

Thetis Island School

The first crude building opened in 1920 on the shore of Telegraph Harbour.

The first teacher was A. Tomlinson. He had 6 boys and 9 girls in his classroom that first year.

Teacher Archibald John Williams Dodds, a married man with a family living in Ganges, Salt Spring Island, was hired as the second teacher for the 1921-1922 school year. He had 14 students in his classroom. Mr. Dodds was known as a strict but fair disciplinarian. His students did not get away with any misbehavior, but at the same time, he did not use the school strap.

Mr. Dodds had a key role in advocating for the new school building, and in 1922 the school was relocated to a new building on Forbes Road.

In March 1923 Mr. Dodds reported to the Teachers' Bureau, Department of Education in Victoria, BC, that there were 14 children enrolled at Thetis Island School, that he was paid an annual salary of \$900 and that there were no boarding or lodging facilities for the teacher. He wrote: *"Nobody will board the teacher. I have just been turned out of one shack and have got another till the end of June. I am baching. Prices for milk, eggs, high; vegetables unobtainable on the island. Prices at the Island Store very high."*

The school closed in 1929 due to a lack of enrolment.

A new one-room school was built on the Island on North Cove Road in 1951 under the jurisdiction of the Nanaimo & Ladysmith School District, and expanded in 1996, purposely retaining its one-room design. Former student Brenda Westacott reported in a June 2016 article in *Arbutus Magazine* that the *"school was a modern one-room building complete with electricity supplied by a generator in the school yard, oil heat, indoor plumbing and a telephone which shared the Island's only line"*. She added, *"many students did not have such conveniences in their homes."*

A new teacherage was built near the school in 1955.

During the mid-to-late 1960's the school closed due to insufficient enrollment. It re-opened again under with jurisdiction of the Cowichan School District in 1973 with ten students in grades K-6. By 1978 enrollment had increased to 12 students in grades 1-6.

In 1984 the Cowichan School District turned down a request from Thetis Island parents to turn the then-vacant teacherage into a classroom for a private pre-school and kindergarten on a free-use basis.

The teacherage building was sold and removed to another location in 1987.

In 2009 there were 16 students covering grades K-7 in the one room school with one teacher and one teacher assistant.

A new playground was opened at the school in 2013.