



Willow Grove Primary School  
2520  
(Formerly Latrobe River State School &  
Willow Grove State School)  
1883-2023



## 1960-1970

The 1960s began an era with new buildings (built in 1959). There were two classes, one for the junior school (prep-grade 2) and one for the senior class (Grade 3-6). Usually, the head teacher took the older class. Students undertook art and craft classes, sport classes and religious education. Students brought their own lunches to school; however they were supplied with a small bottle of milk each.

Some of the games they played were British Bulldog, Humpo Bumpo, shoulder fights and brandy. Students also spent time building huts as there was many patches of bush in the school grounds.

School was very strict and there was an expectation that students would behave, or they would receive punishment. This punishment was handed out by the head teacher. "The expectation was to be firm and fair with the emphasis on firm; a no-nonsense approach was always taken which allied with the social norm of the time. A long piece of leather, [was] kept on the chalk ledge of the blackboard..." Chalk sticks to memory sticks, 125 years of school at Willow Grove Primary School, No 2520, 2008, pg.14)

For the teachers, particularly the head teacher, their job was not just teaching the students. The teachers did not receive breaks to plan and prepare, they ate when the students ate, there was no business manager and no cleaner. The head teacher was the business manager and had to keep accurate records of all expenses. Arthur Methers kept meticulous records, showing every cent that was spent. He balanced his books every time. This was something he found very important as when he first arrived the books did not balance, something he had to rectify. The head teacher was responsible for cleaning the school, which generally wasn't done on a daily basis. As noted in the School Council minutes the cleaning budget from the Department of Education was insufficient and further funds was found by the School Council or the school received donated items.

The 1960s were a period of stability for the school, with only 3 head teachers being in charge during that time. They were Bruce Baud 1958-1961, John Fitzgerald 1961-1964 and Arthur Methers 1964-1972.

In December of 1966 there were 51 students, 9 Preps, 5 Grade 1, 7 Grade 2, 9 Grade 3, 10 Grade 4, 6 Grade 5 and 5 Grade 6 students. The teachers were Mr Arthur Methers (Head Teacher) and Miss Kay Haniball. Various issues plagued attendance, share farmers children (coming and going) and measles, mumps and the flu went through the school. In May, 14 junior students had measles and in September, 10 junior students had mumps. The average attendance in the junior school was 140 days, yet in the senior school it was 175 days. Of the Grade 6 students, three went to Trafalgar High School and two to Yallourn Technical School.

School fees included the following: SRA Book 35c, Target Speller 40c, Art 70c, Maths Levy 45c, school paper 11c- a total of \$2.11 or \$1.61 (not all students had Target Spellers).

Junior school: reader 20c, paper 50c, Art fee 50c, Let's Join In 15c, spelling list 5c – a total of \$1.40

The majority of students came from Willow Grove, and others came from Shady Creek, Trafalgar and Morwell. The parents' occupations included: garage proprietor, share farmer, farmer, store keeper, carpenter, school teacher, SEC employee, welfare worker, car salesman, painter, salesman, mechanic, welder, farm hand, bread carter and home duties.

In his end of year report, Arthur Methner wrote the following about the school:

*The text now in its second year has been a useful aid to the other BB work.*

*Generally the new maths work I have used in the old course have proved successful. English work has improved. Spelling is at a good level...Social Study activities have proved worth while. On a whole I am pleased with the progress.*

*The new Maths work has proved more enjoyable to the children because of the variety ... Children were very keen on the work and provided much information from home. Art good. Altogether it was a very successful year with all children doing better and more eager to be educated.*

*I along with Miss Haniball have strived for more variety in reading rather than over working the group reader. The interest, the number of books read and enjoyed are evidenced of the success of the change.*

*The work in this section of the school had been very pleasing to me. Miss Haniball has been very co-operative, and the work of the whole school has benefited.*

*All subjects have been well taught, the children have been happy in their activities and in my testing; work has been well known.*

*The new maths equipment has been well used and children are gaining a good basis for number work.*

*Maths- the new course has been taught throughout this section. Work has been well taught and children have guided and excellent grounding.*

*Reading: a great variety of material was used and this fact certainly kept the children eager to read. This eagerness was built upon and channelled so that children read many books, home-made books, cards etc. Additional activities and reading programming is planned for 1967.*

*General – I am more than pleased with the work of this section and am glad that Miss Haniball will be with me next year. The children have been well taught and are happy to work and are getting the grounding needed for their scholastic careers.*

In 1969 when man was going to the moon, the whole school and some extra members of the community, gathered around the school's black and white television. Television was not in every home so everyone gathered where they could. It was a time of great joy, yet was soured, when the school was broken into not long after and the television was stolen.