

Arakura School Variance Report on Charter

1st January – 31st December 2008

PURPOSE

Our vision is a summary of our purpose

ARAKURA SCHOOL STATEMENT OF VISION

Through achievement, Arakura School will be recognised within the community as being a desirable establishment to educate, develop and prepare students for a balanced and fulfilling future.

MISSION STATEMENT

ARAKURA SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

In partnership with our community, we will provide a caring, educational environment, which will recognise uniqueness; provide opportunities and encourage co-operation.

I roto i te noho whanaungatanga,
ka whakapuāwaihia e mātou,
he ara wānanga atawhai,
kia kitea ia ōna ake piha,
ki te whakarite putanga kētanga,
ā, ki te whakahau te mahi tahi.

I le fesootaiga ma tagata lautele matou te fesoasoani;
la aoaina le fanau ise aoaoga faapitoa;
la faamalosia foi lo tatou pulupulu lima faatasi.

VARIANCE REPORT 2008

Commentary and Observations

Improvement Targets for 2008

WRITING

- ♣ For 50% of our Year 1 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 60% of our Year 2 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 70% of our Year 3 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 80% of our Year 4 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 80% of our Year 5 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 60% of our Year 6 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.

Writing Targets For 2008

Year Level	Target		% Met
Year Zero/One	50% writing at or above chronological age	15/31	48%
Year Two	60% writing at or above chronological age	23/35	66%
Year Three	70% writing at or above chronological age	15/37	41%
Year Four	80% writing at or above chronological age	26/30	87%
Year Five	80% writing at or above chronological age	19/31	61%
Year Six	60% writing at or above chronological age	15/34	44%

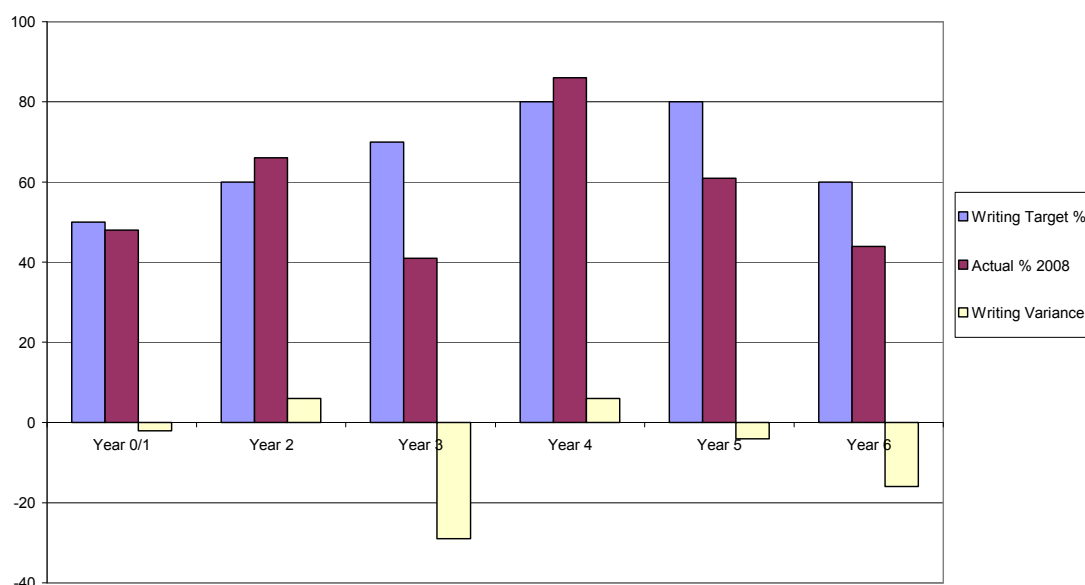
VARIANCE FROM 2008 TARGETS

	Writing Target %	Actual % 2008	Writing Variance
Year 0/1	50	48	-2
Year 2	60	66	+6
Year 3	70	41	-29
Year 4	80	86	+6
Year 5	80	61	-19
Year 6	60	44	-16

- Overall, these results are very pleasing! Most year levels were able to achieve these targets, but the results also show that the targets were realistic.
- An area of particular interest is Year Zero. In previous variance reports, year zero children's results have not been included. This year the Year Zero results were so pleasing I felt that these needed to be included. At the time of testing, every Year Zero child in our new entrant class was achieving at or above their chronological age in writing. This must be put down to effective teaching practice in our junior school classes.

- A shared understanding across the staff of what effective practice entails has helped to shift the student results in our school. This year, our WELL programme has focused on looking at the leadership programme within school. The concept of distributed leadership was “tested” this year with the introduction of new staff members. It was essential to transfer information about our schools expectations around the teaching of literacy to these new staff quickly. Professional development meetings were based around developing teacher knowledge and creating an awareness of resources available within the school. Literacy observations were carried out in order to set next steps for teacher’s professional learning, and feedback about individual classroom practice was given. All teachers were asked to select an area of literacy to be observed. Most teachers elected to have their writing programme observed, and in all observations, effective practice was evident. .
- The introduction of the Joy Allcock Spelling Under Scrutiny Programme must also be recognised. Teachers in the junior school have been involved in professional development in this area, and it has been noted by our Special Needs Teacher that the word vocabulary and decoding skills of our six year olds are improving. In 2009, all teachers will be involved in further professional development in this area.

2008 Writing Results



AREAS OF INTEREST...

- The Year Six data highlights an area of our school where the children are achieving below the expected level in writing. The Year Six students missed their targets by a considerable margin. These targets were set based on the results of these students in 2007, but the expectation for continued improvement was of course, still evident in target setting. The 2008 Year Six cohort has been previously identified within the school, as being one with significant behavioural and learning needs and by taking this into consideration; the Year Six targets were adjusted accordingly. The Year Six results have “dipped” in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and now 2008. It is a level where the children have to be equipped with a wide range of critical literacy skills and know how and when to use these skills, if they are to achieve at or above their chronological age.
- The Year Three students are another cohort that have been identified within the school as having a range of special learning needs, and this is reflected in their 2008 results. Presently, 18 of the 37 Year Three children at Arakura School are on the special needs register, and of these 18 children, 16 have received extra literacy development with our Specialist Reading Teacher. It is also important to note that

one student is currently under ORRS funding for severe hearing loss. This information will be taken into consideration when setting targets for 2009.

Gender and Ethnicity Breakdown 2008 Writing

	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 0/1	At or above Chronological age	% 2008	% 2007	% 2006
Boys	6/20	5/9	11/16	10/15	9/14	8/25	49/99	49	52	49
Girls	8/15	14/22	15/17	9/20	15/21	9/19	70/114	61	60	58
Maori	4/19	8/13	6/15	5/9	9/13	5/19	37/88	42	60	53
Pasifika	0/2	2/2	7/8	3/8	0/2	2/2	14/24	58	57	50
NZ European	8/13	9/17	6/8	9/16	14/16	9/23	55/93	59	53	57
Indian	0/1	N/A	N/A	1/2	0/2	N/A	1/5	20	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	0/1	2/2	1/2	N/A	3/5	60	56	40

Improvement Targets for 2008

READING

- ♣ For 35% of our Year 1 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 50% of our Year 2 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 65% of our Year 3 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 80% of our Year 4 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 80% of our Year 5 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 65% of our Year 6 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.

Reading Targets For 2008

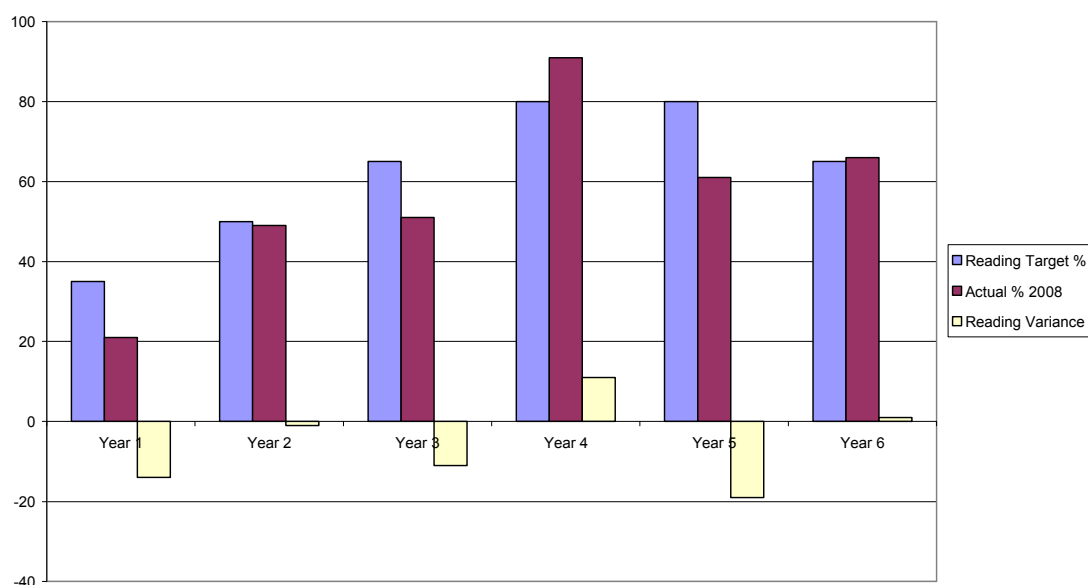
Year Level	Target		% Met
Year Zero/One	35% reading at or above chronological age	9/42	21
Year Two	50% reading at or above chronological age	17/35	49
Year Three	65% reading at or above chronological age	18/35	51
Year Four	80% reading at or above chronological age	30/33	91
Year Five	80% reading at or above chronological age	19/31	61
Year Six	65% reading at or above chronological age	23/35	66

VARIANCE FROM 2008 TARGETS

	Reading Target %	Actual % 2008	Reading Variance
Year 1	35	21	-14
Year 2	50	49	-1
Year 3	65	51	-11
Year 4	80	91	+11
Year 5	80	61	-19
Year 6	65	66	+1

- Overall this year, the results show a dip from 2007. With the exception of our Year Six and Year Four cohorts, all other year groups had a negative variance. The expectations for the continued improvement of students at Arakura School were set high at the end of 2007.
- Our involvement in W.E.L.D has focused on writing, but in 2007 we noted that staff professional development in reading was required. We were able to use strengths within the school and involved teachers in professional development on taking and analysing running records. Two staff attended a two-day reading comprehension course, and provided feedback and resources to all staff. Based on these results, further professional development in reading is required in 2009. This will be included in our professional development schedule for 2009.

2008 Reading Results



AREAS OF INTEREST...

- In both 2007 and 2008 our School Literacy Leader has taught the Year Four cohort, and both years this has impacted positively on these results. This data may indicate the need to raise the achievement benchmarks of our Year Four cohort, however, in order to be able to compare across years, we have chosen instead to keep our target expectations high (80% at or above). In 2009, Arakura is trialing e-asTTle which will provide us with an opportunity to assess children's academic progression in a more formative way. This will be trialed with a small cohort of year four, five and six children who are identified from this year's target as being "achievers".
- The Year Six results are particularly pleasing this year! This cohort has been provided with extra support this year. Of the 14 boys who are working below the expected level, 10 have received one on one reading support. This has obviously made a considerable difference in 2008, as for the past two years, the Year Six pupils have not reached their target.
- It is important to note that our new entrant students are generally arriving at school with limited literacy skills. All students arriving at Arakura School begin working at emergent levels, where the nationally recognised reading age is less than five. Unfortunately, this means that many of our five year olds are actually starting below chronological age on entry to school. In 2008, we adjusted our benchmarks to allow for children to begin at emergent one which we have marked as having a reading age of 5.0 years. Emergent levels are designed for students to work at for two to three months. In order for children at Arakura School to reach chronological age in Year One, they are expected to move up fourteen levels in their first year of school! This needs to be taken into account when analysing our Year One data.

Gender and Ethnicity Breakdown 2008 Reading

	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 0/1	At or above Chronological age	% 2008	% 2007	% 2006
Boys	5/20	3/9	14/16	9/15	7/14	6/25	44/99	44	52	49
Girls	13/15	14/22	15/17	9/20	9/21	3/17	63/114	55	60	58
Maori	11/19	7/13	14/15	5/9	6/13	5/19	48/88	55	60	53
Pasifika	0/2	2/2	7/8	5/8	1/2	0/2	15/24	63	57	50
NZ European	11/13	10/17	8/8	8/16	9/16	7/23	53/93	57	53	57
Indian	1/1	N/A	N/A	1/2	0/2	N/A	2/5	40	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	0/1	0/2	1/2	N/A	1/5	20	56	40

Improvement Targets for 2009

WRITING

- ♣ For 50% of our Year 1 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 60% of our Year 2 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 70% of our Year 3 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 70% of our Year 4 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 80% of our Year 5 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.
- ♣ For 80% of our Year 6 students to be writing at or above their chronological age.

READING

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- ♣ For 70% of our Year 6 students to be reading at or above their chronological age.

*Cathryn Lea,
Literacy Leader, Acting Assistant Principal 4/02/08*

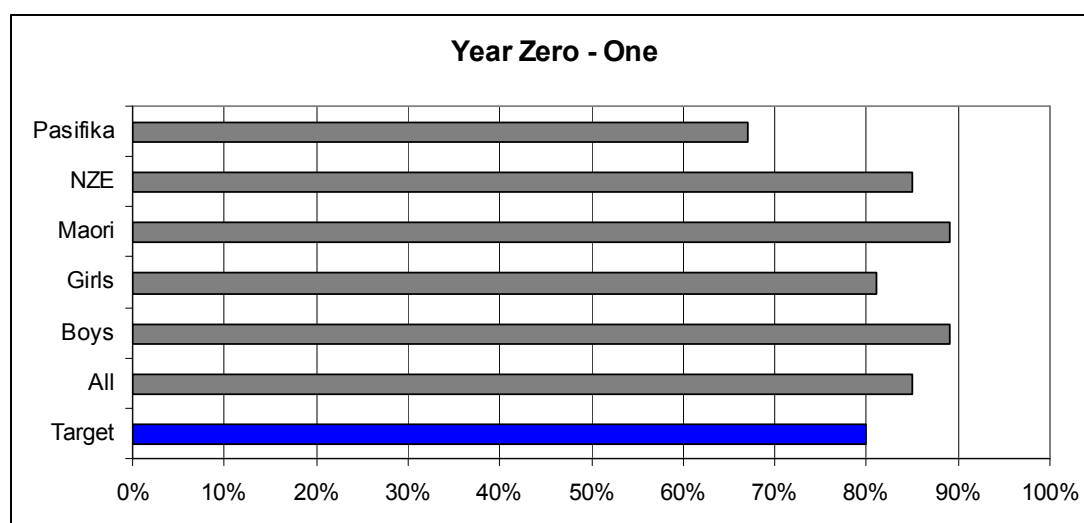
Maths Data for 2008 Variance Report

In 2006, our school maths programme was based upon our school curriculum plan. This plan ensured coverage of all the achievement objectives within the variety of strands. At the end of that year a new staff member to the school, who had previously been involved in the Numeracy Project, designed a simplified version of that Project and this was used throughout the school in 2007. This gave us some base line data that we then used when creating 2008 targets. As a general rule we took our end of 2007 year data, examined each cohort and then added between twelve to thirty percent to their result.

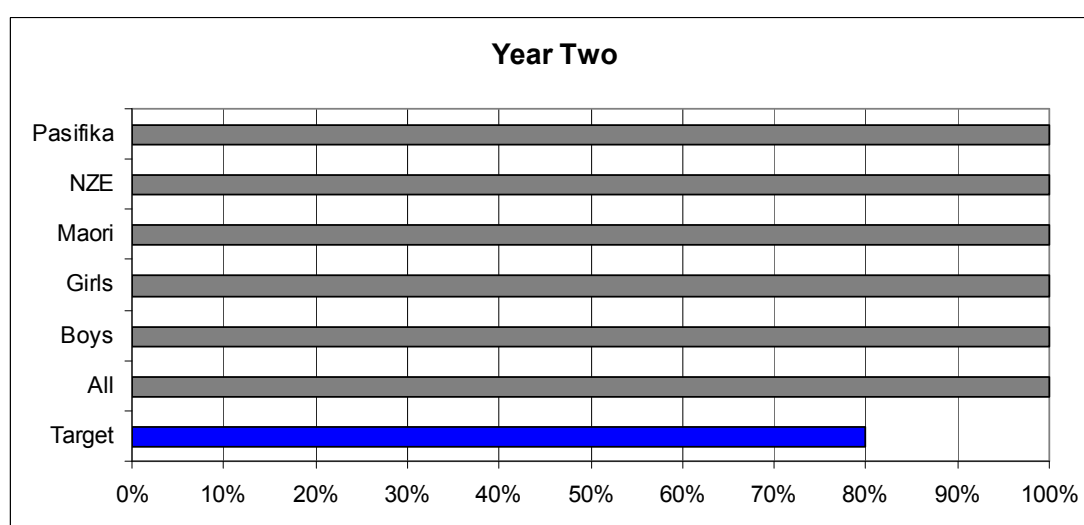
This became their 2008 target. It should be noted that this was focusing on the Addition and Subtraction Strand only.

In 2008, our school was accepted and took part in the Numeracy Project with the same teacher mentioned above leading the project, with support from Maths Advisers from Victoria University. As a consequence the staff received specialised professional development, classroom release time for assessment and additional classroom resources.

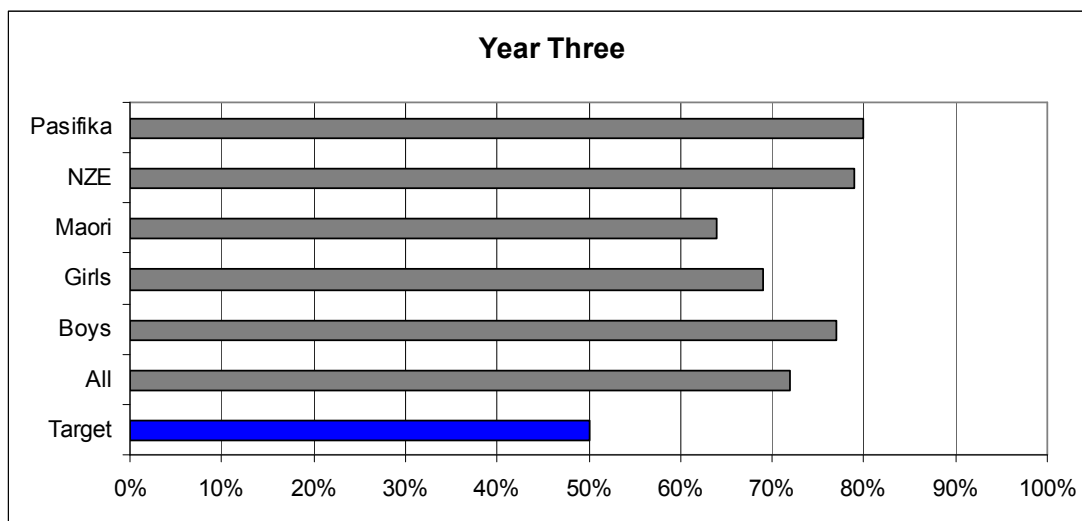
Our results for the 2008 year are very pleasing overall. The following is a breakdown of our results by the year group and within each cohort the data is further split between gender and ethnicity.



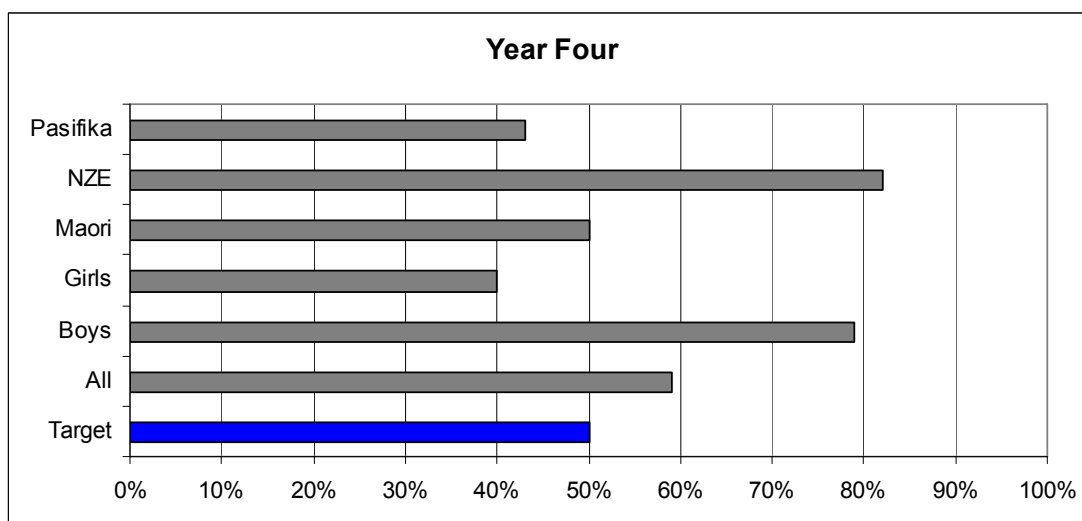
This graph shows that nearly all cohort groups achieved their target. The only group that did not was the Pasifika group, however, as this is a very small group of three children, it simply means two out of three children achieved the target.



This was one of the success stories for the year. All children achieved the target of stage two (counting from one on materials). We subsequently discovered that one of the main teachers of this cohort inadvertently thought that the target was stage three. This could therefore highlight the importance of high expectations for our children. It should also be noted that the target stage for this group nationally has been increased considerably (to stage four).

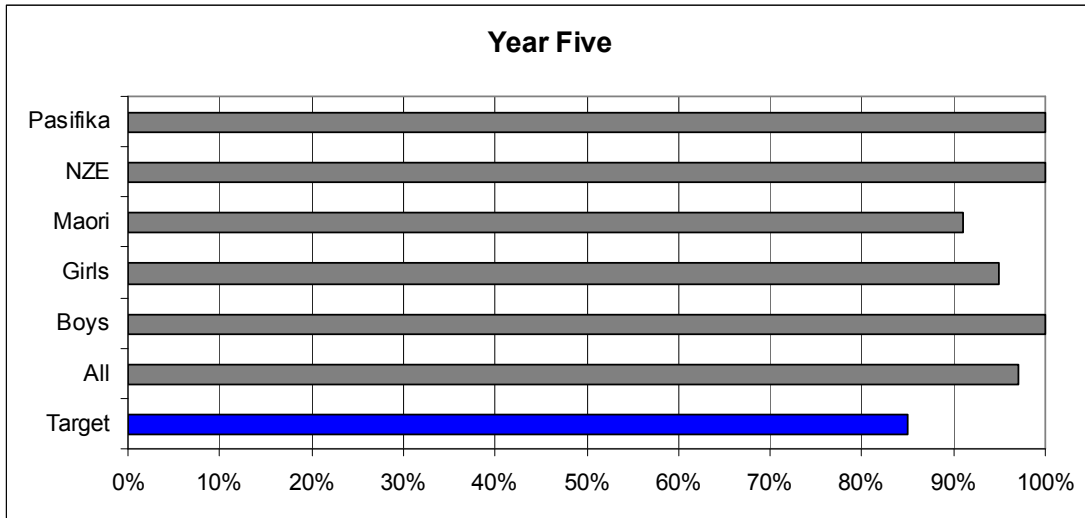


The target of fifty percent for this cohort was considerably lower than the first two groups. This was because at the beginning of the year only thirty four percent of that cohort were achieving at that level, Furthermore forty two percent were two stages or more behind the target level. Therefore, these results are very good. They represent a thirty eight percent increase in the average result.

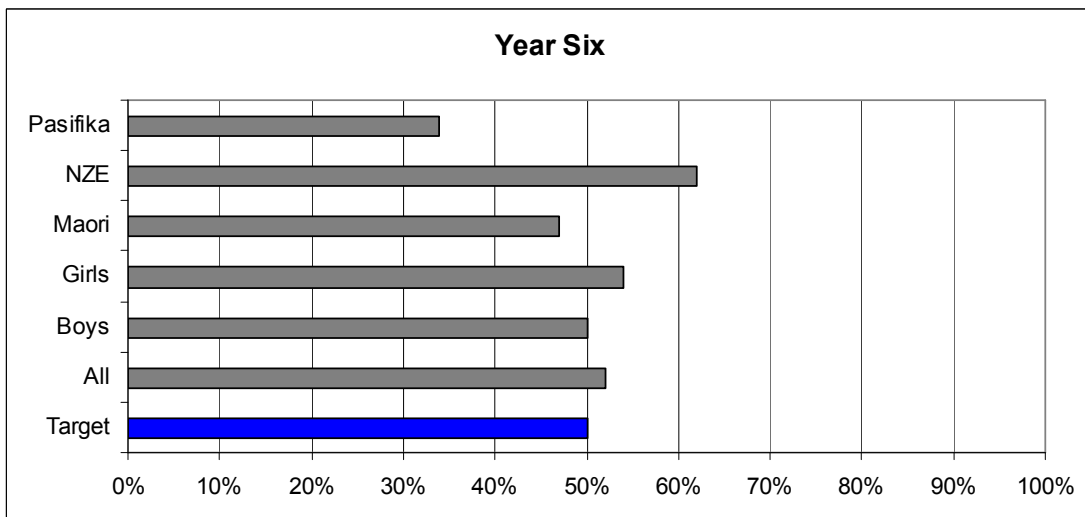


This cohort at the beginning of this year was in a very similar position to our Year Three group. Only thirty five percent were achieving at the target level, so their target represented a fifteen percent increase. From the above graph it shows the average score for this cohort improved by twenty four percent.

It is important to consider that of the nine Pasifika children represented by this data, three of them did not achieve the target as they did not have the confidence to explain the maths strategies they were using in English. The classroom teacher of this cohort also described difficulty in identifying the next learning step for these children as it was the first time she had taught Year Four children.



This group was given the target of eighty five percent at the start of the year as they were already at fifty seven percent to start with. As you can see from above, significant gains were made by this cohort. The increase in their average score was forty percent. One reason for this is simply that the benchmark for this group did not change. It was simply that more of the cohort was expected to achieve that level.



The target of fifty percent was set for this group as they were sitting at twenty one percent at the start of the year. They finished the year with an increase in their average score of thirty one percent. The Pasifika result was disappointing, however, it should be pointed out that this data represents

three children; one of which has considerable learning needs. The Maori result was also disappointing and represent a cohort group of seventeen children. In this group four children have considerable learning needs and the classroom programme possibly did not meet their needs adequately.

In summary, these results show that we have had a very successful year teaching maths and the Numeracy Project was a big part of this. It also shows that we, as a decile three school, hold ourselves to the same national standards other schools use. This will be reflected in our 2009 targets as it has been noted that the benchmark levels for the Years Zero to Two have been increase.

Finally, it is important to note that this data is a true and accurate representation of the maths achievements of the children in our school. Every child in our school is presented in this data; including our three ORRS children, and a number of Pasifika children that arrived during the year with very little or no formal schooling.

Improvement Targets for 2008

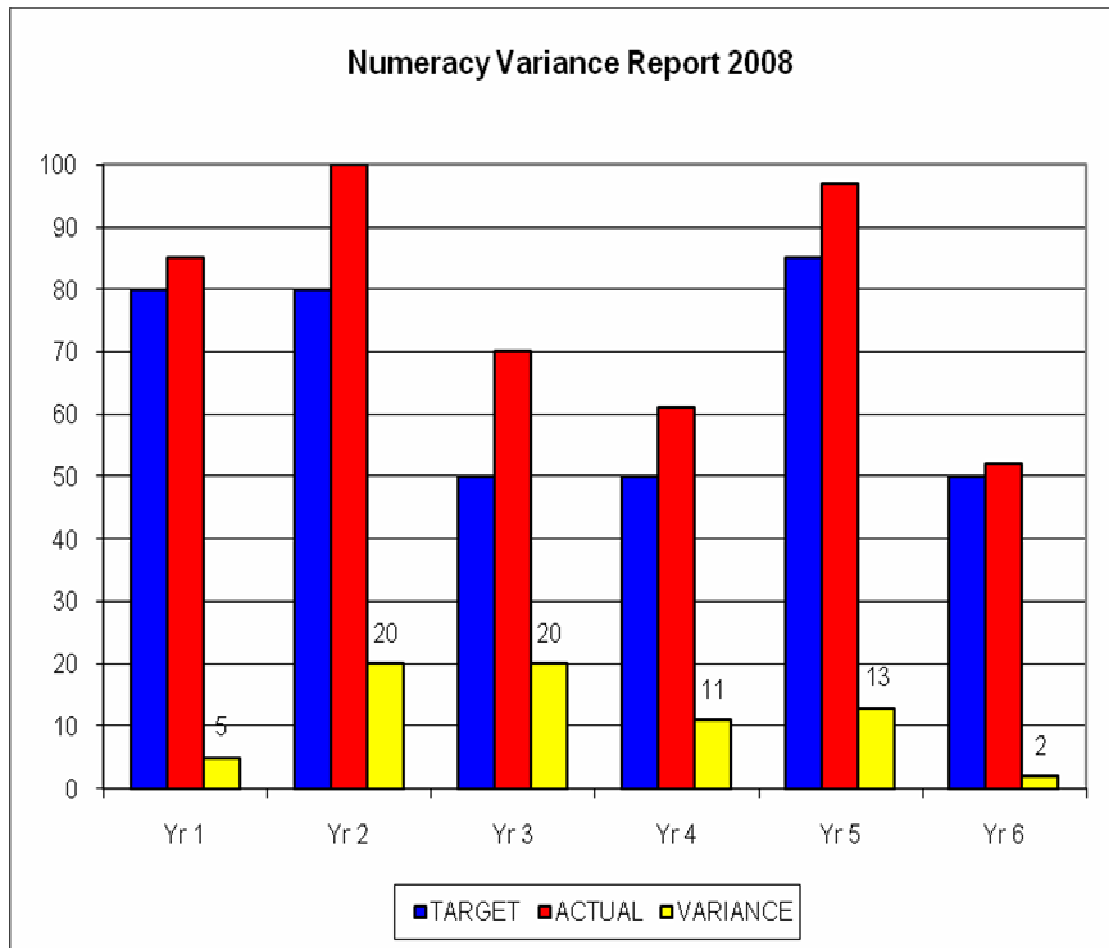
Mathematics

Numeracy: Addition & Subtraction Strategy

- For 80% of our Year 1 students to be at Stage 1 or Stage 2
- For 80% of our Year 2 students to be at Stage 2 or Stage 3
- For 50% of our Year 3 students to be at Stage 4
- For 50% of our Year 4 students to be at Stage 5
- For 85% of our Year 5 students to be at Stage 5 or Stage 6
- For 50% of our Year 6 students to be at Stage 6

Variance From 2008 Targets

YEAR	EXPECTED STAGE	TARGET %	ACTUAL %	VARIANCE
One	1-2	80	85	+5
Two	2-3	80	100	+20
Three	4	50	70	+20
Four	5	50	61	+11
Five	5-6	85	97	+13
Six	6	50	52	+2



Improvement Targets for 2009

Mathematics

Numeracy: Addition & Subtraction Strategy

- For 80% of our Year 1 students to be at Stage 2, Stage 3 or Stage 4
- For 50% of our Year 2 students to be at Stage 4
- For 80% of our Year 3 students to be at Stage 4 or Stage 5
- For 70% of our Year 4 students to be at Stage 5
- For 80% of our Year 5 students to be at Stage 5 or Stage 6
- For 80% of our Year 6 students to be at Stage 6

*Jason Tane,
Numeracy Leader, Deputy Principal 4/02/08*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For the fourth year in succession I would like to recognise the hard work and assistance of our Literacy Leader and Numeracy Leader in preparing this report. Cathryn Lea took over from Kieren Moriarty as the literacy leader in 2008. She proved to be an inspired choice and developed into our third outstanding literacy leader. So as in the past she was the obvious choice to help me analyse the end of year data and interpret results for writing and reading. Once again we have found that much of the data is a reference point for future teaching and learning in 2009 and beyond. Jason Tane, Deputy Principal and Numeracy Project Leader, liaised with Leyton Walker from Victoria University to bring Numeracy into the same generic prominence as literacy in the past four years. Here lies the crux of this issue numeracy had a fraction of the resources especially time that has been dedicated to literacy. When I consider the results of the professional development on student outcomes and teacher knowledge it is a huge credit to Jason.

Assessments can become outdated, irrelevant and even be misleading with out some form of explanation. This whole exercise raises more questions than answers for the principal and the numeracy and literacy leaders who are collating the data and preparing this report. Part of our job is to get teachers

to continue to reflect on the results. This of course is a good thing and teachers, including the principal, have got better at self reflection as the Literacy and now Numeracy Programmes have progressed. We are also fortunate that the staff as a whole have gained from the past five years and prepared to contribute to discussions, processes and policy making. New staff members can include experiences from previous schools.

Cathryn, Jason and I took several days collating the results and ensuring they were accurate. For this report having 'three heads' to interpret the findings was invaluable. The highlights in the report are mine to provide reference points for the staff and Board of Trustees members.

I trust this has been a worth while exercise and provided the reader with a clear outline of our process.



Mark Kibblewhite
Principal

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2008

In 2008 we all at Arakura School continued to concentrate on achieving greater consistency as part of the Wainuiomata Education Leadership and Learning (W.E.L.L.). As another year passed we are even more aware of the impact of valley-wide inservice based on data from our literacy and numeracy programmes.

In December 2006 the WELD initiative was due to cease (that was extended to the end of Term One 2007 and beyond with a special focus on sustainability) so in 2007 we focused on sustainability especially with the departure of our Literacy Leader, Kieren, to be replaced with Cathryn. In 2007 we identified 'Reading' rather than 'Writing' as the aspect of literacy we wish to continue to concentrate on although writing and other curricula were included. In 2008 Arakura concentrated more on mathematics (the numeracy project) and with many teachers it has already had a generic effect and transferred from writing to reading, and indeed all areas of the curriculum.

There are still many gaps which have been and will continue to be addressed thus reducing disparities. One such gap which we as educators have had to come to terms with is that poor teaching (and indeed leadership) can have the greatest impact on student achievement. In 2008 Cathryn and Jason and I identified several factors which could be barriers to learning. The greatest now is consistency across the team and maintaining higher expectations of teachers. To this end Arakura teachers have in 2005 to 2008 observed teachers to see first hand how they deal with this aspect of student learning. Enthusiasm exhibited by everyone at all times is important along with explicit and thereby effective communication to all stakeholders.

To this end we intend to encourage more families, Whanau and caregivers to be more involved in their child's learning. ***"The evidence is clear that parents and caregivers who are actively interested in, and supportive of, their child's learning and who provide plenty of encouragement at home can make a big difference to their child's progress"***¹

¹ Literacy's Helping Hands (NZ Education Gazette, 9th May 2005)

Naturally in line with the WELD project to date future WELL projects, in line with EHSAS requirements, will be evidence driven based on recorded data. In the past the staff have been put through a written scenario and then had their classroom teaching observed. Past showed improvement in observations of practice and theoretical knowledge. Teaching practice and general 'teacher talk' around the school would suggest that 'newer' staff have progressed at a similar rate and assimilated the "this is how we do things around here" approach at Arakura School.

2008 saw the remnants of the fifth year of a planned 'three year literacy programme' which has morphed into and leadership and learning programme to future proof our schools.

Having been involved in education for over 30 years now I have not located the 'silver bullet' I have always believed it is hard to learn, especially in our present system, without strong literacy skills and a good attitude to learning backed up by support from home and school. The temptation to be pulled away from the core business of teaching and learning to property and finance has become greater during my eleven years as a principal. However as a teaching principal for part of that time and my desire to remain the head learner rather than the accountant and property manager I decided to commit to setting a good example and join in. In the past it meant saying that I did not know enough about literacy teaching and was there to learn in the supportive environment of a situation filled with literacy experts. We are moving into a stage where the question is being asked:

"What impact does leadership have on improved student outcomes and how do we know / identify it?"

As elected president of the Wainuiomata Principals' Association I have noticed nearly all of our meetings now are professional development based. I also congratulate the J.E.D.I. for supporting the WELL project. Previous Ministers of Education deserve recognition wishing to see the savings from the restructuring of Wainuiomata schools spent on projects that benefited the whole community. W.E.L.D. and now W.E.L.L. involves everyone from preschool to secondary so it fits that criterion.

Teaching is like coaching a sport. Finding ways to influence the learner and show them the next step. Similarly when a student does well (Mark Twain once said that he never let school get in the way of his learning) frequently the school does not get a mention that the parents choose the "right" school then supported the school with "high expectations" (money and time etc). However when something goes wrong the coach (school / teachers) are solely at fault. Teachers at our school from me as the principal to the recently trained Provisionally Registered Teacher accept their role is to provide the student, using tax payers' resources, with the very best teaching at their disposal without excuses. However excluding excuses there remain **reasons** outside the teacher's sphere of influence that impact on all of this. Probably the greatest of these reasons is disruptive students. So whilst all of the above must be taken into account and teacher / principal inadequacies cannot be underestimated other factors such as teacher training, Ministry initiatives, new curriculum, increasing amounts of paper work and so forth cannot be ignored. We remain at a stage where issues must be stated clearly as I feel poor planning, organisation and provision of resources on the part of my superiors should not present a crisis on my part! Tasks must be prioritised not accumulate to the point where paralysis by analysis becomes the norm as I fear it has done in the past.

Teachers themselves are learners and as so deserve feed-back and feed-forward to illustrate next steps. The W.E.L.L. is providing this and 'dollops of feedback' have been provided by. Hopefully my performance management observations are complementary to this process so everyone benefits. By moving into W.E.L.L.² this process is a continuation on from W.E.L.D. and will focus directly on leadership and sustainability towards the goal of improved student achievement.

² Wainuiomata Education Leading and Learning

John Hattie, an achievement-measurement expert based at Auckland University's School of Education, New Zealand Listener 6th – 12th November 2004, made some interesting statements about the effects of the following: Feedback; Class Size .05; Classroom Ambience 0.7 crucial!; So too is the presence of disruptive students -0.78!; Computers 0.32; Retention; Competition; Frequent Testing and Non-School Factors. "The home effect is primarily a function of the expectations ... have a great effect." page 19. I cannot agree with his recent comments on class size for the simple reason that if there are less students to interact with and give feedback then the amount of time / feedback devoted to each student is more likely to increase!

Many years ago when I first heard Hattie describe his "dollops of feedback" I agreed with him I also agree that the presence of disruptive students and the expectations and other factors from home is pivotal to us moving forward. Our data supports these findings of Hattie and the negative effect of disruptive students and parents who did not work with their child at home, by hearing their reading for example or signing their reading log without supervising or hearing their child's reading once a month, did not contribute as they could have. This was an easier year than most in many respects and we look forward to a positive start in 2009.

This is our sixth variance report and once again the reader needs to take into account a few mitigating circumstances. These form *reasons not excuses* for most of *'the less than desirable results'* achieved by some cohorts.

Some thoughts for consideration:

- (1) The composition of teaching staff in 2008 with beginning teachers. These staff members were definitely still getting to grips with the required teaching and assessment methods. The remaining staff would still consider themselves at various stages along the continuum especially when one considers that subtle changes were made to their teaching and assessment practices as well. Our first major changes to our planning and reporting cycle was in Term Two 2003 so we are still refining the process, including the target setting. **When setting future targets we consider as one of the criteria the previous year's cohort coming through.** This is an ongoing process of refinement and being in our infancy in regard to these latest changes in required report writing we treat targets as organic. We also take into account a beginning teacher which factors in 'learning the ropes' at the best of times. Similarly excellent experienced teachers have a positive affect with improved results. In 2008 of the classroom full time teachers, four had less than two years experience; two had between three and five, and only one between five and ten years teaching!
- (2) Although the addition of a 'new classroom', due to roll growth, has alleviated some overcrowding in classes and cut down on subsequent movement throughout all cohorts all classes were functioning at 'maximum capacity'. It was decided to continue (from 2006) with another 'over flow class' in the school's library four mornings a week. The alterations to the hall could then include upgrading the 'hall supper room' up to a 'mini classroom standard.' This meant the library and computer suite were harder to access in the mornings with all classes being rostered in the afternoons.
- (3) There remains an inconsistency of teachers used during release time throughout the year. This was resolved when our 'usual' relievers were used. Our students do not respond well to change and new staff. Classroom Teacher Release Time is an ongoing issue in many schools, according to what I have heard from other principals and teachers. It is becoming more effective as we all learn to work with it. In our case we aim to use some of it for classroom observations. These support the literacy programme and numeracy contract.

- (4) Succession planning is important and this year we got to see if our processes were in place. The succession extends to the actual programme itself. W.E.L.D. has morphed into Wainuiomata Education Literacy and Leadership (W.E.L.L.)
- (5) Reading results are now more consistent with each other. This was brought about by implementing the STAR reading test to support the asTTle test. We maintained the seen text running record in junior reading testing to PM benchmarks. The change that measures accuracy and comprehension as opposed to previously just accuracy. Progress and Achievement Tests for Listening Comprehension also provided another point of reference and highlighted students' potential. That is a predominantly oral as opposed to a visual medium.
- (6) Likewise the numeracy contract provided much more useful assessment tools. So subsequent data is more meaningful.
- (7) These Literacy and Numeracy results have identified the need to focus on the development of skill teaching in numeracy and literacy programmes and the need to **teach teachers** to teach more strategies.
- (8) With the continuation of our enrolment scheme roll growth is not such an issue.
- (9) Differences in teacher expectations warrant further examination. In 2009 we intended to focus still further on our expectations for achievement and in particular looking closely at gender, ethnicity and age.
- (10) Behaviour management is always an issue in a school. Whilst things were not as bad as previous years some classes / teachers were concerned with classroom management and social issues which contributed to the variance between targets and achievement. At times their antisocial behaviour had a detrimental affect on their progress. The staff members concerned tried every strategy they knew including involving outside agencies such as R.T.L.B. and G.S.E. Otaki Health Camp, with mentor. Pleasing progress was made during the year.
- (11) Recording data on our 'blue cards' which are the school-wide cumulative record shows that teacher interpretation of test criteria has improved with better moderation practices, staff meetings and teacher only days. Likewise teaching and methods of gathering data (assessment / 'marking') are more consistent. Several staff meetings were spent on achieving a consistent approach for assessment.
- (12) New entrants' entry data tells us that five year olds are still coming to school with limited alphabet knowledge, unable to write words and generally they have limited concepts about print. Most do not know their colours, surname, basic address and birthday. So our new entrant, year one and year two targets are adjusted accordingly. New entrant teachers have observed a school with similar issues to ours and issues such as teacher expectations were addressed.
- (13) Despite these challenges we have concentrated on the research which states Quality teaching has the greatest impact on the learner. We have continued to identify through the Wainuiomata Education Literacy Development (W.E.L.D.) Programme ways of improving our teaching practices. An intensive four year professional development programme has been put in place including regular teacher observations / teacher modeling / feed-back and feed-forward strategies. This provides an individual learning pathway tailored to meet the needs of teachers to improve learning for each and every individual student. This programme has been embraced by all teachers at our school and they can see the benefits. We intend to concentrate on improving teaching and learning via the writing process with reading and mathematics along with social skills being the other areas of interest for our school. Hopefully excellent teacher practice will 'rub off' on all curricula. The numeracy contract certainly supported this pathway of teachers as learners.
- (14) Perhaps the greatest impact of all on this report is the transient nature of the school roll. The 2008 targets were set with existing students in mind. With it being the fifth year of undertaking the exercise it is still difficult to refer to previous trends and as we were still moving the goals it could not be considered an exact science. The targets for 2008 were therefore set using the data from the previous year and roll change makes a considerable difference to this.

Extending Higher Standards Across Schools

Preamble:

*(iv) Provide a paragraph from **each** school outlining:*

- how they will be involved to ensure the success of the project
- how they will benefit from the intended shared outcomes of the project
- what their specific foci will be within the project

All Wainuiomata schools have been involved with WELD since 2004, an initiative that is all about collaboration within and between schools to improve every level of school performance. For 2007 all the Wainuiomata schools have identified a professional learning priority in the area of leadership. This has been built into their school plans. Principals have collaboratively committed to: developing a leadership curriculum for Wainuiomata schools refer to diagram in section (ii), establishing a professional learning programme to support introduction of the curriculum into the cluster, prioritising professional learning within and between schools for instructional leadership teams, sharing in school learnings with the cluster, a research and evaluation project to assess the impact and effectiveness of the leadership and management curriculum and programme.

In addition each of the schools has analysed their priorities for Professional Learning in each of the following outcome areas ; quality teaching, teacher education, physical resources and organisation. The following paragraphs identify the individual schools additional (to leadership) priorities.

Arakura

Arakura School's development focus for 2007 * will focus on leadership and management and continue work on literacy. We have concentrated on quality writing for the past three years, having worked on reading in the five years before that. Increased student achievement through teachers using 'best practice' is pivotal. Over time this should become generic with all teaching being based on evidence and data; formative assessment, action research and the needs of the learner (this includes the teacher as a learner). This will resemble a twin pronged approach to Leadership and Literacy strands with foci such as Māori and Pasifika target groups and New Entrant data used to inform decisions. The Principal, Deputy and Assistant principals as members of the leadership team will be supported by the WELL focus and the cluster wide commitment to increase leadership effectiveness.

Comment:

- All of the above paragraph (**in bold**) has been covered and commented on in our variance report in the preceding pages. * It is a direct quote and although 2007 is mentioned the focus remained in 2008.
- Financial details will be reported on by Wainuiomata Primary School, which is the fundholding school for our cluster, in their Variance Report for 2008.
- The data gathered in 2008 will be presented to a Valley wide staff meeting on Friday 13th March 2009³ and subsequently reported to Boards of Trustees and The Community by individual schools and as a cluster.
- The diagram on the following page outlines a plan we at Arakura School formulated to implement the transition from WELD to WELL. Simply put this means the movement from a concentration on staff development using a literacy focus to sustainability through leadership capacity building. Literacy, along with Numeracy will remain as areas of interest and be a conduit for leadership team activity.

³ Changed to Friday 13th March (from Thursday 12th March) since last report was published and sent to the auditors.


Strategic Plan 2006 - 2008				
↓				
Annual Plan 2008				
↓				
Literacy Plan 2008				
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓				
Leadership Strand	Literacy Strand	Financial Strand	Policy Strand	Assessment Strand
<p>External learning contribution / Professional Development Providers e.g. <i>Cognition Modules?</i> <i>Penn. State?</i> Research proposal?</p> <p>Mark <i>PDPC?</i></p> <p>Jason PLC Cathryn PLC</p> 	<p>External learning contribution / Professional Development Providers E.g. Christine Austin & Joy Allcock</p> <p>Cathryn Lit. Leader</p> <p>Jason Associate Lit. Leader</p> <p><i>'Home & School Partnership'</i> for all Staff.</p>	<p>Release Literacy Leaders \$2,000</p> <p>Release Classroom teachers \$4,000 (16 days)</p> <p><i>Retreat & Symposium</i> \$3,000</p> <p>Joy Allcock \$500</p> <p>Teacher Only Day</p> <p>Total: \$9,500</p> <p>(<i>EHSAS</i> contribution?)</p>	<p>Inclusiveness, Define 'ALL' In all policies Reviewed in 2008.</p> <p>Review Etiquette for Classroom observations</p>	<p>2008 Targets set from 2007 Variance Report.</p> <p>Variance Report (MoE Compliance)</p> <p>Board of Trustees Reports from Principal, Lit. Leader & staff</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>Community Reports</p> <p><i>EHSAS</i> Reporting</p>

Diagram: Showing how the 'literacy strand' will continue but be supplemented by a 'leadership strand'. Note that when this plan was devised the *EHSAS* funding had not been confirmed. Since then the 'Penn State' involvement and 'Cognition Modules' have been removed. *EHSAS* Funding has been confirmed.

ACTION RESEARCH

Seeking to understand and acting on the best we know.

"Action research is continual disciplined inquiry conducted to inform and improve our practice as educators. Action research asks educators to study their practice and its context, explore the research base for ideas, compare what they find to their current practice, participate in training to support needed changes, and study the effects on themselves and their students and colleagues." ~ 'Emily F. Calhoun'

"The good news is that when groups have adequate organisation support in using data as a source of information to guide practice, leadership generally surfaces within the group."

"... all action research approaches encourage disciplined inquiry, reflection, and the improvement of practice or expansion of knowledge ..."

... identify issues or problems, study the context of those problems, collect data, take actions and engage in discourse and reflection around the results of those actions."

"These changes are unlikely to occur if principals do not participate and help lead the effort."

I have included the above quotes about action research as it has played a key role in our inservice in 2008 and will continue to do so in the years ahead. In 2008 at Arakura the staff reviewed data comparing our students with national averages (asTTle) of students from similar demographics to us. We also collected data about the students perceptions (that is their enjoyment of writing)

- asTTle (schools with similar student populations) was used to identify what was working well and where we needed to improve.
- We reviewed our curriculum standards document and set further benchmarks for intended improvement.
- We have received several pieces of professional readings which we have used to study what works to improve our teaching of writing, reading and numeracy.
- We identified approaches and programmes we were currently using.
- I have attempted finding more time for the staff to work together, identifying staff members who are willing to lead.
- We have used structured response sheets to record diary entries.
- Teachers continued working with selected 'target groups' but not in a formal monitoring situation as in the past.
- Leyton, Julie, Shona, Carina, Jason and Cathryn have provided an even better support system this year. This included a series of staff development sessions, classroom observations, strategic planning and modeling opportunities.

Towards More Effective Teaching Practice

As with the previous section on Action Research I have included this special section in my report because it is relevant to what we have been doing at Arakura School during 2008. These pages are similar to an appendix designed to provide the reader with more information to support the main findings at the beginning of this report.

It provides supplementary information on strategies we tried to transform teaching practice, in school professional development, support to improve outcomes for students and lists some resources used in the process.

Effective teachers:

- Expect their students to succeed;
- Ask students to explain their thinking and wait for them to do so;
- Focused questioning and explanations to help students develop their thinking;
- Clearly define objectives;
- Talk less.

Effective teaching thrives in supportive school cultures:

- An emphasis on student achievement;
- Analysis and open discussion of achievement information;
- Sharing classroom practice;
- Management arrangements that support professional activities;
- Leadership involvement and the sharing of leadership activities across staff.

Transforming teaching practice

Individual teachers felt invigorated by the changes in their teaching practice when they began using the (literacy / numeracy) strategies.

Effective teachers have expectations that children can achieve academic progress and believe that they can be effective in helping (them) to do this. *'Picking up the Pace'*

The schools that are most successful in sustaining high levels of achievement are those whose teachers base their teaching methods on student achievement information.

Positive Student Outcomes

- Lifting teachers' expectations
- Developing strong learning communities
- Regularly using valid assessment data to inform practice
- Supporting principals in leading learning
- Facilitating highly effective teacher practice.

In-school Professional Development

- Models of effective teaching practice
- Literacy action plan (Cathryn)
- Numeracy action plan (Cathryn)
- Analysing the students' results to inform their next steps
- Teaching strategies
- Observed classroom practice and then given feed-back and feed-forward at where to next
- Worked together to moderate students' writing samples (especially in 2006 - 2008)
- Consistency across the school in collecting and analysing student data.

Main Features

- Gathering and using assessment information to inform teaching
- Collecting baseline data
- Regularly integrating formative assessment into the programme sharing learning outcomes and success criteria for each lesson through self-assessment and reflection after the lesson
- Changing classroom practice by drawing on the Ministry handbook *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* and by focusing on what it is that teachers do (deliberate acts of teaching, namely D.A.T.s) to raise achievement in writing.

Supported by

- School visits by a literacy facilitator
- In-class modeling and video filming of classroom practice.
- 'Kieren's DVD' (John Dickie)

Teachers are now far more focused on direct teaching strategies and on developing programmes for effective literacy teaching.

Literacy Leadership (primary) continues *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* published, 2003

The *New Zealand Curriculum exemplars: English* published 2003.

Improving Outcomes for our Students

Literacy advisers (Shona) supporting classroom teachers

Numeracy advisers (Leyton and Julie)

Literacy Leadership 2000-2004

RT:Lits Shona Smellie

RT:LBs

Consultants (Murray Gadd)

Help school leaders to review literacy goals, to analyse achievement data. Base future decisions for classroom literacy practices on the evidence. Broker professional support. Evidence-based change process. Aims to improve students' achievement in literacy, teachers' knowledge of literacy, and teacher practice. Writing.

RT:Lits (Shona) work with teachers to ensure that classroom practice effectively supports students with literacy difficulties. Shona also worked with two groups of year six students in 2008.

RT:LBs (Delwyn) advice and guidance to teachers, risk of low achievement because of learning and behavioural difficulties.

Resources available /used in 2008

Mana Education Centre and TKI

English Online and asTTle – English exemplars

NZ Maths (data input, planning and reporting)

Resource Link

Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4

Helps teacher to refine their focus on each of the dimensions of effective literacy teaching practice and to move towards evidence-based decision making to meet individual students' needs.

The interactive CD-ROMs

'Kieren's DVD'

