During March 1920 a petition, signed by the residents of Lower South Arm of the Bellinger River embracing a large area between Brierfield and Nessville schools, was forwarded to the District Inspector of Schools, Kempsey, requesting the establishment of a school in the locality.

The parents of 22 school age children were the signatories.

The inspector duly acknowledged the petition and forwarded a formal application form to the residents. This was returned to the inspector on 10th July 1920 with a signed undertaking to convey materials and to supply foundation blocks for a building if the application was successful. The inspector recommended the application be granted because under the conditions prevailing the children received little education. He wrote:

"The residents live along a road on the north bank of the South Arm of the Bellinger River. Some of the children on the west end attend Brierfield: the Kruckows in the centre attend Fernmount and the Dallaways on the extreme east attend Nessville. Those pupils attend badly. Often arriving at 11 o'clock, leaving early, and missing generally two or three days a week. The children therefore practically receive very little schooling."

Permission was therefore granted for the establishment of a provisional school.

Some difficulty was experienced in selecting a suitable name for the school. The locality was known as South Arm, but the inspector considered this title a little indefinite and suggested that a meeting be called to propose a more suitable one.
Two were offered: "Bushell's Hill" and "Endeavour." There were objections to those suggestions however, and in July 1920 it was decided that the school should be known as South Arm Road.

In February 1921 two acres in extent were resumed for public purposes, and plans and specifications for a school building were prepared. Work did not commence immediately however, on account of lack of funds. Representations were made to the Minister on a number of occasions to commence the building because the children had to travel over 5 miles to attend school at Fernmount. When funds became available in the new financial year an expenditure of 408 pounds was approved for the erection of a school building.

It is assumed that the school began operating in January 1923 when the first teacher Mr. John Hourigan was appointed. He remained at the school for only one month and Miss Ella Midlane was appointed teacher. Two weeks later she was replaced by Mr. Albert Fuller.

When the school building was erected no provision was made for a weather shed and in April 1923 Mr A. Godden, Secretary of the Parents' and Citizens' Association, made representations through Mr R.S. Vincent M.L.A. for the erection of one. He wrote:

"We have an attendance of between 25 and 30 children and the teacher lives some miles distant and owing to bad weather and the bad state of the roads he is at times delayed and the children have no place to go out of the rain and wind which we consider is subjecting them to unnecessary hardship and is also a menace to their health."

The application was not granted and an enclosed verandah which was attached to the school was provided for the pupils in wet and inclement weather.

The request was renewed in 1924 but once again it was refused. The correspondent was informed that it was not the practice to build weather sheds for small schools.
Towards the end of 1926 the Parents' and Citizens' Association decided to build a tennis court for the school children and made application to the Department for assistance in acquiring some wire netting for this purpose. The Department was unable to grant this request, however, because it was not departmental policy to provide tennis courts at primary schools or to grant assistance.

When South Arm Road was opened the school was classified as a provisional one. In December 1926 Mr Warrell Nelson, the teacher, suggested that the school be raised to public school status as the annual average attendance had been in excess of 20 since the school commenced operating. The matter was referred to Mr Inspector Putland who recommended that the request be granted as the school appeared to be a permanent one. On 1st January 1927 South Arm Road was gazetted as a public school.

During 1929 Mr Nelson informed the inspector that the weather shed was in need of repair. He added that since the erection the roof had been blown off on two occasions by severe winds and that necessary repairs had been effected by the Parents' and Citizens' Association. The present damage had been caused during a gale when the whole of the iron roof was carried away. Tenders for the work had been invited in May and one submitted by Mr G. McCristal for 7 pounds 15 shillings was accepted.

A public meeting was held at South Arm in September 1929 at which the residents decided to have the name of the school changed from South Arm Road to Tarkeeth.
The Under-Secretary of the Department was informed that a good deal of confusion had been caused owing to the fact that other places had similar names, and that Tarkeeth could be most appropriate as the Post Office had been operating under the name for the past four years. The local inspector supported the suggestion on account of the fact that both the Bellinger and Nambucca rivers had South Arm roads. The Department had no objection to the change of name and on 31st October the new designation was officially adopted.

Mr Nelson found it necessary to close the school on 9th December 1931 as no pupils were in attendance. The non-attendance of pupils was caused by very heavy rain which had fallen continuously throughout the day.

Following a meeting of the Parents and Citizens' Association in July 1932 the Honorary Secretary Mr. N. Leach wrote to the Department requesting the establishment of a ninth class at Tarkeeth. At the time this request was made there was no need for a ninth class as there were only two pupils in the current class. However the Secretary was informed that if these two pupils continued to follow a super-primary course provision would be made for them when necessary.

During the winter of 1933 Mr. Hollaway found it necessary to close the school on a number of occasions on account of heavy rain and gales. In April he reported that over ten inches of rain had fallen in over twenty four hour period.

On resuming duty after the September vacation in 1933, Mr. Hollaway reported that the tank water was not fit to drink and that the tank itself was in a very dilapidated condition. He therefore made application for the supply of a new one. The Mr. Inspector Griffiths supported his application and recommended that tenders be called for supplying an 800 gallon tank. The work was carried out by Mr. N. Donnelly of Hyde Street Bellingen.
In response to a request by Mr Hollaway, the closing of the school was sanctioned on 29th November 1934, to enable the teachers and pupils to proceed to Coffs Harbour on the occasion of the visit of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester to the town.

Mr. Roy S. Vincent M.L.A. made representations to Mr Drummond, Minister for Education, in 1935 urging the necessity of painting the school building. The matter was referred to the District Inspector who agreed that the building needed an overhaul. He wrote:

"The school needs painting. The window frames need repair. They are made of oregon and have perished through remaining so long with very little paint on them. They have come apart at the corners in some cases and in others have broken away. Downpipes to the tanks also need replacing."

As it was not possible to secure local tenders for this work the Departmental Painting and Repair Staff were instructed to carry out the work for 41 pounds. Painting and repairs were completed in February 1936.

During Mr Hollaway's time, air raid shelters were dug in the school grounds as the threat of war drew near. He was to leave Tarkeeth at the end of 1942. January 1943 Mr Sid Roberts arrived. He was replaced in July 1943 by Daphne Davis, a local girl from Urunga. She was later to marry Mr Tucker.

There does not seem to be a lot of information about this period of the school's history.

In 1945 Reginald O'Hearn came from Dorrigo to take up a teaching position at Tarkeeth. He was to remain there for some fifteen years. He resided in Urunga and travelled each day mostly on motor bike. During his stay the school's numbers were to fluctuate, at times the number of pupils being very low. The Parents and Citizens' were a strong band of people, holding regular card parties in Fells' home. There were also annual bonfire gatherings in the school grounds. This was a
very enjoyable event with all the children spending a lot of their free time building the huge bonfire which most of the families in the district would attend. Another annual event was the Annual Small Schools Athletic Carnival held at Bellingen. Tarkeeth was honoured in 1950 and in 1959 when Marlene Willett was chosen to go to Sydney for the Zone Sports.

Another highlight of the school year was the combined Empire Day picnics with Brierfield, also the annual Christmas trees in the Brierfield hall. During 1957 there was a lot of controversy surrounding a bus to take high school students to Bellingen. Mrs Fell was the main instigator. She travelled to Sydney for talks with parliamentarians and after a long battle the community was successful. The bus service started in 1958, the first being owned by Mr Frank Mitchell of Urunga and was driven by Bob McLaughlan. This small bus was referred to as the “sardine tin”. Later on the South Arm bus was bought by Mr Norm Andrews continuing till the early 1960’s. He was succeeded by Mr Ernie Graham and then by his son-in-law Mr Ralf Kennedy.

In 1959 great excitement up the South Arm. The power had arrived. There was a lot of celebrating. I know of one party held at Jim Barnett’s which continued until the small hours.

In the 1960’s Mr O’Hearn left Tarkeeth and transferred to Valla. Mr Don Gunter took his place for a period of about 12 weeks being replaced by Mr Malcolm MacLennan. He was to remain until 1964. During this period Tarkeeth school was to excel in the sporting field bringing home the Athletics Shield from Bellingen in 1963. This was no mean feat as the number of pupils left a lot to be desired.

Mr MacLennan resided at Nambucca Heads travelling each day. He was a keen sportsman, playing Rugby League with Nambucca Heads. This was a delight to the children as quite often injury would prevent his arriving at the school Monday mornings. Another highlight was
the softball game played on a Friday afternoon. I remember quite a few bats being broken and the senior pupils cutting down a small oak tree to substitute as a softball bat. Also swimming lessons were started, being held at the old Raleigh baths. Mrs Bartlett assisted Mr MacLennan on those occasions.

In 1965 Mr Phil Brown was to take up the position of teacher, during his stay a verandah was added to the school building. The Parents and Citizens’ again came to the fore running carpet bowls on the verandah at Jim Barnett’s. Those were very enjoyable nights for young and old. They also held Christmas concerts on the verandah at the school. The number of school children had grown quite considerably and the school was running smoothly. Once again during 1965 the Athletics Shield came home to Tarkeeth.

Jasuary 1967, a new teacher, Mr Richard Rettalick, also a new weathershed. What a year. The Parents and Citizens’ wrote to the Department of Education requesting a new weathershed. This was successful to a degree, the Department supplied the material with the Parents and Citizens’ supplying the voluntary labour also two tradesmen were hired. They were Mr Kevin Durbridge and Mr John Robards from Urunga. Funds to pay those tradesmen were raised by running of street stalls held in Urunga and raffles.

January 1969 Mr Dick Cook arrived and was to remain until the school closed in 1972. During this time combined events were held with Viewmont and Valla Beach also Gleniffer. Swimming was held at Brigalow Caravan Park for ten days at the end of each year, transport being provided by the parents.

Mr Don Willett, a very popular member of the community was an active member of the Parents and Citizens’ Association for 40 years and he gave the last lesson in the school due to Mr Cook’s absence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date Appointed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Hourigan</td>
<td>January 1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ella Midlane</td>
<td>February 1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert Fuller</td>
<td>March 1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donald McIlwain</td>
<td>November 1924</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warrell Nelson</td>
<td>August 1926</td>
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<td>George Hollaway</td>
<td>April 1932</td>
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<td>Sidney Roberts</td>
<td>January 1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daphne Davis</td>
<td>July 1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reginald O’Hearn</td>
<td>January 1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donald Gunter</td>
<td>March 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malcolm MacLennan</td>
<td>June 1960</td>
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<td>Phillip Brown</td>
<td>January 1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Retallick</td>
<td>January 1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard W. Cook</td>
<td>January 1969</td>
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The school closed in May 1972