

Edenhurst Prep School: A History

'60s

1961: Mr and Mrs Copestick purchased a house in Westlands Avenue; the house was called 'Edenhurst', and had been used as an ARP post during World War Two. The Copestick family commenced renovations, converting the house into suitable premises for a School. By September 1961, 24 pupils aged between 3 and 15 years of age had enrolled for the first day of term; by the end of the first school year Edenhurst Prep School was home to 108 pupils. The school fees were 60 guineas per annum.

1962: Construction of the 'New Building' began, complete with hall/gymnasium and classrooms on the ground floor. The Headmaster, Bill Copestick, had designed a modest office for himself, at approximately 21 square feet; he didn't spend much time there, preferring to engage with staff and pupils on his travels around the school. The kitchen was extended and equipped to cater for 150 lunches. Allotments adjacent to the school were purchased and laid as grass playing fields for soccer, hockey and cricket. An old RAF wooden hut was installed for use as changing rooms. The school's first Carol Service was held at St. Andrew's Church.

1963: The Art room was built on top of a flat roof in the main building. The Copestick family moved out of school into a new house as both they and the school needed more space.

1964: After Inspection by HMI, the school was Recognised as Efficient by the Department of Education. The Car Park was formed and tarmacked, and second floor classrooms were built on top of the New Building. The first School Play - 'Quality Street' - was performed for parents on stage at school.

1965: The school magazine 'Annalia' records that 11 pupils took the Common Entrance to boarding schools while 11 others gained places at local grammar schools, and two pupils gained GCE passes.

1966: Sports Day was held for the first time on the field at school.

1969: The Headmaster became a member of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools. This was to become significant over 20 years later, as the inspection of independent schools was handed over to the Independent School Council. By the end of the year, over 650 pupils had come and gone.

1971: One half of the wooden changing hut was converted into a Science Laboratory.

1972: The Edenhurst Playing Fields Trust was founded. The task of the Board, comprising several parents, was to help raise enough money to acquire land to be used for playing fields.

'70s



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1974: A 10 acre plot of land was leased from Newcastle Borough Council in 1974 and the ground made good for sports, with the Trust taking on responsibility for its upkeep.

1975: Three Tennis courts were laid at school with all-weather tarmac. Sports Day was held for the first time on the Playing Fields.

1976: Nick Copestick returned from a teaching post in London, to take up the position of Headmaster, while Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Copestick became Principals. The first school Prospectus was produced in black and white. The building known as 'the Beardies' was built as living accommodation for the new Head; four years later it was converted for classroom use. The Activities Programme was initiated; this began as two late afternoon sessions, but was eventually extended to eight lessons per day. Pupil number 1,000 was registered.

1978: In response to local reorganisation of secondary schools, which prevented pupils living in key areas of Newcastle from taking the 11+, Edenhurst took on pupils towards G.C.E.'O' level. Approximately twenty 11-year-old pupils enrolled for the first class and the same process continued for the next three years. In 1984 the first cohort successfully took their exams at 16+. By then, the Grammar Schools had become independent and after two more years of 'O' levels, Edenhurst reverted to its Prep School formula.

1979: A new extension was built onto the ground floor of the New Building comprising a classroom and toilet/cloakroom. This was used for the newly formed Nursery class, accepting children on a part or full time basis from the age of three.

'80s

1980: The school purchased its first computer, a Sinclair ZX80. In 1981 the new version ZX81 arrived. For the next eight years the BBC microcomputer became the principal tool for the new subject of Information Technology.

1981: The building known as 'The Bungalow', part of the original Edenhurst estate, was purchased and converted into two infant classrooms. The back gardens of the house were converted into a large playground.

1982: The first 'Annual Speech Day and Prizegiving' was held in the Walter Moberely Hall, Keele University. This event now takes place each September in the Victoria Hall, Hanley. Many prominent Heads of Public Schools have presented prizes over the years.

1983: The Bungalow was handed over to the Nursery class, who have remained there ever since. The first school ski trip to Italy took place.

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1984: The first floor of 'the Beardies' was converted into the Science Laboratory, complete with storage and preparation room.

1985: A colour Prospectus was designed and mailed to over 2,000 business addresses in the area.

1986: The school PTA was founded. The Board of The Playing Fields Trust were incorporated on to the first committee, under Chairman Ken Jones. Subsequently, the Trust was wound up, having fulfilled its task to develop the playing fields, leaving the PTA to concentrate on social functions and fund raising for the school. The school celebrated its 25th anniversary at a special Anniversary Ball organised by the PTA with great success. A competition for a design on a china cup resulted in a popular sale of these items.

1987: A ground floor room in 'the Beardies' was furnished with tools and other equipment for teaching Craft, Design and Technology. The PTA, in its first major project, provided much of the funding; subsequent projects have included improving the Play Area, contributing towards the school Minibus, and the purchase of I.T. and audio-visual equipment.

1988: The school won a national award, sponsored by NatWest, for work done to help pupils in a local special school.

'90s

1990: The school Carol Service moved to the Parish Church of St. Giles, thus forging closer links with the parish.

1991: The school administration became successfully computerised, using a small network of Apple Macintosh computers. Following upgrades, the first Macs were then passed on to the pupils. Their popularity and ease of use led to the furnishing of an IT room with six computers and one in each infant classroom. By 2001 there were 15 iMacs in the I.T. department, and 15 other Macs functioning around the school in addition to the office/staff network.

1992: Biannual visits to a French Château in Brittany begin; these trips alternate with European ski trips.

1993: The school's first inspection under the new Independent Schools system resulted in a complementary report and confirmation of Accreditation by the Independent Schools Joint Council, assuring parents of continuing quality and excellence of teaching. Pupil number 2,000 was part of the year's intake.

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'90s

1994: A School Play – 'Brilliant the Dinosaur' was performed at The Mitchell Memorial Theatre, marking a trend to involve as many children as possible on a one night show at outside theatres.

1995: The school's Homework policy is featured on ITV's 'News At Ten', following a government initiative to encourage homework in state schools. Edenhurst choir represented Britain in a Music Festival in Bavaria.

1996: A nine-month cultural visit by a Japanese student culminated in a Central TV appearance for the school. A new prospectus was issued and modified to become the content of the school's first website.

1997: Bill Copestick, Founder of the school, died in Cornwall following a stroke at the age of 74. His working life had been dedicated to teaching, particularly in languages, drama and sport. Many former pupils will remember his strong motivation skills.

1998: Spanish appeared on the curriculum, making a total of three foreign languages with an additional option to study German as an Activity.

1999: The Design Technology department moved into the area next to the Art room, while Information Technology relocated to the ground floor of 'the Beardies'. An increase in pupil numbers from 190 to 230 forced the addition of temporary classrooms for Music, and the restructuring of classes to two per year group. Three pupils gained places in the National Children's Orchestras.

'00s

2000: The Millennium celebrations were led by the PTA who organised a trip to the Millennium Dome, a special Millennium Tapestry, a commemorative tie and the gift of a mug to all pupils. The first Christmas Concert was held at the Victoria Hall, Hanley, involving all pupils in the school and a choir of over 100. In the Alderley Edge Music Festival Edenhurst choirs made a clean sweep, winning all the competitions they entered.

2001: Edenhurst Preparatory School is 40 years old! A successful inspection by the newly formed Independent School Inspectorate resulted in glowing tributes, and the school proved its academic worth by recording six scholarships to senior Independent Schools.

2002: The school's first website is launched.