



Arakura School Variance Report on Charter

1st January – 31st December 2009

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 aoaoina le fanau ise aoaoga faapitoa;
la faamalosia foi lo tatou pulupulu lima faatasi.

VARIANCE REPORT 2009

Commentary and Observations

This report signals a change in the style of our reporting. It is based on advice from Accent Learning Advisors Jan Baynes and Julie Roberts. As well as providing a written report of variance on the previous year's goals it is envisaged this report will meet the reporting requirements outlined in NAG 2A for future reports especially in 2011.

Achievement of Variance 2009 Student Achievement Target

Reading	
Year Level: Contributing school with Years 1 to 6	Strategic Goal: Achieving towards these goals would be reflected by more of our students meeting the following benchmarks (listed below in the annual targets)
Annual Objective:	Budget: \$1200 to support Literacy development. Budget to be spent on Professional Development, classroom resources, teacher release and assessment tools.
Historical Position: 2009 was the second year of the WELL Project (Wainuiomata Education Leadership and Learning), and involved the Leadership team taking part in Professional Development with Patrick Duignan. Prior to this, the Wainuiomata Cluster was involved in the WELD Project (Wanuiomata Education Literacy Development). In 2009 Arakura School employed four full-time teachers, who had not participated in the Professional Development Projects. In 2009 the targets for all levels except Years Five and Six were raised due to increased teacher expectations, and awareness that we would be involved in Teacher Professional Development. The Year Five cohort target remained the same at 80% of all students to be reading at or above their chronological age. The Year Six target was decreased due to a historical trend of students tapering off at this level (asTTle 3b). Target setting for 2010 is going to shift to identify a specific cohort group.	
Annual Target: 50% of Year 1 students to be reading at or above their chronological age 60% of Year 2 students to be reading at or above their chronological age 70% of Year 3 students to be reading at or above their chronological age 70% of Year 4 students to be reading at or above their chronological age 80% of Year 5 students to be reading at or above their chronological age 70% of Year 6 students to be reading at or above their chronological age	2009 Achievement Level against Target: Percentage at and above at the end of the year 34% of Year 1 56% of Year 2 76% of Year 3 79% of Year 4 67% of Year 5 60% of Year 6
Analysis and Recommendations	
Achieved Outcome (actual result): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 3 and 4 students met their set targets for 2009. All other year levels did not. • Shifted 63% to 71% of Pasifka students achieving at or above their chronological age. • Shifted 55% to 64% of Girls achieving at or above their chronological age. Shifted 44% to 60% of Boys achieving at or above their chronological age. • Biggest concern is the Year 1, 5 and 6 cohort, who missed their target by more than 10%. • No shift in Maori students across all year levels from 2008 to 2009. 	Recommendations (where to next?): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing monitoring and assessment of reading across the year with a particular focus on target students. Target students have been identified from 2009 end of year collation sheets. 2. Continued teacher professional development in using assessment tools, such as running records, STAR, asTTle and Listening PAT. 3. Junior Team will continue to monitor individual students by using anecdotal books, showing students learning behaviour and next steps. 4. Identified a target group of students reading 6 or more months below their chronological age. Teachers will be required to monitor these students using a tracking sheet. 5. Further Professional Development of Literacy from advisor. 6. New teachers attending professional development opportunities. 7. Building leadership capacity within the school (linked to Professional Development plan)

Achievement of Variance 2009 Student Achievement Target

Writing	
Year Level: Contributing school with Years 1 to 6	Strategic Goal: Achieving towards these goals would be reflected by more of our students meeting the following benchmarks (listed below in the annual targets)
Annual Objective:	Budget: \$1200 to support Literacy development. Budget to be spent on Professional Development, classroom resources, teacher release and assessment tools.
Historical Position: 2009 was the second year of the WELL Project (Wainuiomata Education Leadership and Learning), and involved the Leadership team taking part in Professional Development with Patrick Duignan. Prior to this, the Wainuiomata Cluster was involved in the WELD Project (Wanuiomata Education Literacy Development). In 2009 Arakura School employed four full-time teachers, who had not participated in the Professional Development Projects. The 2009 targets for writing were similar to those set for year levels in 2008. The levels where targets were not raised were areas where the target was already set high (i.e. 80%). Target setting for 2010 is going to shift to identify a specific cohort group.	
Annual Target: 50% of Year 1 students to be writing at or above their chronological age 60% of Year 2 students to be writing at or above their chronological age 70% of Year 3 students to be writing at or above their chronological age 70% of Year 4 students to be writing at or above their chronological age 80% of Year 5 students to be writing at or above their chronological age 80% of Year 6 students to be writing at or above their chronological age	2009 Achievement Level against Target: Percentage at and above at the end of the year 59% of Year 1 75% of Year 2 57% of Year 3 79% of Year 4 82% of Year 5 70% of Year 6
Analysis and Recommendations	
Achieved Outcome (actual result): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall results show a positive shift, with the exception of the Years 3 and 6 cohorts. • Shifted 49% to 66% of boys achieving at or above their chronological age. • Shifted 61% to 75% of girls achieving at or above their chronological age. • Shifted 42% to 74% of Maori students achieving at or above their chronological age. • Shifted 58% to 74% of Pasifika students achieving at or above their chronological age. • All students classified as "other" are achieving at or above chronological age. • Of concern is the Year 3 and Year 6 cohort, who missed their targets by more than 10%. 	Recommendations (where to next?): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing summative sample to be collected once a year as in 2009. This will be moderated as a staff, with support from Literacy Advisor. On-going formative assessment of writing samples to be collected by classroom teachers at least once a term. Teachers will use success criteria sheets created by Literacy Leader to inform assessment and next steps. 2. Target students have been identified from 2009 end of year collation sheets. Teachers will be required to monitor these students using a tracking sheet. 3. Continued teacher professional development in using assessment tools such as aTTle and New Zealand Exemplars 4. Teacher Professional Development to re-visit Joy Allcock Programme, especially in the Senior Team. 5. Further Professional Development of Literacy from advisor. 6. New teachers attending professional development opportunities. 7. Building leadership capacity within the school (linked to Professional Development plan)

Mathematics

Achievement of Variance 2009 Student Achievement Target

Numeracy	
<p>Year Level: Contributing school with Years 1 to 6</p>	<p>Strategic Goal: Achieving towards these goals would be reflected by more of our students meeting the following benchmarks (listed below in the annual targets)</p>
<p>Annual Objective:</p>	<p>Budget: \$3000 to support the Numeracy contract. Budget to be spent on Professional Development, setting up a new classroom, team equipment An extra \$2500 to be spent on teacher release</p>
<p>Historical Position: 2008 was the first year of Numeracy Professional Development. The targets were set low for 2008, hence all targets were met, in particular targets for Year 1 and 2 students. The Year 2 target for 2009 (50% of students to be at Stage 4 for addition and subtraction) was set low due to the shift in expectations for this cohort this year. Target setting for 2010 is going to shift to identify a specific cohort group.</p>	
<p>Annual Target:</p> <p>80% of Year 1 students to be at Stage 2, Stage 3, or Stage 4 50% of Year 2 students to be at Stage 4 80% of Year 3 students to be at Stage 4 or Stage 5 70% of Year 4 students to be at Stage 5 80% of Year 5 students to be at Stage 5 or Stage 6 80% of Year 6 students to be at Stage 6</p>	<p>2009 Achievement Level against Target: Percentage at and above at the end of the year</p> <p>97% of Year 1 58% of Year 2 72% of Year 3 70% of Year 4 85% of Year 5 72% of Year 6</p>
Analysis and Recommendations	
<p>Achieved Outcome (actual result): <i>Addition and Subtraction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant shifts in all year levels across the school. 76% of students are working at or above expected levels in addition and subtraction. • Shifted 21% to 3% to be at risk in addition and subtraction (39 students down to only 7 students). • 94% of Pasifika students at or above for addition and subtraction (31 out of 33 students). • Biggest concern is that 23 Maori students are cause for concern or at risk. This has been identified as the target group for 2010. <p><i>Other Domains</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified knowledge area of concern is basic facts. • Basic facts knowledge is not matching strategy stages achievement, particularly in Year 4. In Year 4 in proportions and ratios and multiplication and division, only 30% of students are achieving at or above expected levels, due to low basic facts quick recall. • This year all Year 2 students were assessed in all strategy domains. This saw a positive shift in achievement, particularly in proportions and ratios with 85% of students working at or above expected levels. 	<p>Recommendations (where to next?):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Ongoing monitoring and assessment of strategies across the year with a particular focus on target students. 9. Introduction of an assessment schedule drawing on a range of tools. 10. Basic facts professional development of explicit acts of teaching across all levels. 11. Ensuring staff make connections between strategy and knowledge. 12. Introductions of PAT's to Years 4-6. 2010 variance report will show progress and achievement in PAT. 13. Identified a target group of Maori students working below expected levels in addition and subtraction. 14. Further Professional Development of Numeracy from advisor. 15. New teachers attending professional development opportunities. 16. Building leadership capacity within the school (linked to Professional Development plan)

As one can see by reading from the achievement reports above comments on the gender and ethnicity breakdown are covered in the bulk of the reports.

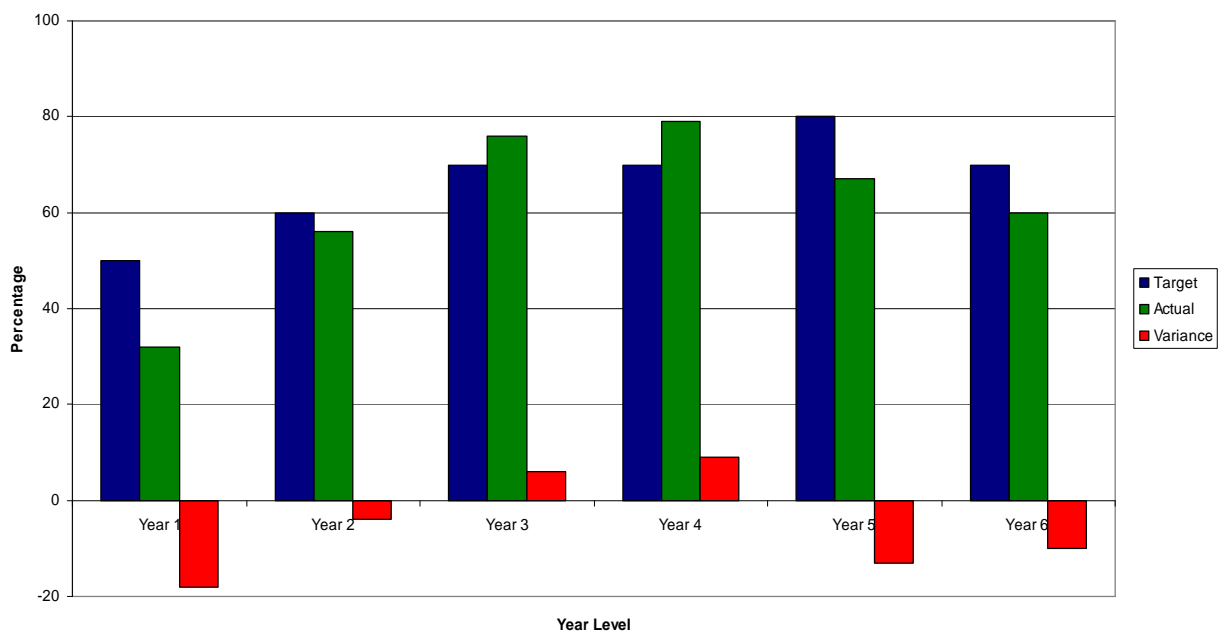
The same can be said for improvement targets for 2010. These will also be mentioned in the Charter 2010.

The graphs that follow present the achievement in a pictorial format.

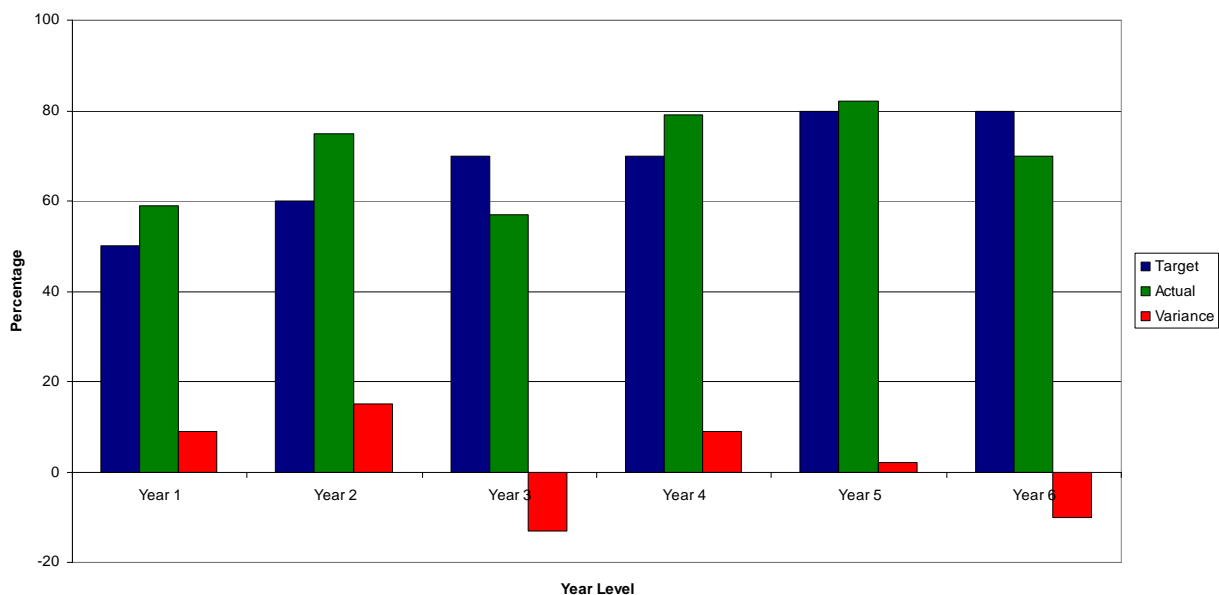
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Graphs

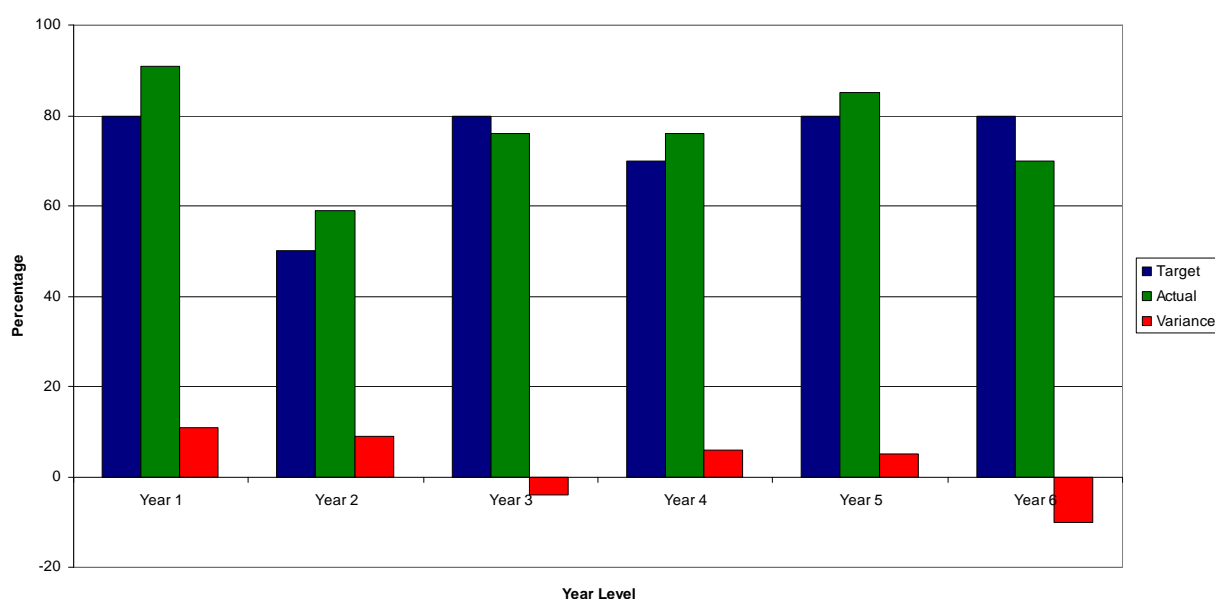
Arakura School 2009 Reading Results with Variance



Arakura School 2009 Writing Results with Variance



Arakura School Numeracy Results 2009 with Variance



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School Strengths and Identified Areas for Improvement

Strengths perceived or otherwise can also become areas for further improvement. This is especially true if a school's community loses staff and thereby experience. In an endeavour to encourage actively involved, confident, connected lifelong learners school goals will always include improving teaching techniques. Several teachers have gone on to promotions throughout the region and indeed country.

Basis for Identifying Areas for Improvement

Our school uses previous and the most recent ERO review along with its own informal review processes to gauge progress. Staff turnover has been an issue recently so our criteria has to be reviewed and repeated for the benefit of new teachers. Our own Data such as six year nets, which in turn follow on from five year school entry assessment test form a basis for identifying areas. Other standardised tests form assessment strategies we can base our decisions around. These include asTTle, STAR and PAT.

Planned Actions for Lifting Achievement

In our continual attempt to develop teaching, programme planning and assessment practices we have invited several agents to assist our school in raising student achievement. This includes for literacy Jan Baynes, from Accent Learning. Julie Roberts (also from Accent) is working with us on our numeracy project. Katy Adeane (Literacy Development Officer with Ministry of Education) and Neil Withington (Senior Adviser with Accent Learning) is working with me, the principal, on improving leadership performance. From a Board of Trustees perspective the school has a contract (financial support from Ministry of Education) with Elaine Hines (STA Trainer). Another recommendation from ERO involved Māori consultation. To this end the Board is considering a Whānua Advisory Group. Again this has Ministry support and uses George Konia (Pouherenga Matauranga), and Paea Dentice (Pouwhakataki) as initial facilitators.

How Students are Progressing and Achieving

As well as reporting under the above headings the next Variance Report in 2011 for 2010 will be required to report and comment on the *'numbers and proportions of students at, above, below or well below the standards, including by Māori, Pasifika and by gender (where this does not breach an individual's privacy' as per NAG 2A i* . This future report will *'include how students are progressing against the standards and how they are achieving'*, as per NAG 2A ii. If I had to predict what these future results may present to a reader I would offer the following:

- (a) Many five year old students from our catchment area (our school is zoned) will enter school with limited academic skills and abilities. Their school entry assessment tests will be at least one to two stanines below the expected 'normed' figures.
- (b) The six year net scores will also reflect a cohort significantly below the desired standard. These students would have improved but not to the desired level. That is 'green level'. If historical data is taken into account approximately 65% - 72% of students tested each year are below 'green.'
- (c) Other standardised 'accepted' nationally normed tests will reflect similar results. Students will exhibit progress but may still fall below, or well below the desired standard. STAR and asTTle pen and paper tests will give us similar results to what we are getting now. Another question to consider is why is there not a test for oral language. It is accepted that oral language comes before writing and reading so baseline data would be useful in this respect. Using the High School as an example it frequently takes their students another year to reach the desired NCEA 'standard'. By the end of Year 12, 87.4% of students have achieved Level One. By the end of Year 13, 92% had achieved Level Two
- (d) A question to consider is will the standards remain constant or will the bell curve move to the right. That is despite students improving there will always be a tail of underachievement. "Despite the rhetoric, some children will always fail" ~ Hattie, N.Z. Herald 07/02/2010
- (e) All data has a 3% error factor – at least. Much data is not triangulated or as I prefer to say they do not use multiple measures (use more than one test).
- (f) Some research suggests 70% - 80% attributed to the home "natural assets" 20% - 30% learning attributed solely to school.
- (g) We have developed exemplars of our students. These are a portrait of struggling (not failing) students. We have a few exceeding literacy progressions and six year net standards. 20% - 25% within the standard and at least 70% below.
- (h) Recent Māori consultation, as part of the proposed Whānau Advisory Group George Konia was present, mentioned that many Māori in our community would like to hear more positive reporting, more success stories not that Māori are the long tail of underachievement. These tests we are trialing on our students will give us results we probably expect in advance. The single minded tests are given under the assumption that they are testing what is important!
- (i) "Without hope, you're hopeless" ~ Fullan. Our community of learners need hope not to be consigned as 'failures' from an early age then the 'failure tag' repeated in future annual testing.
- (j) Schools must teach what comes through their gates but to quote Fullan once again "Educational reform is not a substitute for political or social reform." Our school, like all others must work alongside the community it reflects!
- (k) When one considers previous Variance Reports this school's reporting has never hid or deliberately misled. This school has always been transparent and informed parents and boards of its achievement and performance school improvement such as WELD then WELL including EHSAS to improve teaching and learning in Wainuiomata. The simple truth is that sometimes different people value different aspects of their child's development. Just as Hattie has said that some children will always fail so some parents and caregivers will not care about academic achievement, will not support the school, will not provide their children with the home support necessary to make that desirable necessary leap in achievement.

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Strategic Section

The strategic targets follow on from analysis of our achievement data. It includes an action plan and space for future recommendations. The main goals and targets will be transferred to following year's Charter.

Strategic Section for Literacy

Reading and Writing.			
Year Level: Contributing school with Years 1 to 6	Strategic Goal: To have all students working at or above their chronological age in reading.	Budget: \$1200	
Target: To accelerate the Literacy achievement of students identified as cause for concern in Reading and Writing.	Target Outcome: All students to be working at expected Reading and Writing levels.	Target Group: All Year Levels.	
Historical Position: The school has completed five years of Professional Development and will have further, more in-depth support in 2010. Reading There have been shifts across the school in 2009. 62% of students are working at or above their chronological age in Reading. STAR, asTTle and Listening PAT have been used for the past two years for Years 4-6. Year 1-3 teachers have been involved in Professional Development in using running records in 2009. In 2010 there will be ongoing assessment and monitoring through the use of anecdotal books and wedge graphs. Writing There have been significant shifts across the school in writing in 2009. 71% of students are working at or above their chronological age in Writing. asTTle and New Zealand Exemplars have been used to mark a summative writing sample again in 2009. As in 2008, this sample was only collected once per year, as the moderating process was proving to be too time consuming, and not always useful to day-to-day classroom practise. In 2010 Arakura School will be planning to teach "multi-genres", where individual classroom teachers can select a writing genre appropriate to their classroom activities. This fits in with the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum.		Baseline Data: Reading Analysis on 2009 results highlights some year levels that appear to be struggling. Close monitoring of these levels is crucial, and will be completed through the use of target students. 62% of all students are reading at or above chronological age in reading. 71% of all Pasifika students are achieving at or above their chronological age in reading, and 55% of Maori students are achieving at or above their chronological age in reading. Writing In general the 2009 results for writing were pleasing, highlighting areas of significant improvement. 71% of students are working at or above their chronological age in writing. 74% of all Pasifika students are achieving at or above their chronological age in writing, and 74% of Maori students are achieving at or above their chronological age in writing.	
Action Plan			
What will the School do to meet the target? 1. Analyse results transferred from 2009 and identify target students. 2. Introduction of a target monitoring sheet that will	When will it be done by? 1. Term 1, Teacher Only Day 2. In Term 1 ongoing throughout the year.	Who is involved/responsible? 1. Literacy Leader and Classroom Teacher 2. Classroom Teacher	What resources will be used to meet the target? 1. 2009 collation sheets. 2. Analysis of Assessments, Literacy Advisor, Literacy

determine teaching and learning next steps. These will be recorded in Teacher's anecdotal books.			Leader.
3. Teaching programme will reflect the needs of these students.	3. Terms 1-4 2010.	3. Classroom Teacher	3. Literacy Advisor, Professional Development, Literacy Budget, Teacher release, Classroom visits.
4. School wide assessments to be carried out each term.	4. Completed as per assessment schedule.	4. Classroom Teacher	4. Running Records, STAR, aSTtle, Listening PAT, Wedge Graphs, HFW testing, alphabet testing.
5. Literacy Leader will monitor and analyse individual student progress.	5. Completed in Terms 2 and 4	5. Literacy Leader and Classroom Teacher	5. Literacy analysis of testing.
Achieved Outcome (actual result):		Recommendations (where to next?):	

As for literacy the main goals and targets for numeracy will be transferred to following year's Charter. Likewise the strategic targets for numeracy follow on from analysis of our achievement data. It includes a similar action plan and space for future recommendations to literacy.

Strategic Section for Numeracy

Numeracy		
Year Level: Contributing school with Years 1 to 6	Strategic Goal: To have all students working at or above Numeracy expectations.	Budget: \$1000
Target: To accelerate the Numeracy achievement of Maori students identified at cause for concern and at risk in addition and subtraction.	Target Outcome: All students to be working at expected Numeracy levels.	Target Group: Years 3 – 6
Historical Position: There have been significant shifts in all year levels across the school in 2009. 76% of students are working at or above expected levels in addition and subtraction. The school has completed two years of Professional Development and will have further, more in-depth support in 2010. Full NumPA has been completed for the last two years. In 2010 there will be ongoing assessment and monitoring through the use of Gloss. There has been no collection of strand achievement in previous years. In 2010 PAT assessment in Years 4-6 will begin this process.		Baseline Data: Baseline data from 2009 (addition and subtraction) 71% of Maori students achieving at or above. Years 3 - 6 2010 has identified from 2009 data that 20 out of 40 Maori students are below expectations with the biggest cohort being in Year 2 (9 students). There is a similar ratio in proportions and ratios but for multiplication and division there are 35 Maori students working below expectations.

Action Plan

What will the School do to meet the target?	When will it be done by?	Who is involved/responsible?	What resources will be used to meet the target?
<p>1. Analyse results transferred from 2009 and identify target students.</p> <p>2. Introduction of a target monitoring sheet that will determine teaching and learning next steps.</p> <p>3. Teaching programme will reflect the needs of these students.</p> <p>4. School wide assessments to be carried out each term.</p> <p>5. Numeracy Leader will monitor and analyse individual student progress.</p>	<p>1. Term 1, Teacher Only Day</p> <p>2. In Term 1 ongoing throughout the year.</p> <p>3. Terms 1-4 2010.</p> <p>4. Completed at the end of each term by using Gloss and IKan.</p> <p>5. Completed at the end of each term.</p>	<p>1. Numeracy Leader and Classroom Teacher</p> <p>2. Classroom Teacher</p> <p>3. Classroom Teacher</p> <p>4. Classroom Teacher</p> <p>5. Numeracy Leader and Classroom Teacher</p>	<p>1. NumPA data from 2009.</p> <p>2. Numeracy Analysis of Testing Sheets, Numeracy Advisor, Numeracy Leader.</p> <p>3. Numeracy Advisor, Professional Development, Numeracy Budget, Teacher release, Classroom visits.</p> <p>4. Gloss, IKan, Basic Facts Assessment, NumPA</p> <p>5. Numeracy analysis of testing.</p>
Achieved Outcome (actual result):		Recommendations (where to next?):	

Tracking sheets for Literacy and Numeracy are as follows:

Literacy Target Tracking Sheet 2010					
Teacher:			Room:		
Target for 2010					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To accelerate the Literacy achievement of students identified as cause for concern in Reading and Writing. 					
Identified Students					
Year Level	Name:	Initial Evidence	Plan of Action	End of Term Evidence	Identified Next Steps

Numeracy:

Numeracy Target Tracking Sheet 2010					
Teacher:			Room:		
Target for 2010					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To accelerate the Numeracy achievement of Maori students identified at cause for concern and at risk in addition and subtraction. 					
Identified Students					
Year Level	Name:	Initial Evidence	Plan of Action	End of Term Evidence	Identified Next Steps

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Acknowledgement

For the fifth year in succession I would like to recognise the hard work and assistance of our Literacy Leader and Numeracy Leader in preparing this report. Many many hours were spent on this report.

Cathryn Lea, Assistant Principal, Acting Deputy Principal who took over as the literacy leader in 2008 has 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 2010 and beyond. Assisting us in this analysis and providing ideas for changing our reporting format has been Jan Baynes.

Natalie Schrijer, Acting Assistant Principal and Numeracy Project Leader, liaised firstly with Leyton Walker and more recently Julie Roberts from Accent Learning (ex 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 in the past few years. In 2009 this imbalance was

addressed somewhat. When I consider the results of the professional development on student outcomes and teacher knowledge it is a huge credit to Natalie and Julie.

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 six years and prepared to contribute to discussions, processes and policy making. New staff members can include experiences from previous schools. This can be limited if they are a year one or two teacher with other more pressing issues to deal with.

Cathryn, Natalie (with the input from Julie and Jan) and I took several days collating the results and ensuring they were accurate. For this report having 'five heads' to interpret the findings was invaluable. The report highlights many 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

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Principal's Report

In 2009 we 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. In 2009 this balancing act continued. That is maintaining gains made in literacy with those in numeracy and extending them across 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. In 2009 we replaced Jason with Natalie and aimed at consistency across the team and maintaining higher expectations of teachers. To this end Arakura teachers have since 2005 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

Naturally in line with the WELD project to date future WELL projects, school improvement projects that replace EHSAS, 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 experience 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. Unfortunately our three year plan from 2009 - 2011 needed to be abandoned once EHSAS funding was withdrawn. 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 twelve 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. I remain to be convinced whether the present approach to introducing regimented standards and methods of reporting will add value to what we have been doing since 2004. The 'new' New Zealand Curriculum has the potential to be an effective tool. Too much assessment and data gathering can lead to over measurement. "Weighing the pig does not make it grow."

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

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

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.

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! The government's acknowledgement in the 1:15 ratio should help address this issue.

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. Medical issues have become more prominent in our community. Ear infections and not wearing spectacles impact on student achievement as does truancy.

This is our seventh 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 2009 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 used to**

² Wainuiomata Education Leading and Learning

consider as one of the criteria the previous year's cohort coming through.

This was an ongoing process of refinement and will be replaced with standards based targets in 2010. 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 2009 of the classroom full time teachers, four had less than three years experience, and only two between five and ten years teaching! Teacher working at different levels to their past experience is also a factor.

- (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 hall 'supper room' as opposed to the library, and with drawl room next to Room Six as in the past.
- (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 aTTle 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. Moderation takes a lot of time and energy if it is to be done with validity.
- (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 2009 targets were set with existing students in mind. With it being the sixth 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 2009 were therefore set using the data from the previous year and roll change makes a considerable difference to this.

VARIANCE REPORT 2009

Where action research fits in

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 2009 and will continue to do so in the years ahead. In 2009 at Arakura the staff reviewed data comparing our students with national averages (asTTle, STAR, six year nets) of students from similar demographics to us. We also collected data about the students perceptions (that is their enjoyment of writing and reading)

- asTTle (schools with similar student populations) was used to identify what was working well and where we needed to improve.
- We reviewed our curriculum planning process. The goal will be to refine an achievement statement that will contain all the legal requirements and our approach to teaching and learning.
- The National Standards will 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.
- Staff use a reflective journal and share successes, and failures, during staff meetings. The goal is to share what works to raise achievement with hard to teach students.
- Teachers continued working with selected 'target groups.' Jan and Julie assisted here. This was a return to a more formal monitoring situation as in the past.
- Leyton, Julie, Shona, Jan, Carina, Jason, Cathryn and Natalie have provided an even better support system this year. This included a series of staff development sessions, classroom observations, strategic planning and modeling opportunities.

VARIANCE REPORT 2009

Strategies, Professional Development and Resources

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 2009. 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 / Jan)
- Numeracy action plan (Natalie / Julie)
- 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 and numeracy and leadership facilitators.
- In-class modeling of classroom practice.

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 (Jan and Shona) supporting classroom teachers
 Numeracy advisers (Leyton and Julie)
 Literacy Leadership 2000-2004
 RT:Lits Shona Smellie
 RT:LBs
 Consultants (Murray Gadd)
 Leadership (Katy, Literacy Development Officer) Help school leaders, especially the principal 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 and numeracy, teachers' knowledge of literacy and numeracy, and general teacher practice.
 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 2009.
 RT:LBs (Lianne) advice and guidance to teachers, risk of low achievement because of learning and behavioural difficulties.

Resources available /used in 2009

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'



**Mark Kibblewhite
Principal**

Monday 1st March