

As St John's new Primary School opens to its pupils on Monday
a tribute to all former and present teachers.....

Teachers Are Remembered

Here is a copy of a letter written to Maura Downes when she retired after a lifetime of teaching. It was found among her papers when she died at the age of 93 and was read at her funeral. All we know about the writer is that she was in the top year of the Junior School.

To Miss Downes
With Love

Long before
Any of us children were born
You came to our school
And for fourteen years
You helped so many children
To learn so many things.
We did not know very much
About the beauty of words
But you helped us
To enjoy poetry
To write poems ourselves,
To write stories
About the world around us
Stories about ourselves
And our friends
That we might know each other better
Not only about our own lives
Did we think
But about people
Who lived long before us
Or in far away places
And strange lands.
Eskimos in Australia
Aborigines in the Arctic
Or was it the other way round?
We had a lot of fun!

But sometimes we had tummy-aches,
Head-aches,
Or Toe-aches,
Or other aches and pains
Especially
When it came to
Percentages,
Fractions,
Decimals,
And other ghastly
Mathematical things.
You had to explain,
And explain,
And explain again.
Until at last
We saw light

Even Mathematics can be fun!
Once you know it.

Most important of all
You told us
About the life of our Lord
That we might know of His Love
That we might learn to serve Him
That we might have faith in Him
Who made us all.
Maybe he chose you
To be a teacher
So that you could make so
Many children happy
For forty-two years.
Many of them are now grown ups.
We have still got a long way to go.
But you prepared us
And will try to do our best.
We shall never forget you
And we cannot repay you
For all you have done for us.
So today we ask Him
Our Lord
To Keep you always
In his care.