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A school era ends—now new chances for all

MALTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL has an almost unbroken record of training the youth of the district since its foundation in 1547 by Archbishop Holgate of York.

Malton County Modern School, through comparatively young, has firmly established itself as a school which meets excellently the needs of the less academic child. Why change this?

To understand the reasons we must go back at least to 1944. Then, although we were still at war, the Government showed great faith in passing a major Education Act, under the sponsorship of 'Rab' Butler.

Among its provisions was the extension of secondary education to all children; this was to begin at the age of 11 and there were to be two categories of secondary education, modern and grammar.

The allocation of children to one or the other was to be achieved by the existing 11-plus examination, which was supposed to divide children according to their "abilities and aptitudes".

So the old senior schools became secondary modern and a big programme of building was planned.

Malton was particularly fortunate in its new school—the county modern is by any standards a beautiful building in an attractive setting.

Much excellent work was done by progressive headmasters all over the country; in particular, secondary modern schools were to be free of that pressure of public examinations which largely determines the curriculum of grammar schools.

NEXT TUESDAY, THE FORMER MALTON GRAMMAR AND MALTON COUNTY MODERN SCHOOLS BEGIN A NEW JOINT LIFE AS MALTON SCHOOL, A COMPREHENSIVE. IN THIS SPECIAL ARTICLE, MR. PHILIP TAYLOR, THE HEADMASTER, LOOKS AT THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE AND THE ADVANTAGES IT WILL BRING.

submit plans for reorganising their secondary education on comprehensive lines.

A comprehensive school means simply a school to which ALL children in a given area go.

English schools cannot be really comprehensive, because we still allow parents who so wish to pay to send their children to private schools, but

to all intents and purposes a comprehensive school is as defined above.

What advantages will a comprehensive bring to children in the Malton area? There are three:

● The 11-plus examination is abolished. At Malton School we shall be able to watch each child carefully during the first years and note whether

he is ready to forge ahead or whether he needs time to settle in and show his true abilities.

● All children will have the benefit of the combined staffs and the combined buildings. Naturally, each building has had some rooms and equipment superior to those of the other; now every child will have the benefit of the best.

● A better scale of equipment and amenities will be possible. It is worthwhile buying an expensive item for 700 children to use; it would be difficult to buy two such items, each for 350.

The new school offers many opportunities. It is up to parents to encourage their children to believe that nothing but the best in effort and behaviour is good enough for Malton School.

Disadvantage

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Alas, with time this idealistic picture began to fade. Parents persisted in regarding their child who was allocated to the secondary modern school not as having been assigned to a school suited to his abilities and aptitudes, but as having "failed the 11-plus." Worse still, it became clear that the 11-plus was far from perfect as a selector.

Side by side with this grew the parents' conviction that their secondary modern child was at a grave disadvantage in the employment market compared with his grammar school counterpart, because at the end of his schooling he had no impartial public certificate to show what standard he had reached.

Under this pressure a new examination came into being, the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE), designed to suit the brighter secondary modern child.

A pass at Grade I in the CSE is deemed to be equivalent to at least a bare pass in the General Certificate of Education (GCE), which grammar school pupils take.

Public clamour against the 11-plus grew. There is good evidence to show that if a child is categorised as a failure, he will not try to escape from his category. Moreover, children from less fortunate homes start with a built-in discouragement which often masks their real ability.

In 1965 the Government issued a circular to education authorities inviting them to