

Officially opened after two-and-a-half years

TRADITION-BUILDING AT DOWNER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ALTHOUGH it has been in use since 1952 and was the first new grammar school in Middlesex since the war, Downer Grammar School, Shaldon-road, Edgware, the official opening ceremony was not held until Tuesday last week.

As well as the schoolchildren, in their dark red uniform, and their parents, there were present many members of the Harrow Council, the Middlesex Education Committee and head teachers from local schools.

The ceremony was performed by the Right Rev. J. de Blank, Bishop of Stepney and former vicar of St. John's, Station-road, Harrow, and a short service of dedication was conducted by the Rev. A. C. D. Fennell, Vicar of All Saints', Queensbury, and the Rev. F. R. Mitchell, minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrow.

LEARNING BY DOING

County Alderman Mrs. K. M. St. P. Crump, chairman of Middlesex Education Committee, was chairman and gave a brief outline of the history of the school. She explained how, several years ago, when plans had been made for the building of the new Harrow school, a small grammar school was started in Blackwell Secondary Modern School, Headstone-lane. Each year two forms were added to the nucleus of the school.

The first two groups had now reached the top of the school and made up the lower sixth. At last the school had achieved the whole spread of ages, except for an upper sixth year, which they would naturally acquire next year. After about 2½ years as a school, she said, they were already beginning to build their own traditions.

Describing just one of these traditions, Mrs. Crump said that the school had got right away from the idea that a grammar school was a place where children studied from books and blackboards, with an occasional turn in the gymnasium, and had now introduced the theory of "learning by doing." As well as the usual class rooms, they had some very fine practical rooms, with domestic science for the girls and woodwork and metal work for boys.

She concluded her introductory address by adding her own good wishes for the school's future.

REAL PURPOSE

In formally declaring the school open, the Bishop said it was only in England that a clergyman would be asked to perform such a function. It always seemed strange to foreign visitors, who quite rightly regarded the English as far from a religious nation, that they never hoped to begin any new enterprise without asking for God's blessing on it. It was such actions, he continued, that showed that life was not only divided into watertight secular and religious compartments.

He added his own good wishes for the school's future by explaining his idea of what a grammar school was for. It was not so much to teach its

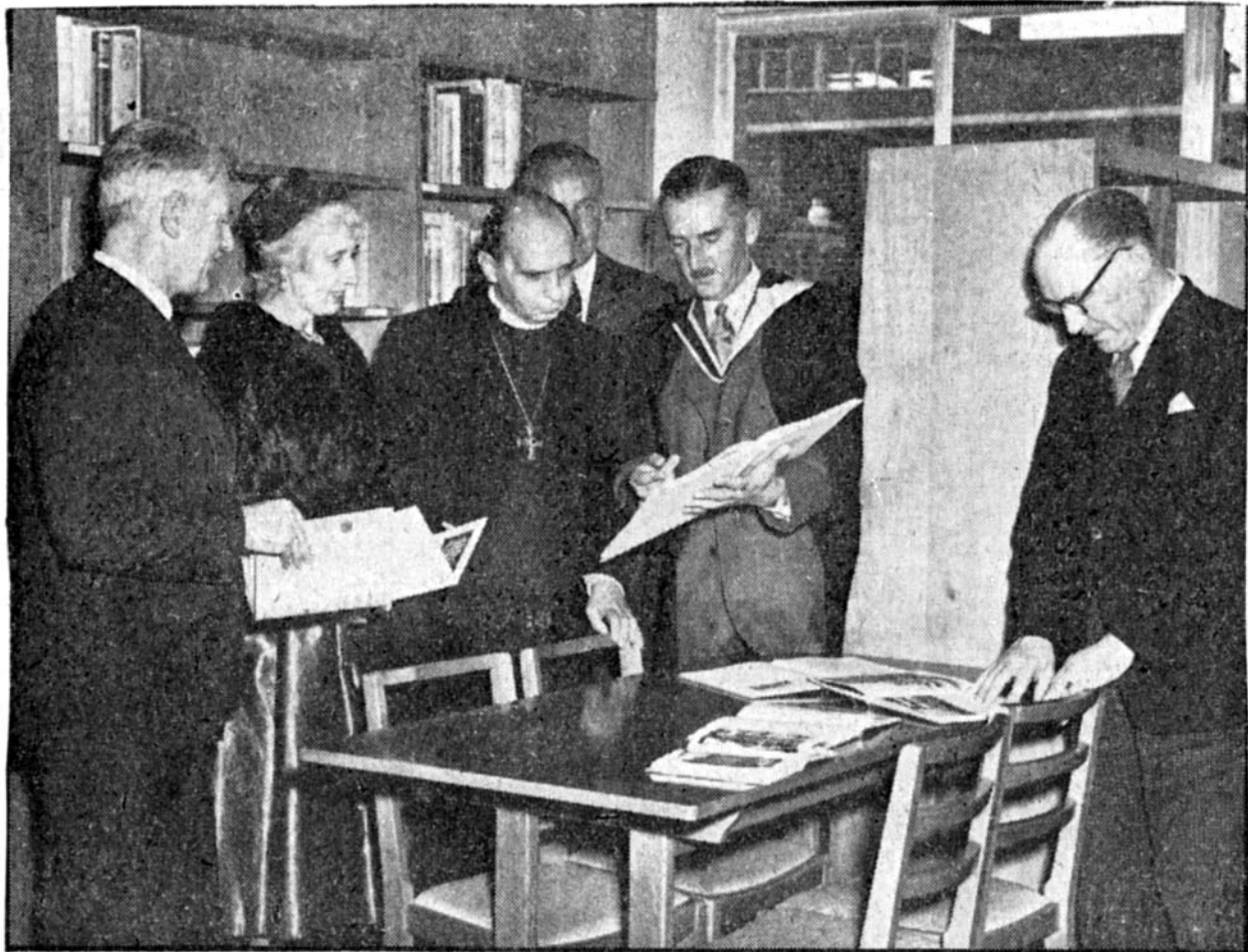
pupils to give the right answers, but to fulfil the real purpose of education and to teach them to ask the right questions. From the grammar schools of to-day he said, would come the nation's future leaders and it was the capacity for leadership that was sought in the grammar schools.

REACHING MATURITY

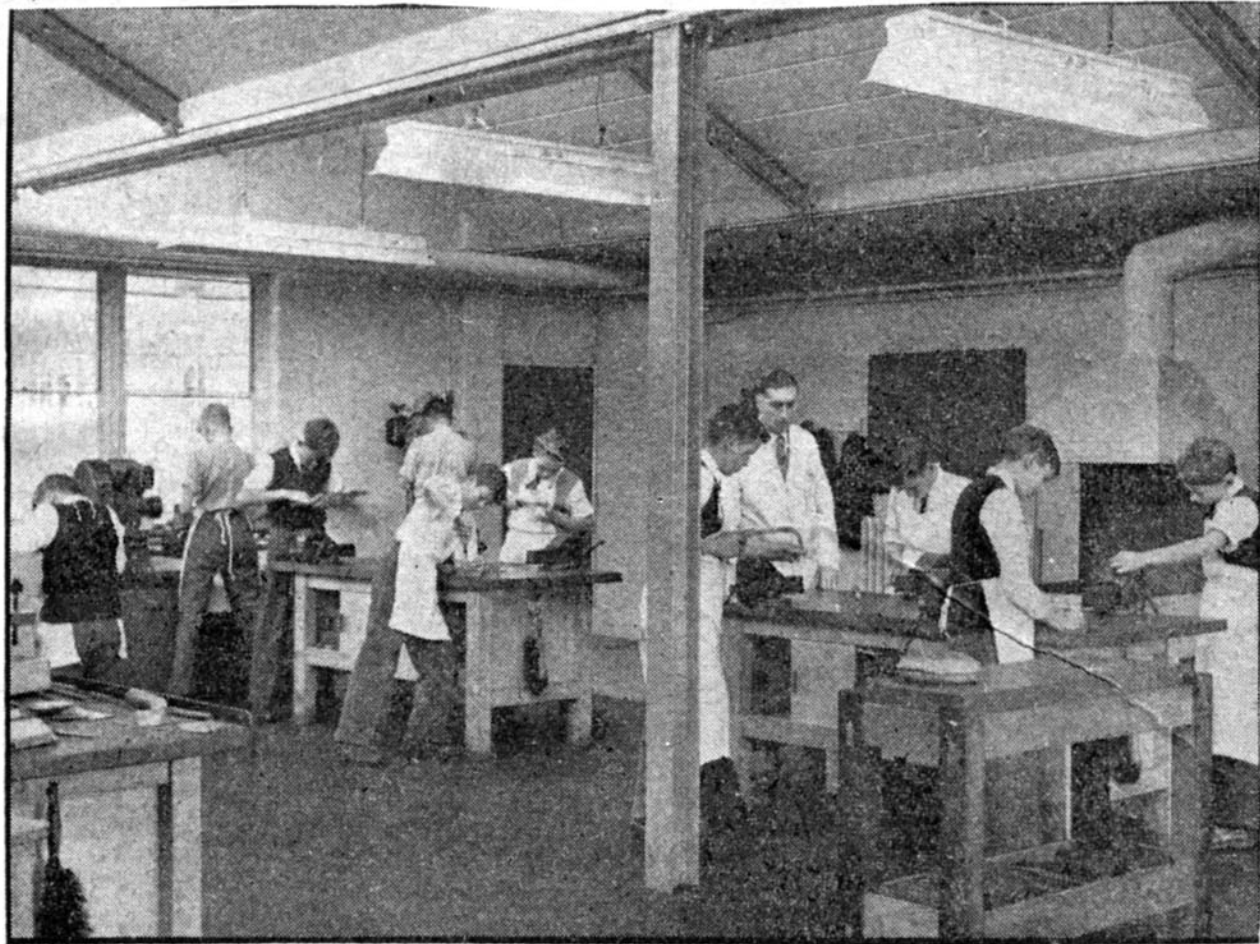
A vote of thanks to the Bishop of Stepney and to Mrs. Crump, was proposed by Alderman C. E. Jordan, chairman of the Harrow Education Committee. He reminded those present of how, two years ago, the school had commenced work against heavy odds. He said he had watched the school's headmaster, Mr. D. Woosley, surrounded by mud, workmen and schoolchildren, begin the school's first day of work. Now, he said, the school had reached a state of maturity and was respected, not only by those who looked in from outside, but by those who worked and taught in it.

Councillor M. C. Nokes seconded the vote of thanks.

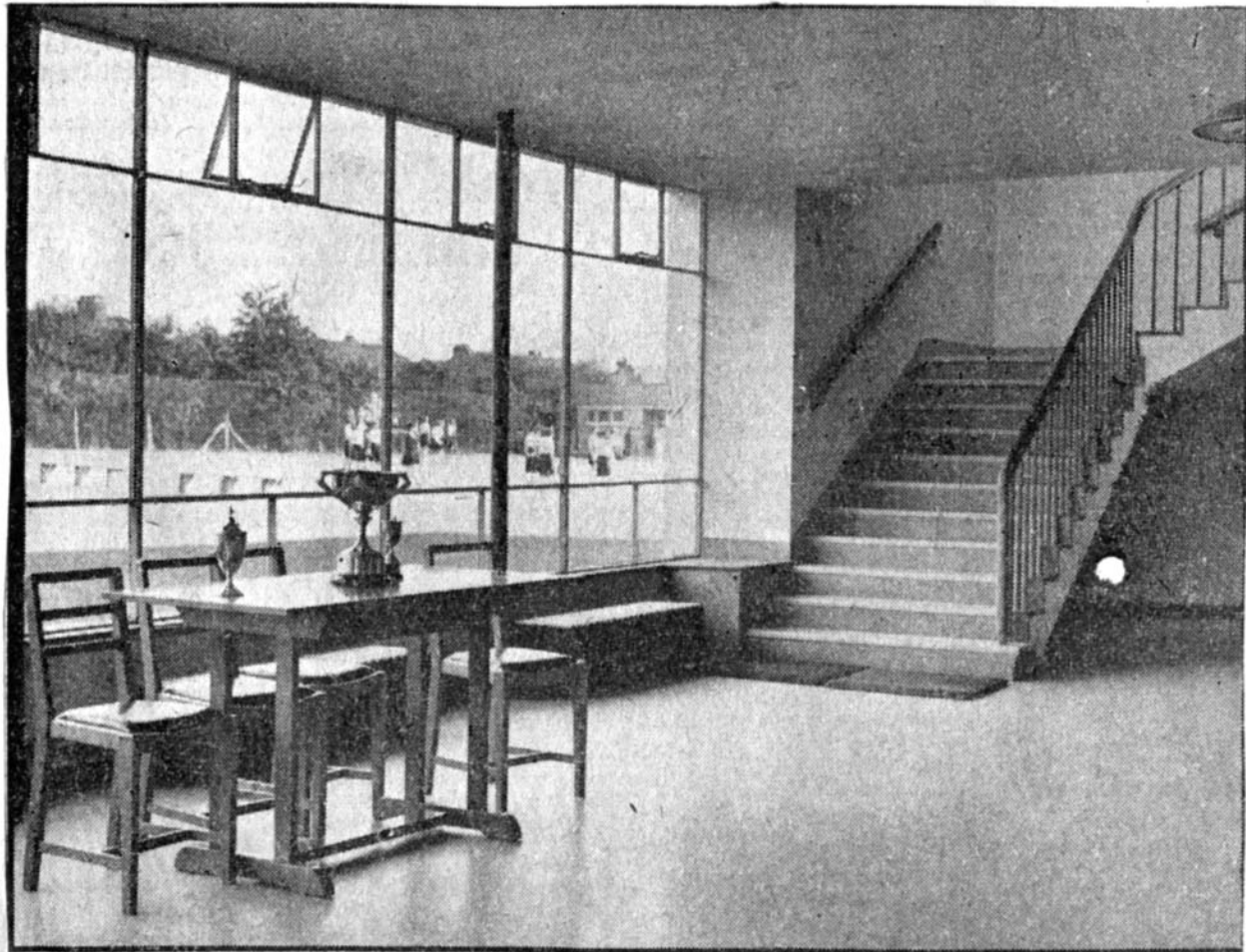
Among those present were Dr. C. E. Gurr, chief education officer of Middlesex and Mr. W. H. J. Knight, the Harrow education officer.



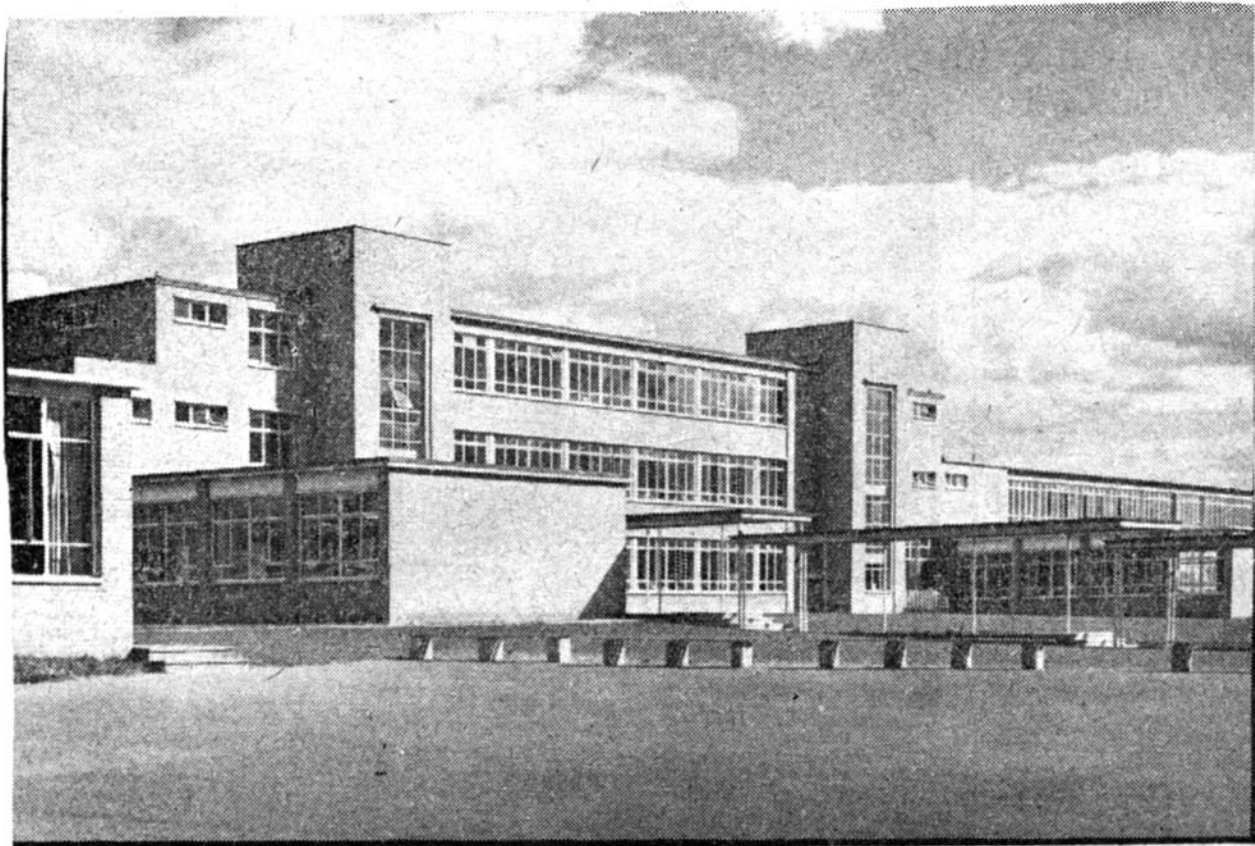
The headmaster, Mr. D. Woolsley (second from right) showing books in the school library to guests at the opening ceremony. Left to right: Mr. W. H. J. Knight, Harrow education officer; County-alderman Mrs. K. M. St.P. Crump, chairman of Middlesex Education Committee; the Bishop of Stepney, the Right Rév. J. de Blank; Dr. C. E. Gurr, education officer for Middlesex; Mr. Woolsley; Alderman C. E. Jordan, chairman of Harrow Education Committee.



A class under tuition in one of the well-equipped workshops.



School trophies grace the table in the light and spacious entrance hall which overlooks part of the school playing fields.



A general view of Downer Grammar School, Shaldon-road, Edgware, showing the clean, modern lines of the building. The school has been in use since 1952 but was officially opened last year.