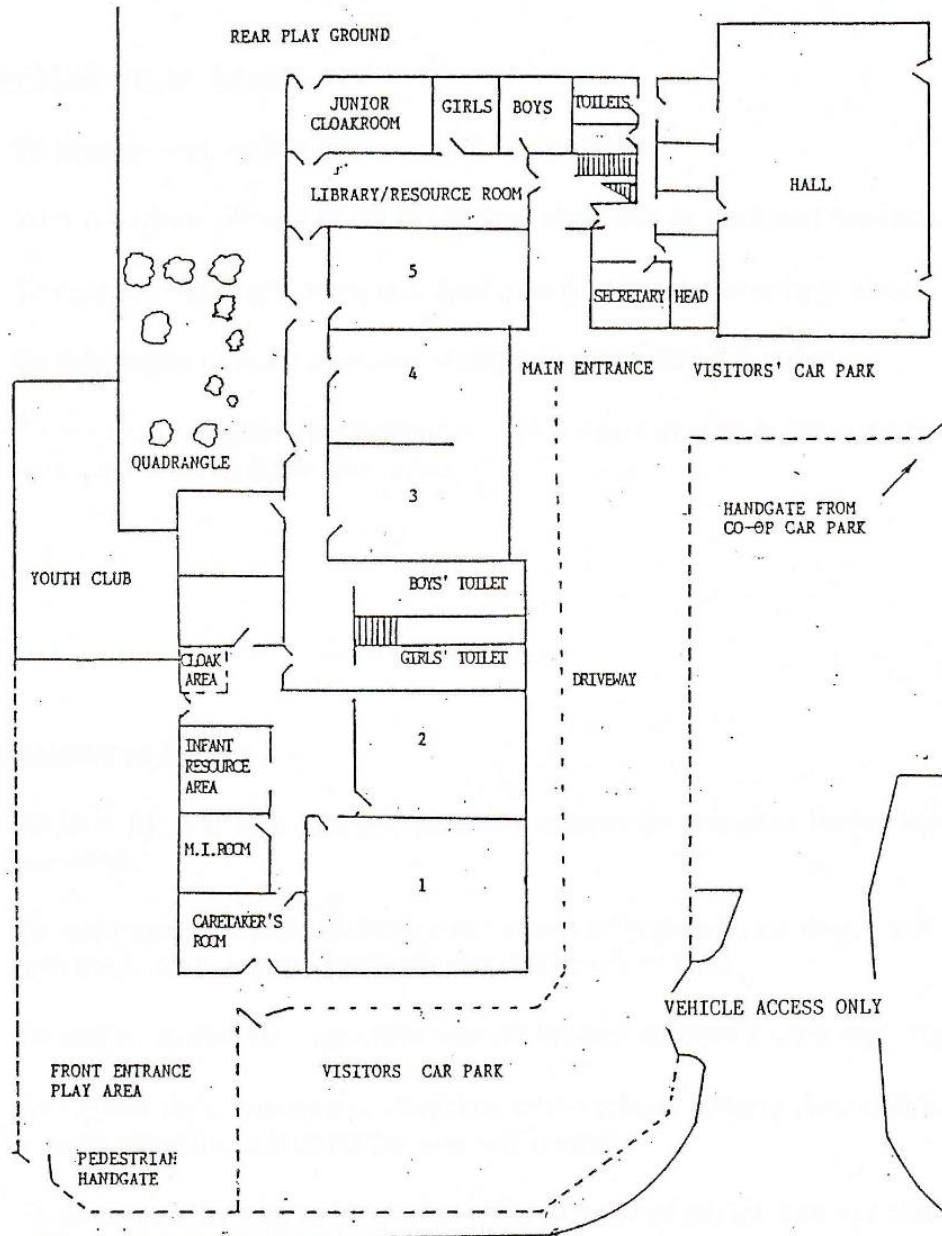
**PLEASE NOTE:**

Class 6 is up rear stair case which is situated by rear Car Park entrance.

(This plan should help you to find your way around our school)

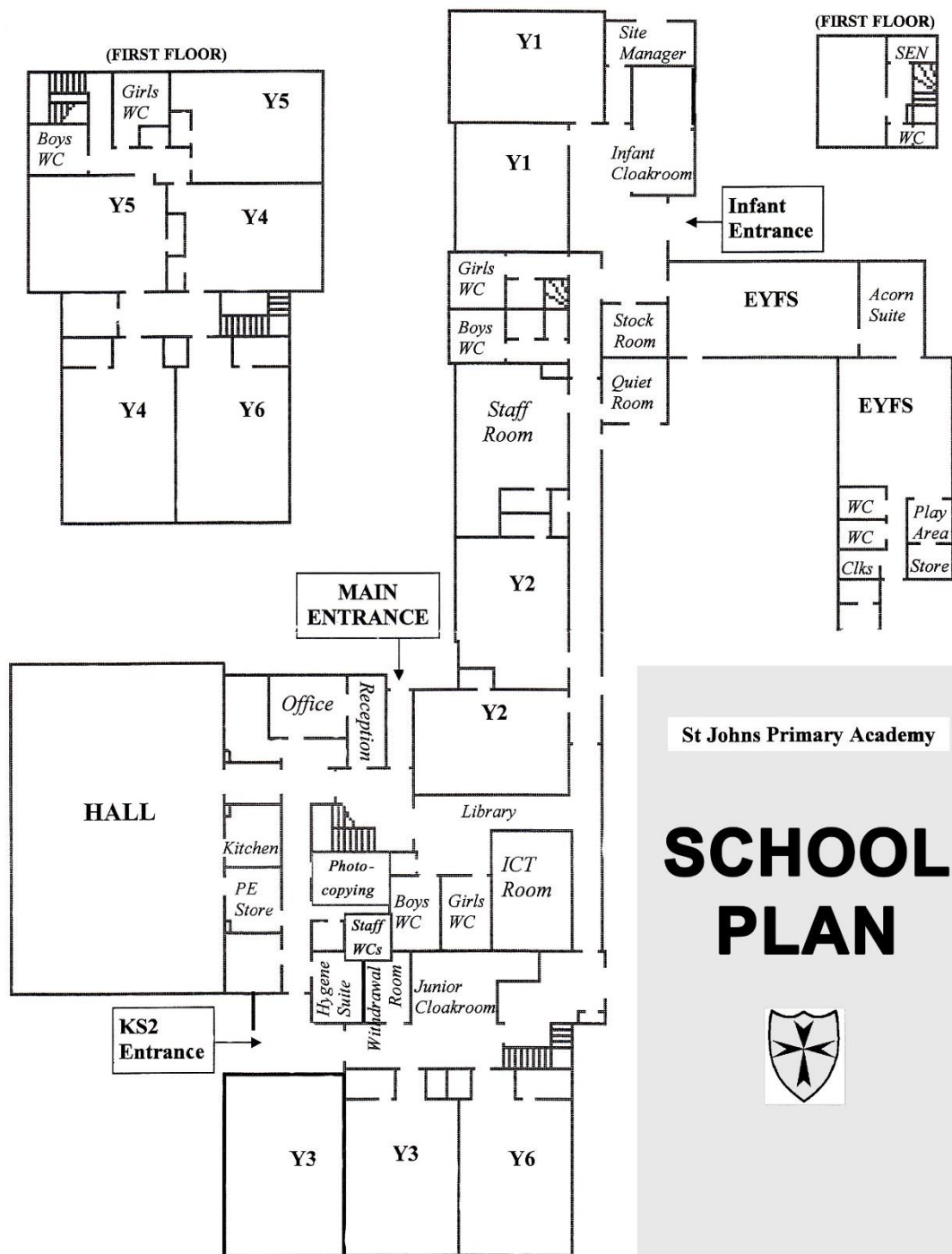
*School Plan*

*This plan should help you to find your way around our school.*



**PLEASE NOTE:**

*Classrooms 6, 7 and 8 are situated at the top of the stairs which are by the main entrance.*



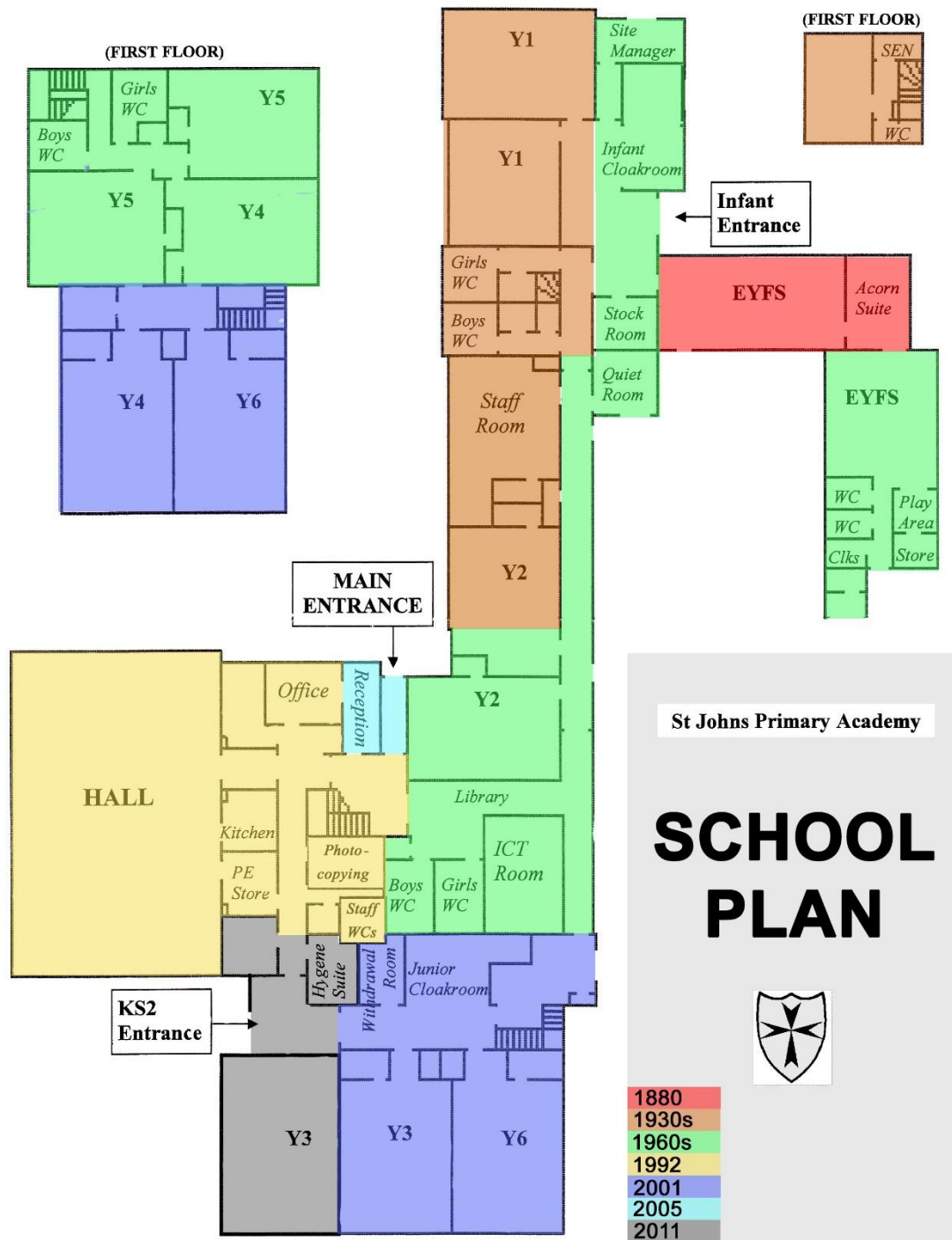
St Johns Primary Academy

# SCHOOL PLAN



Plan showing the different ages of our school building.

The interiors may not be the same as remodelling may have occurred. E.g. the creation of the ICT room.



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## *Team Song*

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I was standing alone, just watching the world  
Wondering where I belonged  
Wondering how I could learn all the things  
I would need if I wanted to reach all my dreams.  
Then I suddenly saw  
There were others like me  
Standing watching the world  
Trying hard to achieve  
All we needed to do was just help each other  
along...

### **Chorus**

**Together we'll fly  
Together we'll soar  
Together we'll push open every door  
If we only think of ourselves as a team  
We'll go so much further in what we achieve  
We'll be patient and kind  
For learning takes time  
I'll share your load and I hope you'll share mine  
There's so much to gain when we finally show  
How much we care, not just how much we know.**



### *Bridge*

And if someone is hurting we'll give them a hand  
And if someone is weak then we'll all take a stand  
At the end of the day we might see  
that we've built so much more...

### **Chorus**

Together we'll fly  
Together we'll soar  
Together we'll push open every door  
If we only think of ourselves as a team  
We'll go so much further in what we achieve  
We'll be patient and kind  
For learning takes time  
I'll share your load and I hope you'll share mine  
There's so much to gain when we finally show  
How much we care, not just how much we know.

### *Bridge*

And if someone is hurting we'll give them a hand  
And if someone is weak then we'll all take a stand  
At the end of the day we might see  
that we've built so much more  
We're part of a team.