



A Brief History of Beal High School

Today, Beal High School is the largest mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11–18 in England.

South Park council school (1908)



Beal's roots go back to the foundation of a senior department to South Park council school in Water Lane, Seven Kings which was opened in 1907. In 1908 a Senior Mixed Department opened with 59 boys and 100 girls. Between 1927 and 1930 the building was used for a temporary selective central school. The clamour for better and more education grew and it was agreed to open a new school.

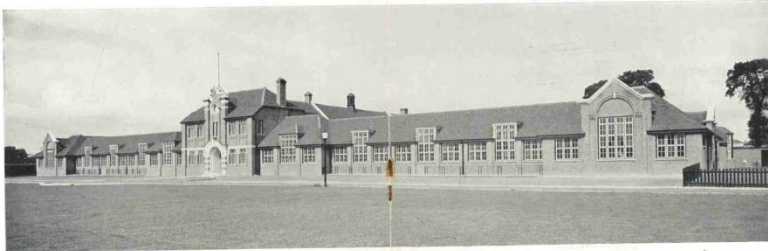
Beal Modern School (1931)

EPW037536 ENGLAND (1932). Beal Modern School (Seven Kings High School), Ilford, 1932





VIEW OF GIRLS' QUADRANGLE.



GENERAL VIEW OF SCHOOL.

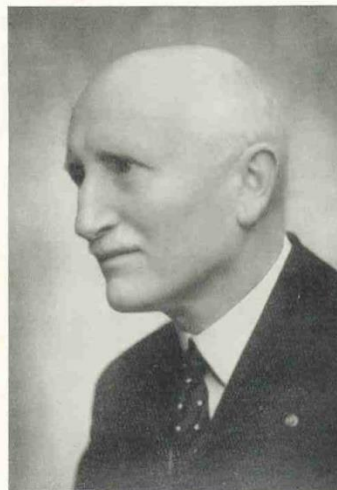
Picture taken from *The Beal School Magazine 1932*)

The girls were allocated the ground floor and the headmistress was Miss J B Atkinson.

The boys were placed on the upper floor and the headmaster was Mr Herbert Goodacre.



Miss J. B. ATKINSON, Headmistress.



Mr. H. H. GOODACRE, Headmaster.

Picture taken from *The Beal School Magazine 1932*)

In general the girls and boys were educated separately and were only allowed to mix on special social occasions.

In 1936 the school was inspected by an HMI, Mr J C Bishop. At this time there were 308 pupils on roll in 9 classes with 2 forms in each of 3 years and three forms in the 4th year. Mr Bishop pointed out the inadequacies of provision for both the boys and the parallel girls' school, all housed in one building, with playing fields of just 6 acres.

At this time a library did not exist, the medical room being used for this purpose. There was no dining room, nor a gymnasium, and the boys' and girls' school shared one laboratory and a hall.



The curriculum included English, History, Geography, French, Mathematics, Science, Art, Handicraft, Music, Commercial Subjects and Physical Training. HMI pointed out the limitations of the school facilities, but reported that *'the spirit of the school is excellent'* and that there were many activities that played a valuable part in the education of the pupils. He was particularly pleased to note that there was a school branch of the League of Nations, which held debates and had lantern lectures. Some of the members of the society had pen friends in foreign countries. He noted, with particular pleasure, that the boys' school was involved in visits to factories, works and museums on an annual basis and that the stage had recently been equipped for operatic and dramatic productions.

On 2nd December 1938, the Headmaster, Mr H H Goodacre retired. He was succeeded by Mr Walter L Norman, who, in the first year of his headship, would be thrown into the Second World War and the organisation required evacuating the school from London to the Kennylands Camp, Kidmore End, near Reading.

School evacuation during the Second World War (1940)

On 19th February 1940, 182 boys and 12 masters arrived at Kennylands Camp. They were part of a national scheme to set up camps in several places away from the danger of living in large cities which were the target of Nazi bombers.

When war ended in Europe in May 1945, the parents expected pupils to return to Ilford, but their hopes were dashed as the school building could not be released immediately by the Air-raid Precautions Controller. The Civil Defence finally left Beal School in July 1945, but the children had to remain at the Camp for their schooling until Christmas, because the building needed renovation.

It should be noted that during the war the site of the current school at Woodford Bridge Road was being used as a POW camp for Italian and German soldiers.

School reopens in 1946

On 7th January 1946 the school re-opened in Ilford.

In September 1947 the school roll was 314. A clerk, Miss D Brooks, was appointed to help the Headmaster and Headmistress. At a time when the requirements for schools to complete forms and paperwork were quite limited her appointment was mainly in connection with the administration of school meals and milk for the pupils.

In November 1947 the Headmaster, Mr Walter L Norman retired after 43 years' service in Ilford schools.



His successor was Dr Elvet Lewis, who commenced duties as Headmaster on 5th November 1947.



Dr Elvet Lewis (1904-1981)

Headmaster of Beal Modern
School/Beal Grammar School for
Boys (1947 – 1969)

Beal Grammar Schools (1948)

As a result of a good report in a General Inspection in 1948, the Boys' and Girls' schools became the Beal Grammar Schools, one for boys and one for girls. Dr Lewis was by training a chemist and he did much to raise the standards of Science teaching in the new school.

Beal Grammar School for Boys moves to Woodford Bridge Road (1957)

In 1957 Beal Grammar School for Boys moved to the present Woodford Bridge Road site with Beal Grammar School for Girls remaining on the Ley Street site.

Dr Lewis retired in October 1969. By this time the school had doubled in size, with a school roll of 644.

In 1969 Mr J M Manuel was appointed Headmaster to replace Dr E Lewis, taking up his duties in January 1970. Prior to this appointment Mr Manuel had served as Senior History Master at Hull Grammar School for Boys. The new Headmaster inherited a well-disciplined school, with a sound reputation throughout the area for good examination results. The school had also built up a tradition for the presentation of school musicals reaching a high standard. The origins of this go back to Mr Gilbert Miles' (later to become Chief Education Officer of Redbridge) fine production of the '*Mikado*' in 1935.

In January 1972 the future of the school was in the balance. The Education Committee considered a proposal that Beal Grammar School for Boys be re-organised to become a third grammar school containing boys and girls to balance the single-sex grammar schools of Ilford County High School for Boys and Woodford County High School for Girls. However this proposal was defeated and plans were drawn up to re-organise Beal as a comprehensive school, commencing with a new intake in the first year in September 1976. In preparation for this Mr Manuel visited a whole range of



comprehensive schools in Hull, Harrogate and Essex, particularly acquainting himself with the organisation and option system for fourth and fifth year pupils.

During the next twenty years the school was to grow from 640 pupils to 1089. As the school organisation grew more complex the number of deputy heads trebled. When Dr M Ford was promoted to a headship in March 1973, Mr Ivor Chapman succeeded him as Deputy responsible for the compilation of the timetable (and many other things besides). Mrs Denise Arnold (who became Mrs Carr in 1989) was appointed as Second Deputy in 1976 (when girls first joined the school).

Meanwhile the school was growing, with additional buildings being added. In 1973 the History and Geography rooms were completed at the front of the school. In October 1975 a pavilion was built at a total cost of £10,500, the money having been raised the successful liaison of school, staff and parents over a number of years.

On 13th September 1974, the School Caretaker, Bill Bentall died after 26 years of service. He had had the distinction of being 'dropped' at Arnhem in 1944, having reached the rank of RSM with the famous 'Red Berets'.

In 1976 the comprehensive wing was completed to the west of the school, providing new facilities for Art, Music, Commerce, Home Economics and a number of other teaching rooms.

In November 1973 HMIs Gordon and Ounstead visited Beal and gave the school a good report, with one major criticism, that it was felt a far greater use of visual aids was needed about the school to stimulate pupils' motivation, but they were very impressed by the courtesy, sound exam results and positive attitudes of the boys.

Beal High School (1976)

1976 proved to be a difficult year, as the Headmaster and all members of the old grammar school were required to apply for similar posts in the new comprehensive school. Mr J M Manuel was appointed as the Headmaster of the comprehensive school, there having been 47 applications for the post, 4 of whom were short-listed. All other members of staff were also appointed after formal interviews.

On the 2nd September 1976 girls walked through the gates for the first time to join the school in the first year.

In 1977, a Staff Consultative Committee were formed, comprising 4 to 5 members of the staff room to meet regularly with the Headmaster and senior management. At the same time regular meetings were held for Heads of Department to consult with the Headmaster on school policy, plus 6 full meetings of the staff each year.



Beal High School (1982)

By 1982, Beal High School had become fully comprehensive. The transition had started in 1976, with the first comprehensive entry, and when the first girls arrived at the school.

For five days from 29th November to 3rd December 1982 the school received a full General Inspection by eighteen HMIs, led by HMI David Sharman. Beal was one of the first schools in the country to receive a Report published for all to see – a new departure in educational practice.

In September 1983 the school purchased its first computer. Over the past eight years a revolution has taken place, with a highly-organised school office using a complex computer network, a computer department teaching computing skills throughout the school, and all departments having access to modern technology.

In the mid-1980s the school was aware of being under-funded in terms of money required for buying text books. The Headmaster and a number of other senior colleagues wrote a number of letters to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Education and the local MP, Mr Patrick Jenkins, asking them to do all they could to improve funding for British education. During this period of industrial unrest the school maintained the high quality of education but there were problems in recruiting new teachers in specialist subjects, including English, Maths, CDT, Modern Languages and the Sciences.

1991, Mr Richard Fishleigh was promoted from Senior Master to Third Deputy, with special responsibility for assisting the Headmaster in control and management of the school budget, in liaison with the School Governors.

At the end of March 1991 the school completed its first year of having a delegated budget and was in credit for £60,000. A Financial Committee had been formed of Governors who were to oversee the budget of over £2,000,000 per year.

In 1995 Mr Manuel retired and Ms S Snowdon became Headteacher.

A further transition took place in the life of Beal High School in 1997 when, as a result of the shortage of secondary school places in the London Borough of Redbridge, Beal High School expanded from 6 forms of entry (180 students per year group) to 8 forms of entry (240 students per year group).

As a result of the need to accommodate extra students, an enormous building programme took place. Not only were new classrooms built, but also extra specialist facilities: Drama Studios, Science Laboratories, a Library Resource Centre, Information Technology rooms, sixth form facilities, a new administrative area and expanded dining hall. In addition, the building programme was utilised to provide refurbished suited accommodation for all departments and to improve the circulation of students around the school.

In April 2007, a new 'Media Factory' was opened, to accommodate the school's new status as a Media Arts College. This new building consists of three media studies classrooms, a radio station, and a drama studio.



In 2010 a new Sixth Form Centre was opened containing classrooms, private study rooms with IT facilities, a common room and café.

Beal High School was inspected by Ofsted in 2012 and achieved a grade of 'Outstanding'.

In 2013 Beal High School expanded from 8 to 12 forms of entry. To accommodate the extra students, a new building was constructed. This opened in September 2014 to provide an additional 72 classrooms including three ICT suites, sports hall, dance suite, fitness suite, and specialist teaching rooms for Science, Design Technology and Art.



Beal High School (2014)

On 1st February 2014 Beal High School became an academy having previously been a Local Authority maintained school. It was the founding school of the Beacon Academy Trust, which also comprises of Forest Academy, Beacon Business Innovation Hub (BBIH), an alternative provision 'free school' and NELTA (North East London Teaching Alliance) a teaching school alliance and accredited provider of initial teacher training.

In 2018/2019 there was a merger of the Beal High School and Forest Academy sixth forms with the formation of Beal Sixth Form. This provides a wide range of courses across both school campuses.

In April 2016 Ms S Snowdon retired and Ms T Wilmot became Principal having been Associate Headteacher since 2011.

In April 2019 Ms T Wilmot left to pursue other career opportunities. Ms K Burns who had been Managing Director of the Multi-Academy Trust and then CEO also became Executive Principal with Ms Y Andress and Mr P Bray becoming co-headteachers.



Headteachers at Beal High School (1931 to date)

1. Mr Herbert Goodacre - Headmaster of Beal Modern School (1931 – 1938)
2. Mr Walter L Norman - Headmaster of Beal Modern School (1938 – 1947)
3. Dr Elvet Lewis (1904-1981) - Headmaster of Beal Modern School/Beal Grammar School for Boys (1947 – 1969)
4. Mr John Manuel - Headmaster of Beal Grammar School for Boys/Beal High School (1969 – 1995)
5. Ms Sue Snowdon - Headteacher of Beal High School (1995 – 2016)
6. Ms Terese Wilmot – Associate Headteacher /Principal of Beal High School (2011 - 2019)
7. Ms K Burns CEO and Executive Principal, Ms Y Andress and Mr P Bray, co-headteachers (2019 - date)