

Principal's Column—Whakataki o Tumuaki

Nau mai, haere mai. The term is rapidly drawing to a close. Now is that time where teachers are spending their evenings and weekends writing reports. We've also been focusing on our assessments, spent hours together looking at these, are planning our big marae experience and making sure we're ready for the coming term. Oh and tomorrow's another Core Ed teacher development day... Add the winter bugs and it's a time where we all just try to keep calm and carry on!

I've put a special feature in this newsletter all about our assessments at school. I hope you find this useful and if there are other areas you want to know more about, let me know.

We have recently welcomed Alexander into Te Kaho 1. We hope you love your learning and life here!

Mā te wā—Until next time. Matt Stockton, Principal.

Our learning

Many of our Te Pihinga children took part in the amazing Raglan Art to Wear awards. They did so well, spending hours practising and performing in front of a paying public. Their shared entry was given a Highly Commended award.

Te Rākau went to Auckland's Te Wero Whitewater park last week as a William Pike Challenge Awards challenge. They got to experience the full force of the man made river, learning how to cross it safely, what to do if you get caught in a river in flood and, the highlight for all, white water rafting!

Arts remains our focus in our classes, with children continuing to learn a range of techniques and styles, as well as learning new songs and waiata.

Te Ao Māori has seen children learning weaving skills and continuing to develop their knowledge of the marae. Our school kapa haka team is getting huge, with over 70 children now involved! It's already sounding amazing and the team will be working with kapa haka experts at the marae next week.

Pōwhiri and learning at Te Papa-o-Rotu marae

It was with great excitement this week that we announced our whole school pōwhiri and visit to Te Papa-o-Rotu marae (in Māori Point Road). We have been working towards this experience for so long and are so glad it has finally come to be realised. You should have all received a letter this week with full details. In a nutshell:

The whole school will be going to the marae on Thursday 23rd June. All classes will spend the day on the marae. They will be officially welcomed on by the marae and Te Pihinga 1 and 2 children, then will learn all about the marae, its tikanga and many of its stories. They will then spend time learning new kapa haka skills, performing these at the end of the day.

Te Kaho 1 and Te Kaho 3 will remain on the marae, staying overnight and returning to school after lunch on Friday 24th June. Their experience will see them learning much more about the marae, learning

a range of arts and traditional skills, mucking in with jobs and duties and having fun overnight with their friends.

We have asked for help with both days. Please send these forms back by next Monday so we can get everything organised. If you didn't get a letter they are on our website, on Facebook and at the office.

Huge thanks in advance for your support and for the time, support and commitment of Te Papa-o-Rotu marae.

New class and staff for Term 3 and 4

We have confirmed details on our changes for term 3 and 4. While these are less than ideal, we are determined that children will not be affected by them but will have new opportunities for learning and collaboration:

Te Pihinga 1 and 2 will be combining in the Learning Centre and Te Pihinga 1 class. Their programme, like Te Kākano, will be based around collaborative learning, with different teachers supporting different learners at different times.

A new Te Kākano class will be opening in what was Te Pihinga 2. This will be the base for the oldest Te Kākano children. We kept this as part of Te Kākano so that children would continue to learn in exactly the same way. There will be a new teacher working as part of the Te Kākano team.

The library will become mobile! Wendee will travel to classes armed with boxes of books for sharing and issuing.

Te Kākano will become the new place for assemblies on Fridays. Current users of the Learning Centre will now work in one of our three admin and support spaces.

Amy Hanna left us last week to spend more time with her family. She will be back as one of our release teachers next term. Thanks for all you've done for us and our learners Amy. Kate Dermer is now working full-time in Te Kaho 1.

Nicola Inder will be the class teacher for Te Kaho 2 next term while Matt's away and Laurel's our school Principal.

Still no news on our new classrooms...

Assessment at Whatawhata School

As you will have seen from our calendar the last two weeks have been our assessment weeks. We have an assessment week every term and do it all at once to minimise the impact on learning. This is the time where, across the school, we use different tools to get a good picture of the progress and achievement of all the children. It means that class programmes are different so that teachers have the time to work with children. So what are the tools we use?

Running records: For children in the first years of school teachers listen as children read books at particular levels. Teachers record their fluency, the different ways they work out unknown words, their understanding of the text, how they gain this understanding, and their recall of the text.

E-asTTle reading: For our older children. Teachers use this online program to create specific levelled tests. Children either complete these assessments online or on paper. This then provides us with lots of information on children's depth of understanding, the strategies

they use to understand words, phrases and whole texts and their ability to read and understand different types of texts. It tracks progress over time and identifies strengths and needs.

NumPA: Our younger children complete this maths

assessment.

Teachers work one on one, asking children ever harder addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fraction and decimal word problems as well as assessing their knowledge in many different areas

E-asTTle maths: Just like reading, our older children are set levelled online or paper tests by their teachers that focus on particular maths

concepts. These check children's strategies and success in solving a range of problems and their evolving number knowledge.

E-asTTle writing: The whole school uses this assessment. Children complete a standard writing task and are given a set time to complete this without any support from teachers. These are then marked against a standard marking framework.

By using these same tools across the school we get a really good picture of both where the children are at in their learning and the progress they have made since last term. This helps us work with children so they can see their own progress, shape our programmes to target areas the children need most, and (along with a raft of other information) create our National Standards judgements ready to share with you in our reports.

After school carer needed

Kuini and her whānau are leaving us at the end of this term. This means we need to find a new after school carer from the start of next term. This is for five afternoons after school, a total of 12 hours. If you are interested in the position please call in and see Matt or Warren in the next couple of weeks. Many thanks.

Upcoming events

June—Pipiri

- 17th Trees for Survival planting
- 17th Teacher development day
- 20th, 21st Teachers moderate assessment information and class learning
- 21st First BoT meeting of our new Board
- 23rd-24th Marae pōwhiri and learning, marae sleepover
- 29th New Board training evening
- 30th Te Pihinga wearable arts show

July—Hongongoi

- 1st Interschool Y7/8 Ki-o-rahi
- 1st Robocup competition for our Robotics Team @ Hillcrest High
- 5th Mid-year reports go home
- 8th Term 2 ends
- 11th Teacher planning day
- 25th Term 3 begins - Laurel as Principal

