Dexter Cocker

I was fortunate to be appointed as principal to Summerdale Primary School in 1971.

Prospect was an older suburb but in the seventies had a new vitality and continuing development.

There were approximately 300 pupils housed in eight classrooms plus kindergarten. This was the original school from 1913 and provided a school house for the Head Teacher. The eight classes were housed in four by two units each separate from the other with a front porch entrance. The toilets were a separate block ‘over the yard’.

In later years these became a highly valued Art Room but that was a long way away from 1971 and followed an almost unbelievable development, both philosophical and financial.

The advent of the Karmel Report was to have an exhilarating effect on the development of a syllabus that could offer a wider range of educational activities. One of these was our capacity to employ specialist teachers in Music, Physical Education, Art and Librarianship.

With the growth of population, Summerdale was able to employ fulltime specialists and with tremendous support from the entire staff we were able to offer more and more diverse programmes.

As the area developed the enrolment blossomed and the building continued. We had eleven building programmes in ten years. The school was an exciting, ever changing identity. As the buildings grew and developed so did the educational programmes grow and as the staff numbers increased so did the opportunities we could offer our children.

Sport was always a highlight with the school enjoying successes in many fields.

I cannot speak too highly of our staff. We were a mixture of beliefs and capabilities but all were dedicated to give of their best.

I must thank and praise our pupils. Of course some were a trifle difficult at times but in the main were a pleasure, and rewarding to teach, and to observe their development.

The school enjoyed the support of a parent body who were to give unstintingly of their time and talents for the benefit of their children.

My twenty years there were exciting, exhausting and exhilarating and I would like to express my thanks to all those who helped make them so.