

# Catholic School has come a long way

## Whole parish pitched in for new building



Mr Thomas Longueville.  
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by BETTY DUNCAN

Owesity Roman Catholic School is far removed today from its humble beginnings in 1879 when it started life in the old chapel of Castelford House.

But it took a lot of effort on the part of the parish, friends, benefactors, architects and builders (the latter having to work while the school carried on) to bring the premises to their present modern and pleasant state.

After 11 years at Castelford House, the school moved to rooms built by Mr Thomas Longueville in Upper Book Street next to the Catholic Church.

It was at this time that the Sisters of Charity and St Paul began to teach at the school.

Mr Longueville also gave adjoining land to the school which then had 78 pupils.

### Slender

In 1936, a former parish hall known as the Old Hut was pressed into service as a temporary school room and dining room and was used in this way for 35 years.

A two-classroom

A two-classroom block was built in 1957 but, despite this addition the premises needed up-dating so in 1963, with the help and encouragement of the local education authority, plans were made to provide a several purpose hall, two further classrooms, kitchen and staff rooms.

This urgent work on a slender budget of £22,250 was done by Messrs Alcock & Hargreaves, 17 St. Art-nor's, Cambridge Architects, of Shrewsbury. They were congratulated on their "economic miracle", a simple, efficient building which blended with the past, lived in the present and looked to the future.

A further two classrooms with covered teaching area could be added in the future if needed.



Schoolchildren with Father Rooney, parish priest and Sister Imelda.



The new hall, 1970. Dinner time! Gym equipment in background.



Rear view of the new classrooms and playground. In the background (left) there is a section of the two classroom block built in 1957.

The announcement of these plans raised great interest and initiated much practical help. The generous Longueville family donated a further strip of land which made the present entrance possible.

### Dedicated

The parishioners put their energies into the raising of funds and were helped by non-Catholic friends.

And then, once the plans had been approved by the Department of Education and Science and assurance of a grant obtained, the parish tackled the necessary demolitions and site clearance work to ensure that every penny possible should go towards the actual building.

Msgr. W. A. Sherratt, of Church Street, took possession of the site in April, 1969, and the new extensions were completed in time for the formal opening and blessing in June, 1970, by Canon F. Welch, Administrator of Shrewsbury Cathedral and chairman of the Shrewsbury Divisional Education executive committee.

The only addition since has been the purchase of one of the huts from Park Hall which serves as an additional classroom. Today, the one Sister left is the head teacher, Sister Josephine. There are five other teachers plus two part-timers in charge of 124 pupils.

The dedicated teaching and appreciative learning and especially to the Sisters of Charity and St Paul continues to this day and looks set to continue for many years to come.