



—Star photo by Brian Dexter

ONLY 89 STUDENTS attend the 6-room Cartwright High School in Blackstock, and staff members believe it may be the smallest high school in Ontario. Although the red-brick structure built in

1925 is without frills, its academic record is envied. "Last year, we had 12 graduates in Grade 13 and 6 of those were Ontario Scholars," principal Gordon Paisley, talking to the bus driver, says.

## The best comes in small packages as Cartwright High School proves

By BRIAN DEXTER  
Star staff writer

BLACKSTOCK — In an age when bigness is sometimes thought to be best, Cartwright High School is living proof that being small still counts.

There are only 89 students enrolled at the six-room school in this tiny hamlet eight miles east of Port Perry.

Staff believe it could be the smallest remaining high school in Ontario.

The red-brick school, built in 1925, is total without frills, yet its recent academic record is envious.

### 'Not impossible'

"Last year we had 12 graduates in Grade 13 and six of those were Ontario Scholars," Principal Gordon Paisley said yesterday with only mild expression of pride.

"Seven students in all went on to university and the others are all taking some form of post-secondary education. We have the reputation of being a hard school but not an impossible school."

All students attending Cartwright High School, run by the Durham Board of Education, come from Blackstock or surrounding farming communities such as Nestleton, Caesarea and Cadmus.

There are about 200 secondary school students in the school's catchment area, and they have a choice of attending the Blackstock school or Port Perry High School, which has an enrolment of about a thousand.

Shawn Severn, 17, a Grade 12 student at Cartwright, much prefers the school to an

Oakville high school he left three years ago.

"It's just so different it is unbelievable," he said in an interview yesterday. "The individual amount of help you get here is enormous. It just wasn't the same at Oakville where there were 2,000 students."

Another student said: "Here it's just like being in one big happy family. There is no monotony and you at least get to know everyone."

With a full-time staff of six, Cartwright High School has a wide range of courses, although students taking technical subjects or home economics are bused to Port Perry High School for some periods each week.

A few years ago attempts were made to close Cartwright when school board officials claimed its facilities were inadequate and renovations or extensions weren't justified.

Today much of the school appears badly in need of renovation, and staff and students wonder whether further moves to close the school might be made soon. Spending on maintenance is plainly minimal.

### Principal teaches

Principal Paisley teaches or supervises classes for all but two periods each day. A single room in the school serves as his office, a staff room and the office of the school secretary.

The school has a library but no gymnasium or cafeteria. Storage space for school supplies is in an attic corridor where there is hardly room to stand. And every student has to share a locker.

"All teachers are in class eight out of nine

periods a day," Paisley said, "and they are responsible for two subjects or even more. So they have to be very versatile."

The school has courses in French, Latin and German. It also runs night school programs, and its library lends books to Blackstock residents who are without a public library of their own. There is an average of 15 to 18 students in each class.

### Drama competition

Competition in inter-school sports is limited because of the small enrolment and lack of a gymnasium, and student energies are directed toward an annual drama competition, winter carnival, track meet, and curling and inter-house contests.

The school has a ski club and an Outer's Club which organizes such activities as hiking and canoeing.

"Students don't feel left out of anything and nearly everyone participates," said student council president Cindy Van Camp.

She said students complain about the tacky state of the school building "but they take it" and there are compensations.

"I have three maths classes," she said. "There are seven students in one, three in another and only two in the third. So you can't help learning something in that situation."

She said physical education classes are in the Blackstock recreation centre in winter and outside in summer, but there is hope of getting use of a new gymnasium built at the Cartwright Central Public School.

Cartwright High School has an enrolment of 104 and the staff for 1976-77 is as follows: Mr. Gordon Paisley, Principal (English & Latin); Miss Susan Sheen (French & German); Mrs. Pat Procnier (part time) Commercial & History; Mrs. Darlene Jarosz (part time) Art; Mr. Ray Ashton (Mathematics); Mr. Eric Fletcher (Science & Physical Education); Mr. David Payne (Geography, History & English); Mr. Randy Scott (Science & English).