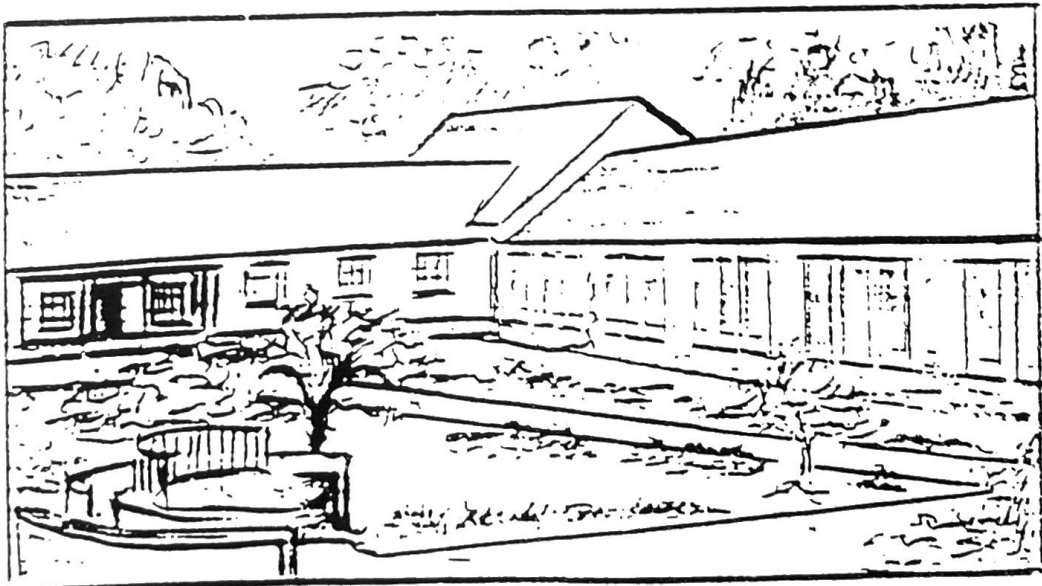




OUR LADY OF MERCY

CONVENT SCHOOL

BOOTERSTOWN



BOOTERSTOWN SCHOOL

Introduction

The connection of the Sisters of Mercy with Primary Education in Booterstown, dates back to the Foundress.

Mother Catherine McAuley opened a Convent here in 1838 at the request of, among others, Mrs. Barbara Verschoyle of Mount Merrion. That lady spent her life in Booterstown Parish, which at the time included Blackrock, Dundrum, Ballinteer, Newtown Park, Stillorgan and parts of Roebuck. To quote from the plaque on the church wall - Mrs. Barbara Verschoyle "spent her long life in this parish, in the exercise of hospitality to her numerous friends, and benevolence to the poor". Both she and Richard Lord Viscount Fitzwilliam were the chief means of the church being erected, "for the accommodation of his Roman Catholic tenants on this part of the estate".

Seeing how successful Mother Catherine McAuley was in her work for the poor in Baggot Street and Kingstown, Mrs. Verschoyle was anxious that a convent should be founded in Booterstown. Through her representation, the Right Honourable Sidney Herbert gave ground for a convent and schools and assumed a large share of the expenses of their erection. The Parish clergy were also anxious for the Sisters of Mercy to come and work in Booterstown, so the Archbishop used his influence to induce Mother McAuley to send Sisters here.

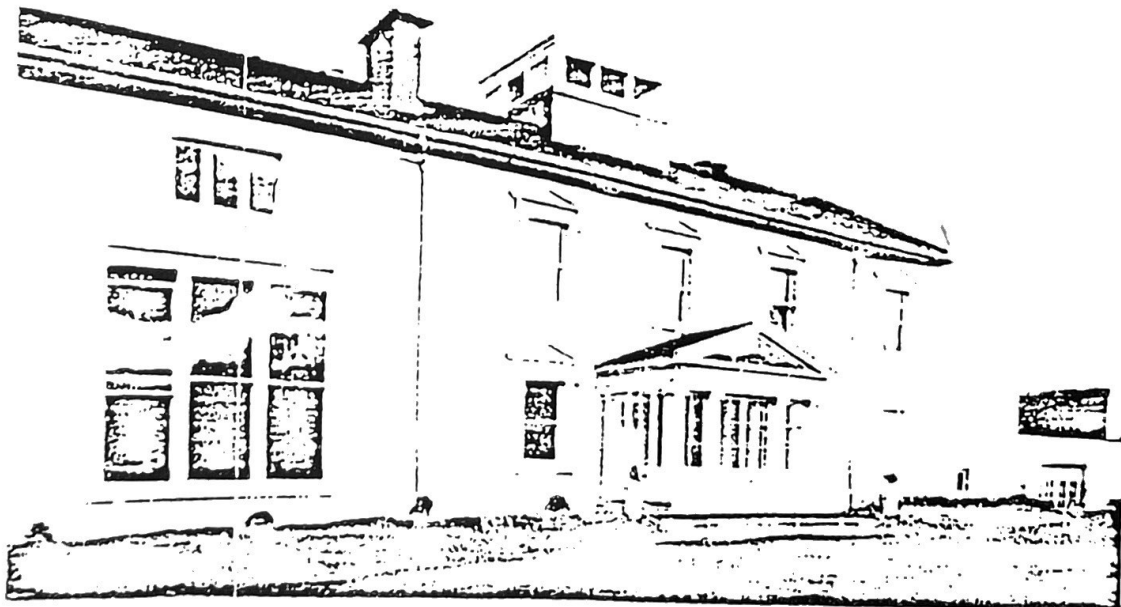
Beginnings

On the completion of the convent in 1838, the Sisters took up residence here. They taught in the school in Blackrock, and also in Kilmacud, from 1857. In 1870, a school and dormitory were opened in Booterstown as an Industrial School for 80 pupils. That was later developed into St. Ann's Children's Home which was a central feature of the Booterstown Sisters' work, until it was transferred to Charleville Road, Phibsborough, in 1979.

The year 1887 saw the opening of a Primary school in Booterstown for 600 pupils. It was situated on Bootersotwn Avenue.

Expansion

In 1923, the Sisters of Mercy bought the house and lands of Collegnes, which adjoined the convent grounds.



In 1935, the house in Collegnes was adapted as an extension of the Primary School. The classes from Infants to 1st were accommodated in the Booterstown Avenue building. Collegnes housed the classes from 2nd to 6th.

Past pupils of the school, living locally, have very vivid memories of the carpet of bluebells and crocuses that surrounded Collegnes house in Spring time. They also recall the panoramic view from the upstairs windows of the house, the cause of many distractions during class.

New School

In 1954, a new Primary School was built to replace both of these buildings, on two acres of land, given by the convent, on Gardener's Row, now Rosemount Terrace. It was blessed by Archbishop McQuaid and formally opened on the 11th February 1955. It is now known as Our Lady of Mercy Convent School. It is an attractive, modern building cleverly designed so that each classroom looks out on lawns and flowering shrubs. Classrooms are bright and pleasant and there is a spacious all-purpose hall equipped with facilities for drama, films, choir, dancing and gymnastics. The school also has a well-stocked library.

In 1968 approx. 1/3 acre of land, adjoining the school was given by the Convent to the Church as a Parish Car Park.

It could be noted, that when the new boys' school on Grotto Avenue was opened in 1968 the Sisters were requested by the then Parish Priest, not to admit boys into the junior classes, as had been the practice all down the years. Our Lady of Mercy became an all-girls school.

Amalgamation

In July 1969 St. Ann's School and Our Lady of Mercy School were amalgamated, and a pre-fab. classroom was built to accommodate the extra pupils. In that year also, Sr. M. Liguori was appointed Remedial Teacher in the school.

There is a record of the external and internal painting of the school in 1973, funded by the Sisters of Mercy, with help from fund-raising events.

Pre-School

Meanwhile, when the numbers in the school decreased, the pre-fab. was used as a pre-school for 3 year old children from 1974.

Later, the pre-school was housed in the main building and the pre-fab, having become superfluous to our needs, was sold to the Department of Education in August 1982. The pre-school continued in operation until June 1989.

Refurbishment

In 1988, when we requested permission from the Department of Education Building Section, to have the school re-wired, we were advised to change our heating system. Consequently in 1989, the storage heating we replaced by gas-fired central heating. This involved a lot of building work in the school - installation of radiators and pipes and the building of a boiler house. The re-wiring was also carried out and fluorescent lights installed.

Other improvements were undertaken at the same time:

- (1) the installation of a sink and running water in each classroom,
- (2) the fitting of modern cisterns in the children's toilets,
- (3) the boys' toilets, unused for many years, were removed, and the area used to make a strong room for storing our audio-visual equipment
- (4) a shed was built in the senior playground for the lawn mower and garden tools etc.

By September 1991, the building work and the re-decoration of the whole school were completed. The project was funded by a grant from the Department of Education and many fund-raising events in the school itself.

School Atmosphere

A happy, friendly atmosphere pervades this small school and there is a climate conducive to the development of the pupils to their full potential. It is staffed by a group of highly qualified and committed teachers who take a personal interest in each pupil. The services of a full-time remedial teacher enables children with learning difficulties to obtain immediate attention on an individual basis. Pupils can avail of this remedial assistance while following the prescribed school curriculum.

Extra curricular activities include hockey, short tennis, basketball, Irish Dancing, Recorder, Guitar, Piano, Speech and Drama.

The aim of the school is to provide primary education of the highest quality, informed by Christian principles and in keeping with our best traditions.

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