

Saint Ambrose College

SaintAmbroseCollege



Blessing and Official Opening of the New Building 8 October 2012

HEAD MASTER'S WELCOME

"And if you have faith, everything you ask for in prayer you will receive."

- Matthew 21:22

In June of 2006, after six fruitless years of campaigning for new buildings, Saint Ambrose College was selected to become a 'One School Pathfinder'. This was to be an opportunity for the Local Authority and the College to set up and test a joint approach to educational transformation. The journey took longer than intended, six years instead of the allocated three; the Lord clearly wanted us to spend more time in the design and planning!

The Celtic cross was chosen by Blessed Edmund Rice, our founder, to become a symbol of the Congregation of Christian Brothers. It is the cross which appears on the badges of all our schools and colleges. Now it carves out that shape in the Manchester landscape proclaiming our Faith to all.

The interior of the building emphasises the religious community which is at the heart of our College. The learning wings provide enhanced teaching and sporting facilities and embrace the IT age like never before.

We must always remember that this is not a new College, it is a new building. The College continues to be an amalgam of past and present students and staff whose shared commitment to Edmund Rice Education has made it unique. Edmund would be proud of what we have built but even prouder of how it will transform the lives and learning of our boys.

Throughout the six years, we were blessed with many good people in our design team and in the build team. They did not build a new College - they built a bright new future for our boys. To all who supported us or played a part in the design and construction of this new building, no matter how small or apparently insignificant, we owe a huge debt - thank you.

May God bless all of you.

**Michael D Thompson. MA, FRSA.
Head Master**



BLESSED BY

The Right Reverend Mark Davies, 11th Bishop of Shrewsbury

I am delighted as your Bishop to be with you for the blessing and official opening of the new building. The College is strikingly new in its appearance and facilities but remains the same in its identity and foundation on the Catholic faith and the educational vision of Blessed Edmund Rice. Today I wish to congratulate the Trustees and Governors, the Headteacher and Staff, the students and parents who have worked and waited patiently to see this project realised and a new Saint Ambrose College standing in Hale Barns today.

Be assured of my prayers for you all.



OFFICIALLY OPENED BY

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester Warren J Smith JP

I am most grateful to the Head Master for his invitation to contribute to the Commemorative Booklet to mark the official opening of the New Build at Saint Ambrose College.

Since becoming Lord-Lieutenant over five years ago, I have made young people and their development one of my key areas of interest and have spoken at many Speech Days and school assemblies on the importance of social and academic education in the future leaders of our country. However, I am particularly pleased, as Her Majesty's representative in Greater Manchester, to have been invited to formally Open the new building that not only stands for increased opportunities for the boys at the college but also makes a statement of spiritual growth in the midst of a secular and postmodern society. The Eight Essentials of Edmund Rice Schools, upon which the ethos of the school is based, are a strong statement about the importance of compassion, justice and the need to share Christ's love in his world and I applaud each of you as you leave this college who hold these tenets to your heart.

My sincere congratulations to the staff and Governors and to the parents whose determination and support have brought about this very special day.



GOVERNORS 2011 - 2012

Mr R M Haig (Chairman)

Mr K Nodding

Mrs G Centeleghe

Fr A Cogliolo

Mr P Donnelly

Mr W Hammond

Mr P Hatchman (Vice Chairman)

Mr T Hutchinson

Mrs Y Kearns

Mrs M Kerr

Mr M Lalley

Mrs D McDermott

Mrs H Norwood

Mr S Parkinson (Director of Finance)

Cllr B Sharp

Br J Sullivan

Mr R Thomas

Mr M D Thompson (Head Master)

**Two former Governors also played
a key part in this project, namely:-**

Mr R Broadbent (former Chairman)

Mr N Milligan

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Saint Ambrose College, was founded during the Second World War, by a group of evacuee De la Salle Brothers.

Towards the end of June 1940, when the Channel Islands were about to be occupied by hostile forces, the parents of boys attending Les Vauxbelets College were asked to decide whether they should allow their sons to be evacuated to England or keep them at home with all the attendant risks (hunger, forced labour etc.).

On 21 June 1940 an apprehensive party of seventy boys and ten De La Salle Brothers, led by Brother Clarence, the Deputy Head Master, safely completed a potentially hazardous voyage from St Peter Port to Weymouth, in England. Once in Weymouth, the evacuees were moved by train to various towns in Cheshire. The evacuees became parishioners of St.Vincents, Altrincham, and the Parish Priest, Canon Donnelly was quickly active on their behalf. With the approval of Dr. Ambrose Moriarty, the Bishop of Shrewsbury, Canon Donnelly, acquired an attractive house on Dunham Road, 'Oakleigh', to serve as a school from October 1941.

The school was renamed "Saint Ambrose College" in September 1942 after Bishop Ambrose Moriarty, who had been so supportive.

At the end of the war, in the late summer of 1945, the De La Salle Brothers returned to Guernsey and left a thriving school in the hands of the Irish Christian Brothers.





HEAD MASTERS OF SAINT AMBROSE COLLEGE

1945 - 1948 : Br. J.J. Dowling

1948 - 1954 : Br. E.L. Casey

1954 - 1958 : Br. D.C. Phelan

1958 - 1962 : Br. P.C. Carey

1961 - 1967 : Br. W.D. Foley

1967 - 1973 : Br. J.G. Gleeson

1973 - 1979 : Br. J.C. Ring

1979 - 1983 : Br. P.F. Rynne

1983 - 1984 : Br. J.J. Sheehan

1984 - 1991 : Br. T.C. Coleman

1991 - 1999 : Mr G.E. Hester

1999 - 2000 : Mr P Howard (Acting)

2000 - : Mr M.D. Thompson

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Oakleigh was no longer adequate for one hundred and seventy children, and the lack of grounds must have proved a serious handicap. At the cessation of hostilities in Europe, the Superior of the College was directed by the Bishop of Shrewsbury to close the school in the summer of 1945. This came as a great shock, for the De La Salle Brothers were contemplating the purchase of a large property with the intention of building a permanent school. The parents of the local boys were much upset by the contemplated closure, and three protest meetings were held, which the Brothers attended. The school was finally closed down in July 1945 and the boys on leaving were expressly told to secure admission to other schools in the area, as the school was definitely not re-opening.

However, the Bishop of Shrewsbury invited the Christian Brothers to re-open the school in September 1945. The former premises of the school were taken possession of early in September and, on 14 September, eighty-one boys, all former pupils of the school, presented themselves. The premises were to serve as a temporary school, pending the purchase of an excellent property in Hale Barns, about 2 miles from Altrincham. Local pressure seems to have been crucial in securing a Boys' Catholic Grammar School for the Altrincham area.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Mr. Jim Cosgrove, founding Chairman of the Parents' Association, and his colleagues were heavily involved in the discussions with the Bishop of Shrewsbury. Canon Donnelly of St. Vincent's, Altrincham, and his fellow priests in Timperley and Sale, also played a crucial role. Bishop Moriarty therefore allowed Canon Donnelly to purchase 'Woodeaves' a grand residence, standing in 22 acres of parkland. The Christian Brothers moved in on Christmas Eve in 1945.

During the war, the College began to grow in popularity, especially as there was no Catholic school for boys in the South Manchester area.

Brother J.J. Dowling (who died in 1990) was the Head Master from 1945 until 1948 and supervised the transfer from 'Oakleigh' to 'Woodeaves', the site at Hale Barns which Canon Donnelly had purchased.

The first lay Head Master to join the College was Mr Eric Hester in 1991, after Brother Coleman retired (the last Christian Brother Head Master). After Mr Hester's retirement, Mr Michael Thompson became the second lay Head Master in 2000.

In 2005, Saint Ambrose College gained specialist status as a Mathematics and Computing College.

In November 2005 Saint Ambrose College was considered the school in Trafford "most in need of a new building" and was awarded a multi-million pound grant in July 2006 to completely rebuild the College. After a bidding process, in January 2010 Balfour Beatty was awarded the contract and the rest is now history.



Artist: Sandro Kopp



SAINT AMBROSE COLLEGE
Hale Barns



The PRESENT

A MOST attractive property was found at Hale Barns. It was a large house "Woodeaves," standing in some thirty acres of parkland. The Superior of the Christian Brothers (the late Brother Noonan) came over expressed the site and it was then purchased for the sum of thirty-four thousand pounds the parish of St. Joseph's, Sale, contributed ten thousand pounds, St. Timperley, nine thousand pounds and the parish of St. Vincent's, Altrincham, contributed the balance of five thousand pounds as well as the legal costs and other expenses. They named the house the Founder Parishes.

On Christmas Eve 1945, the Christian Brothers left "Oakleigh" and moved into their new home. During the holidays the furniture and equipment were transferred to the new building. The school re-assembled with some eighty boys, in the more spacious

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

To this day, Saint Ambrose College is a Christian Brothers' foundation, although now with a lay Head Master and teaching staff. All that is best in the Christian Brothers' tradition is preserved. Saint Ambrose is, therefore, first and foremost, a Catholic School and a Catholic ethos must exist in our daily life.

Saint Ambrose College is under the trusteeship of the Congregation of Christian Brothers and was rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and also by the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury following their recent inspections. The Head Master continues to retain additional membership of HMC.

The College still retains as its core ethos, the charism of its founder, Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice.

The Eight Essentials of Edmund Rice Education:-

- Evangelism of the Modern World
- Awareness of the Spiritual
- Building of a Christian Community
- Compassion for the Weak
- Concern for the Whole Person
- Striving for Excellence
- Teaching as a Christian Vocation
- Education for Justice

THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING SPECIAL

We Made It!

Saint Ambrose College is finally 'in the building'!

Our new school is unique and bespoke in that it is designed around the shape of a Celtic cross; the cross which features on the badge of all Edmund Rice Schools.

As you will see, as boys enter the College they are presented with the central atrium and 'Spanish steps' which provide a social gathering area.

The Chapel which acts as the focal point to the whole College is located in the central atrium space and has an axial relationship to Holy Angels Church to the South East.

The main building is made up of four wings over three storeys, which house the main teaching spaces. These teaching spaces are positioned around the central atrium space with the sports facilities located to the south of the main building. You will see, in order to maximise external space on the site, the sports hall has been located over the swimming pool and is connected to the school building.

These areas combine to provide a clear representation of the Celtic Cross within a purpose-built exceptional educational environment in which to learn and aspire.





BUILDING FEATURES

GROUND FLOOR

This level provides both pupil and visitor entrances to the school, the school office and the major proportion of specialist areas e.g. design and technology, sport cardio, dining and lecture theatre, as well as a direct link to the swimming pool, both from the central area and via a separate sports entrance.

The central atrium space is designed as a multi-functional space for assembly, theatre style performances and a dining/social area; it is the gathering space of the College community.

FIRST FLOOR

The first floor level accommodates the balance of specialist areas, including science, together with music and art.

The first floor also accommodates the sports hall, accessed from the ground floor link by either stair or lift.



Mr M D Thompson Head Master with Architect Mr David Ardill.

BUILDING FEATURES

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor houses the library pods, Sixth Form common room and outdoor balcony alongside study areas and ICT classrooms. Every wing is provided with a dedicated ICT room and boys also have access to numerous 'cyber cafes' during their free time.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SPORTS PROVISION

Sports facilities are contained in the southern wing and extend over two floors. The twenty-five metre long, six lane swimming pool sits directly below the sport hall and provides views across the rugby pitches and cricket square. The air-conditioned sports hall houses a full size basketball court, cricket nets and four badminton courts. Alongside this is a fitness suite equipped with rowing machines, weights, fitness stations and running machines.

The existing senior rugby pitch and cricket square are maintained in their current location, thus preserving the views from Hale Road. These facilities have been supplemented by two further rugby fields to the south of the building, where spectators can view matches from the grassed terrace areas or the viewing balcony.

The outdoor areas will provide additional areas for pupil development with the wetland areas and allotments; there is also a 'trim trail' and exercise area along with traversing walls.





MISSION STATEMENT

At Saint Ambrose College we strive to make real in our lives and in the world the values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We aim to do this together in a spirit of hope and happiness following the example of Blessed Edmund Rice and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the patronage of Our Lady, Help of all Christians.

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

The boys are at the heart of everything we do at Saint Ambrose College, so it should come as no surprise that their opinion is incredibly important to us. The boys have watched the new development with excitement throughout the whole process and quite a number were able to have tours during the building phase.

It's not that we are never satisfied. It's just that there's so much more we'd like to achieve. We are committed to educating and developing the adults of the future. We aim to expand on our potential with the new facilities now available to our students, such as the swimming pool, sporting facilities and computing facilities.

We continually assess, measure, and monitor our students' experiences to help us understand what we are doing well and where we can improve.

It's through the tireless commitment of our Head Master, Governors and staff that we maintain such a respected reputation, and it means a great deal to us that our standards are acknowledged by parents, students and through our results.



Saint Ambrose College

WITH THANKS

Standing still is not an option at Saint Ambrose College. In order to deliver the best in education, we are always trying to evolve and improve. This year has been no exception.

In the future, we plan through new technologies, to communicate more with our parents and students electronically, as well as via traditional methods. We will also continue to keep our local community apprised of our developments and successes through the local media.

The generosity of the school's supporters with their time and support never ceases to amaze us. We are very proud of our students and exceptionally pleased with our new 'state of the art' educational establishment. We continue to count our blessings!

Thank you for visiting our new College buildings and sharing our special day.

God bless