

The children queued up at the kitchen counter and then went back to eat in the classroom. Afterwards they could go out to play. One child said they had to stay in if they didn't finish their food. These are some of the games they played: What's the time Mr Wolf, five stones, skipping, chainy, ouch, kiss chase.

The Old School still had the large stove surrounded by railings. All the desks faced forward in front of the teacher and the blackboard.

There was a garden at the back of the school, between the boys' and girls' toilets, (which were deliberately separated). The garden was probably used for growing vegetables for the school. The children remember digging and if anything grew it was given to the cooks Mrs Gilbert or Mrs Holloway for the children's lunches.

At the front of the playground near the road was a quiet garden for those children who did not want to rush around but play quieter games. Teachers for the older children were Mrs Vaughan, Mrs Burrows and Mr Pearce. The children did mental arithmetic, spelling tests, writing stories and on the last lesson on a Friday afternoon, Mr Pearce would read to them from their current book, Gulliver's travels, was one remembered.

It was always good to be milk monitor because it meant the pupil missed a lesson to collect the crate of 1/3 pint bottles of milk. If they were frozen they would be put in front of the stove to melt. The cream used to rise at least an inch out of the bottle when it was really icy.

Mrs Vaughan played the piano and taught the recorder. She also taught the choir. She ran a Girls Club after school, where they did things such as knitting dish cloths and cross-stitching on a square. The children also did 'Music and Movement' in the classroom.

Sometimes Mr Hayes would come to their classrooms to teach the children French.

In 1956 the new intake of children (5years old), had their first lessons in the village hall (in the Square) with Miss Epps because the new school building (present Primary School) in Ham Lane was not finished. Times move on and by the 1950's the old school was no longer large enough to cater for Lenham's growing population, although it remained in use for several years. When the new one opened the infants (years 1,2,3,4) moved into the new school and the older children (years,5,6,7,) moved into the old school. The infants' teachers were Miss Epps, Mrs Wilson and Miss Buckland.

The children went over to the hall in the new school for Assembly and also for gym. The hall had a pull-out climbing ladder wall, ropes, and a vaulting horse. The girls played netball and rounders and the boys played football and cricket in the playground. The wickets were on the school wall. One pupil mentioned that to bowl a fast ball they would start their run up in the middle of the road and for a very fast ball, the run up began on the other side of the road. The entrance to Boorman's farm was there.

As soon as all the children were in the present school they had the playing fields all the time.

Mr Lampard was the secretary before Mrs Barbara Jones who worked there from 1957-1984. She would work in both schools. 'She was the one who steadied the ship. She was the link between the teachers and parents understanding every situation in all its many sides. Every school needs a Mrs Jones'. (A quote from a teacher in the '70s.)

In 1972 Mr Hayes was still the headteacher and the school was expanding. It was necessary for Class 4 to move over to Swadelands School to a spare classroom unit with a shared entrance vestibule. The other room had secondary school pupils learning French. The classroom also had flies because it overlooked the rural science duck pond. Perhaps that is why it was spare! In the summer a lot of lessons could be outside.

It was not easy having small children in the midst of older children. Fortunately, in the autumn term two mobile classrooms were parked in the playground of the Primary School, so all the children could be on site. As there was no running water in the mobile classrooms it meant the teachers had to fill buckets with water to take into the classroom, if there were art or craft lessons.

When Mr Hayes left Mr Beale became headteacher, followed by Mrs Hilary Parker. Over the last years there has been more building as the school grew: a new Year 6 classroom and IT suite; and a new staff room, which is also used for Breakfast Club and After School Club. Technology has also moved on so much, from blackboards and chalk, school's radio programmes, then cassettes, and on to white boards, computers, laptops, ipads and now chrome books.

Children are keeping up to date as things change and are learning what they will need to succeed in the future. But the basics have not changed, the need for reading, writing, spelling, times tables, mathematics and of course sport in its various forms.

Under its current headteacher and the dedicated staff, the Primary School continues to evolve, helping children's educational development.

Our thanks to Barbara Jones, Meg Chapman, Barbara Anne Roach, John Jones, Sylvia Thorne(Nee Driscoll), Andrew Barr, Mike Cockett and for information from Lenham and Boughton Malherbe in Old Photographs by Jean Cockett and Amy Myers