

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR SCHOOL**

Hamilton South Public School began as an Infant's School. It was officially opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1933, with 24 boys and 12 girls enrolling on that day. Before the end of the year a further 17 boys and 8 girls had enrolled, giving a total enrolment of 61 pupils. Twelve months later, at the close of 1934, the total enrolment had reached 171.

Here are some interesting facts about our school and its development through the years:

- 1933 enrolments - 61 boys and girls.
- The first teachers were Miss Helena Stephen (Headmistress), Miss May and Miss Ada Carroll.
- Miss Carroll will always be remembered by the many she taught in the first year of school life. She will also be remembered for her long and devoted service here from the time the school opened till her retirement in 1961.
- While it was an Infant's School, its students left the school at the end of Second Grade to attend the Primary School (The Junction, Hamilton or Merewether) which was nearest their home.
- During the Second World War, in 1942, when our country was threatened, our school was used as a National Emergency Centre and students had to be taught in two church halls nearby.
- Miss Rachel Samuels then replaced Miss Stephen as Headmistress and in four years the number of pupils grew to 230.
- Two extra classrooms were added and Mrs. Henderson, who was later to become Infant's Mistress, joined the staff.
- In 1949 the last class of Hamilton South pupils moved on to The Junction and in 1950 our school became a Primary School (Year 3 enrolments, 1950: 65 pupils).
- In 1951 Mr G. West was appointed as Deputy Headmaster, followed by Mr J. Gilbert who took up his appointment in 1969. Mr L. Crockett replaced Mr Gilbert on his retirement in May 1976. The position has also been occupied by Mr N. Marriott.
- Miss D. Mann, Mrs L. Martin, Miss M. Wardle, Miss R. Richardson, Mrs U. Lewis and Mrs L. MacDonald all served as Mistresses of the Infant's Department.

Principals as appointed:

Mr G. Coates	Mr F. Asser	Mr C. Casey	Mr A. West	Mr V. Bensley	Mr T. Gibson
Mr W. Smart	Mr J. Palagy.	Mrs R. Lambert	Ms J. Potts (present)		

On 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 1977, our present buildings were officially opened by Mr. A. Wade, M.L.A., Member for Newcastle. Work commenced in February, 1976, and was completed in the early part of 1977. Gone at last were the old timber classrooms and several portable buildings. These were replaced by a modern brick structure which included a Library and Food Preparation Unit. The total cost was in excess of \$600,000.

During 1979, the original Infant's building was refurbished. This entailed carpeting, installation of ceiling fans, replacement of classroom heating and a general overhaul of the building.

1997 saw a joint P. & C. and Department of School Education initiative completed with the opening of the Covered Outside Learning Area (C.O.L.A.).

### **Special Education:**

Additional educational features came into being with the establishment of classes for partially sighted students.

The Partially Sighted Unit commenced on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1963, and was officially opened on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1966, by The Hon. W.C. Fife, M.L.A., Assistant Minister for Education.

During the first week, the total enrolment was 15, under the guidance of Mr G. Thirkettle as Deputy Master and Mrs Abrahams, the assistant, the students were divided into two groups: Upper and Lower Divisions. On the appointment of an additional teacher, Miss C. Bounds, in September, 1969, the students were divided into three groups: Upper, Intermediate and Lower Divisions.

Mr Thirkettle was followed in turn by Mr J. Smith and Mrs R. Keevers. In June, 1975, Miss Bounds was appointed as Deputy Mistress to replace Mrs Keevers who had accepted transfer to New Lambton South.

By 1983 enrolments had decreased markedly, leaving only one class in operation under the guidance of Ms R. Bowes. Miss Bounds transferred to the position of Itinerant Teacher of the Visually Handicapped.

In 1983 an I.O class was established and taught by Mrs M. Beckett. A second class for moderately intellectually handicapped students was commenced in 1987. With this addition to the school, the Partially Sighted Unit was renamed, more appropriately, the "Special Education Unit". In 1993, a third I.O/I.S. class was established after the last of the Visually Impaired students progressed to High School.

Special Education and integration of children with special needs is a feature of Hamilton South Public School.

