

Histon and Impington Infants school.

Introduction

The current Infants school, housed in a fine example of Edwardian educational architecture, and located in the centre of the village holds a special place in the affection of the community. The school and its playing field have played a key role in the community's development over the last century and more.

Early history

In 1910, the Chivers family donated three acres for the establishment of the school and its playing field opposite on what became new school road. The cost of building the school, approximately £5,000, was split between the two parish councils of Histon and Impington and the County Council. The original building was designed by HH Dunn the County Council's architect along the 'corridor system', with all classrooms having a southern aspect. The building was planned to accommodate 360 children and was completed in 1912, and officially opened in June 1913 by the chairman of the County Council and the University's Vice Chancellor. (See photo and plan from opening ceremony booklet.)

The First World War dominated the school's early years. Like many public spaces the school garden was devoted to growing vegetables, and the school field given over entirely to potatoes.

The interwar period saw the return of the school garden to individual plots managed by two or three boys fostering an emphasis on market gardening quite typical of the time. This period, particularly late 30s, also saw the strong development of the sports tradition that is still to be found firmly embedded in the village today. There were well developed school football and netball teams.

The advent of the Second World War once again saw the school playing field commandeered. On this occasion, to counter new threats, a dugout shelter was constructed across the field when 80 men from the village volunteered to dig it on a Sunday soon after the outbreak of war. The arrival and integration of evacuated children increased class sizes. The School playground became the local home guard parade ground.

Post war history

The post-war years saw an increased emphasis on local cultural events and summer festivals. The latter were sometimes held in the grounds of Homefield a Chivers residence and now a small park. The emphasis on sport continued with the installation of a free standing swimming pool in the school playground for use during the summer term.

In the late 50s, circa 1957, a new classroom block, with the typical low pitched roof associated with educational buildings that time, was built, which subsequently held the reception classrooms

As the 60s progressed the school was able to offer a much greater variety of trips, particularly to London, such as the Natural History and Science Museums, the Tower of London and Kew Gardens. The then headmaster was a keen musician and it was clear that this was a thriving musical era at school with violin, recorder and choir concerts described a variety of venues, including the Guildhall.

In the 70s significant new housing development took place in the village which increased the numbers of children attending the school.

In the early 70s because of rising population of the villages school had to expand further. New buildings were erected on Histon Green site, and the then headmaster would travel between them. as would his successor. By 1979 there were over 550 children.

Recent history

The early 80s sees the first mention of the school association and the inauguration of Easter events such as a parade and pancake races.

By September 1980, the rising number of children meant that the infant, junior split to create two schools on their respective sites had to take place.

Through the 80s and 90s the school maintained its tradition of seasonal events with large-scale summer fetes, well supported Christmas productions and Easter events. During this time it also hosted what came to be known as the 'Acorn Gallery', where local artists exhibited their work and demonstrate their skills frequently also working with children. Exhibitions were held about once a term and by the late 90s the school managed to have two 'artists in residence', which were commended in their 1997 OFSTED inspection.

During 2004/05 a new hall, offices and kitchen were constructed at the western end of the site. The building was officially opened in 2006. This building completes the mixed development that has grown on the site over a period of nearly 100 years to serve the community's educational needs.

The school celebrated it's centenary in 2012 and a history of the school was prepared by parent governors and published as part of the celebrations . Much of the information in this note is drawn from that booklet. (See covers reproduced)

GM
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