

Western Heights High School teacher Merania Pakinga works with students Georgia Halbert and Stacey Lansdown. Māori students made gains during the Te Kotahitanga project.



There are many ways teachers are supported to do their best for Māori students. **WAYNE ERB** reports

**I**mproving the performance of the education system to ensure Māori are enjoying educational success as Māori is the aim of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*.

The Ministry of Education's strategy for Māori education underpins many projects involving teachers in early childhood education and schools. Here, and in the following pages, the *Education Gazette* looks at some initiatives.

### Early childhood education

The first focus area of *Ka Hikitia* is the foundation years, both in early childhood and the first years at school. Success at this age is a prerequisite for further achievement. In line with that, the Ministry has published *Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars*.

This assessment resource supports the learning of Māori children and is written from a Māori perspective, something that teachers appreciate.

"It is a culturally-based, culturally active, culturally appropriate tool for our

tamariki – something we've been wanting for years," says Manu Pohatu, head kaiako at Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka.

### Secondary schools

Young people engaged in learning is the second focus area of *Ka Hikitia*, which states: "It is critical for schools to listen to and support students in the classroom."

This year, 17 new secondary schools have joined Te Kotahitanga. This research-based programme helps schools develop teaching that improves educational achievement for and with Māori.

The new schools are in Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay and Gisborne. Each will be supported for up to six years to establish, embed and maintain programme benefits through professional practice, school culture, systems and processes.

Nearly 7000 Māori students and 900 teachers are now participating in Te Kotahitanga in 49 schools.

Teachers at Lytton High School in Gisborne began involvement at a three-day hui to learn what the project means for their daily work.

Acting principal Wiremu Elliott says developing culturally responsive pedagogy is a big matter and teachers had many questions. The hui provided answers and there is a very good feeling among staff. The school's roll is 70

per cent Māori.

Wiremu says principal Jim Corder, currently on sabbatical, wrote a whakatauki (proverb) to inspire staff in the project: "Kei ngaro i te turituri o te wa, kia mau ki te aka matua."

This reminds teachers to not get lost in all the peripheral noise around them, says Wiremu.

"We need to stay focused on what is well-anchored,

# Stepping up

## RELATED FACTS

In 2009, 45.8 per cent of Māori students stayed at school until at least 17½ years, an increase on previous years. For non-Māori students the figure is 72.2 per cent.

- » Last year, 53.4 per cent of Māori students gained NCEA level 3, up from 49.9 per cent in 2002.
- » Since 1992 the number of kura kaupapa Māori, designated character schools and kura teina went from 13 to 88.
- » Māori-medium school students are more likely to gain higher NCEA qualifications and university entrance than Māori students at English-medium schools. The percentage meeting the literacy and numeracy requirements for NCEA level 1 is also higher (84.4 against 68.4).
- » In 2009, 91.4 per cent of Māori new entrants had participated in early childhood education. This is up from 90.4 per cent in 2008.
- » Last year, just under a quarter of Māori ECE enrolments were in kōhanga reo. Enrolments in kōhanga reo rose to 8829 in 2009.
- » The proportion of Māori early childhood education teachers who are registered has more than doubled since 2004.

More information will appear in the upcoming *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga – Annual Report on Māori Education*. The report series is online: [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/5851](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/5851)

**Nearly 7000 Māori students and 900 teachers are now participating in Te Kotahitanga in 49 schools.**

which is Te Kotahitanga, and what sits behind that which is effective pedagogy and raising achievement for Māori students."

### Māori language education

Māori language education, including kaupapa Māori schooling is the third focus area of *Ka Hikitia*. "Through te reo Māori, Māori learners can affirm their identities and access te ao Māori and Māori world views," states the strategy.

Kura are working with communities to create marautanga-a-kura, school curricula that will further affirm Māori values and identity. They are guided by *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* which comes into effect in 2011.

Supporting kura are in-school teacher educators and regional coordinators

contracted by the Ministry of Education.

Team leader Daphne Papuni says coordinators work with teacher educators on a needs basis and directly with schools in a few cases.

Most kura are developing a graduate profile and then considering its implications for teaching. Some others have chosen the wāhanga ako – learning areas – as a starting point, says Daphne.

"The graduate profile is your overall vision – it's the end product. This is what students are going to look like, what they will know by the end of their time in school."

Going through these stages of marautanga development are therefore important, she says. It is a chance for whānau, wider community and the school to agree on what is important for tamariki. ■



## STORIES RELATING TO MĀORI EDUCATION IN NZC ONLINE

### Being culturally responsive

Professor Russell Bishop talks about how classroom relationships based on care and learning, paramount to the educational performance of Māori students, can be developed. Russell is director of Te Kotahitanga and professor of Māori Education at Waikato University.

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/NZC-resource-bank/Ka-Hikitia/Digital-stories>

### Kelston Girls' leading out west

Principal Linda Fox is working with principals from primary, intermediate and secondary schools in West Auckland. Māori and Pasifika students make up the biggest groups in these schools, so raising their achievement is a strong focus.

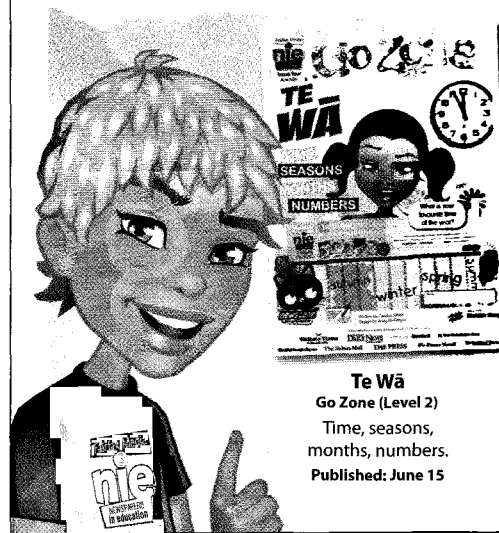
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**"Through te reo Māori, Māori learners can affirm their identities and access te ao Māori and Māori world views".**

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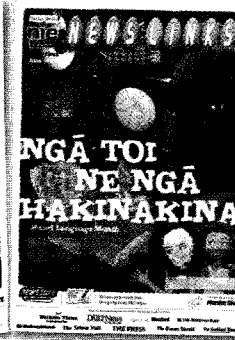
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# Great *gains* made

Staff at a secondary school reflect on the gains made during involvement in Te Kotahitanga, an initiative to lift Māori student achievement. **WAYNE ERB** reports

**"I** don't want to be a nobody, I want to be a somebody," said Heremaia Nikora in 2005 as a Year 9 student at Western Heights High School.

His words stuck both in the minds of teachers at Western Heights High School and the research team, says teacher Maria Tibble.

"It summed up our aspirations for Māori students and became the standard to achieve for everybody who was a part of the project."

Western Heights' Te Kotahitanga project funding ends this year, but the school expects to sustain the gains made for years to come. The project aims to improve the achievement of Māori students in mainstream secondary schools. At Western Heights six years of intensive professional development has led to more students gaining qualifications.

The Ministry of Education project is based on research led by Professor Russell Bishop at the University of Waikato on Year 9 and 10 Māori students' experiences. Findings led to a profile of effective teachers who are committed to creating culturally appropriate and responsive contexts for learning.

Principal Violet Pelham-Waerea says the school was always focused on improving the achievement of Māori students, who are 52 per cent of the now 1500-strong roll. Te Kotahitanga was the catalyst necessary to change pedagogy.

The aim is teachers who can bring about change in Māori student

achievement and are committed to doing so. Listening to Maria, Western Heights' lead facilitator, it sounds as if the school is hitting that mark.

"We've got dedicated teachers focused on what they can do to improve learning for our students," she says.

"We have less deficit thinking about Māori students and the homes they come from. That is reflected not only in the teachers, but all the staff, the board of trustees and the community.

"One of the biggest changes that has happened is a lot of discussion about individual students takes place across subject areas," says Maria.

Teachers willingly respond to questions from peers, parents and students and are used to colleagues popping in to observe them. They keep a close watch on students' progress, and work in teams across departments, supported by deans, student support centre, senior managers and other staff to achieve student targets.

How they teach has changed. For example, teachers have strategies to engage students, says Maria.

"The focus is more on students being engaged with each other and interacting positively with the teacher rather than the teacher at the front talking the whole time."

Teachers provide instruction that acts as a scaffold to learning, invites student input and is reflective of their culture.

"It's being clear about what

is being taught, the purpose for learning and how it relates to their lives."

The results are dramatic. In 2004 just 34 per cent of the school's Māori students gained level 1 NCEA. Last year, 66 per cent did. For level 2, the percentage also went from 34 to 66 and level 3 pass rates for Māori climbed from 29 to 53 per cent.

Violet says more work remains to be done.

"While this is good, there are still students who are not achieving and that's where my focus and that of staff is – what is happening to these students who are not achieving? Why, why, why?"

They will likely find further answers as the school plans to continue evidence-based decision making.

Maria credits the skill, knowledge and support of the research team as an important component of the change. Training consistently challenged facilitators to be focused on their goal. Student voices became an important anchor for them.

"The narratives helped us analyse what Māori students were really saying, and it was great to see it was the student voices acted on and not only what teachers thought."

Also of benefit was a facilitation that remained together and this included Wiremu Shuker, now a deputy principal, as well as support from Merle Ramsay, School Support Services.

Violet says she sees teachers



Working together at Western Heights are teacher Tukura Tahi and students Atamira Grant, Te Hira Haimona, Sean Vercoe and Miriarangi Kapa.

working on the issues outside of the formal project.

"They are carrying on conversations over cups of tea. It's become part of the norm but it is something we've got to keep working on."

Marie says the research team and the Education Review Office have good opinions of the changes.

"When you get that feedback, you take 30 seconds to think 'oh, we are doing well'. Then the next 30 seconds is 'I know we can do better'."

And Heremaia, the student interviewed early in the project, is now studying at Waikato University. ■

## KEY POINTS

- » NCEA pass rates have almost doubled for Māori students at this school.
- » Teachers have a positive focus on how they can make a difference.
- » Teachers always come back to the experiences of students as a basis for inquiry into their practice.

# Know the child

Māori children in early childhood education are the focus of the sector's work on assessment

**A** well-known tauparapara or tribal chant describes te kore, the void that gives forth to te ao mārama, the distinct world we inhabit, which is seen as a place of knowledge.

This tauparapara is the foundation of a new assessment resource for early childhood education firmly drawn from a Māori perspective.

*Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* is a Ministry of Education publication. It was written by members of the Māori education sector and looks set to become a popular resource.

The document contains exemplars of assessment from services with a high percentage of Māori children, and frames these within a kaupapa Māori perspective. It is designed to support quality programmes that strengthen learning outcomes for Māori children in ECE.

Awahi Whānau manager Thelma Chapman says her teaching team received PD on *Te Whatu Pōkeka* and she applauds the publication.

"It's a treasure they've given out and to do justice to it, it's not something you just breeze in and breeze out of. You've got to put the time and struggle in."

Her centre runs a bilingual programme and each teacher has a different level of proficiency in te reo and tikanga Māori. *Te Whatu Pōkeka* led to common understandings, and the potential to work closely with whānau in seeing how a child's whakapapa influences their dispositions.

"For me, it makes *Te Whāriki* come alive," says Thelma.

Rita Walker was a head writer along with Tony Walker, and she says teachers can use the document in different ways.

"For those just beginning their journey, *Te Whatu Pōkeka* clarifies concepts, words that educators hear on a regular basis."

For centres further along in immersing themselves in

te ao Māori, the publication outlines possible assessment practices that use a sociocultural perspective. Such assessment draws on the child's whakapapa, both in terms of social and cultural heritage.

Reasons for assessment include to understand children's learning better, to share and highlight that learning and to help teachers plan.

"The teacher's practice is really about understanding what you do as a result of knowing what the child brings with them. That's the part in the framework which states 'ways of doing', the strategies for learning," says Rita.

The document grounds practical considerations in Māori philosophy, using the tauparapara as a starting point. The chant includes notions of growth and development and the document goes on to describe an holistic view of a Māori child in terms of education.

Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka contributed exemplars to the publication. Head kaiako Manu Pohatu says assessment practices here respect the child.

"It's for us to see what these children want us to see, hear what these children want us to hear. Then we provide the support and resources to realise the potential of the child."

Teachers share assessments with the child and family and their professional learning has not boiled down to using ready-made templates, says Manu.

"It's the essence of what we write that makes it relevant for that child and their family."

The kohanga will shortly host parents for a symposium to explore what *Te Whatu Pōkeka* means for their tamariki.

The authors hope to stimulate debate and encourage people to share views and experiences of using the ideas in the book. In fact, teachers shared their ideas at a conference in March at the University of Waikato.

Collaboration began in the



ECE teachers examine *Te Whatu Pōkeka* during a conference on the new assessment model.

writing. Rita says teachers from kaupapa Māori and other centres, kaumatua and other Māori professionals all contributed to the ideas in the work. The writers analysed this information and drew on writings by prominent Māori authors to develop the document. Now it is over to tamariki, their whānau, and their teachers to bring the ideas to life. ■

## KEY POINTS

- » An assessment model for kaupapa Māori ECE services is available.
- » *Te Whatu Pōkeka* includes exemplars of student learning written by teachers.
- » It builds on Māori perspectives of child development and learning.

## Professional development

Ngā Hihi facilitators are contracted to provide PD on *Te Whatu Pōkeka*. There are two upcoming symposia: Christchurch on 12 June and Auckland on 19 June.

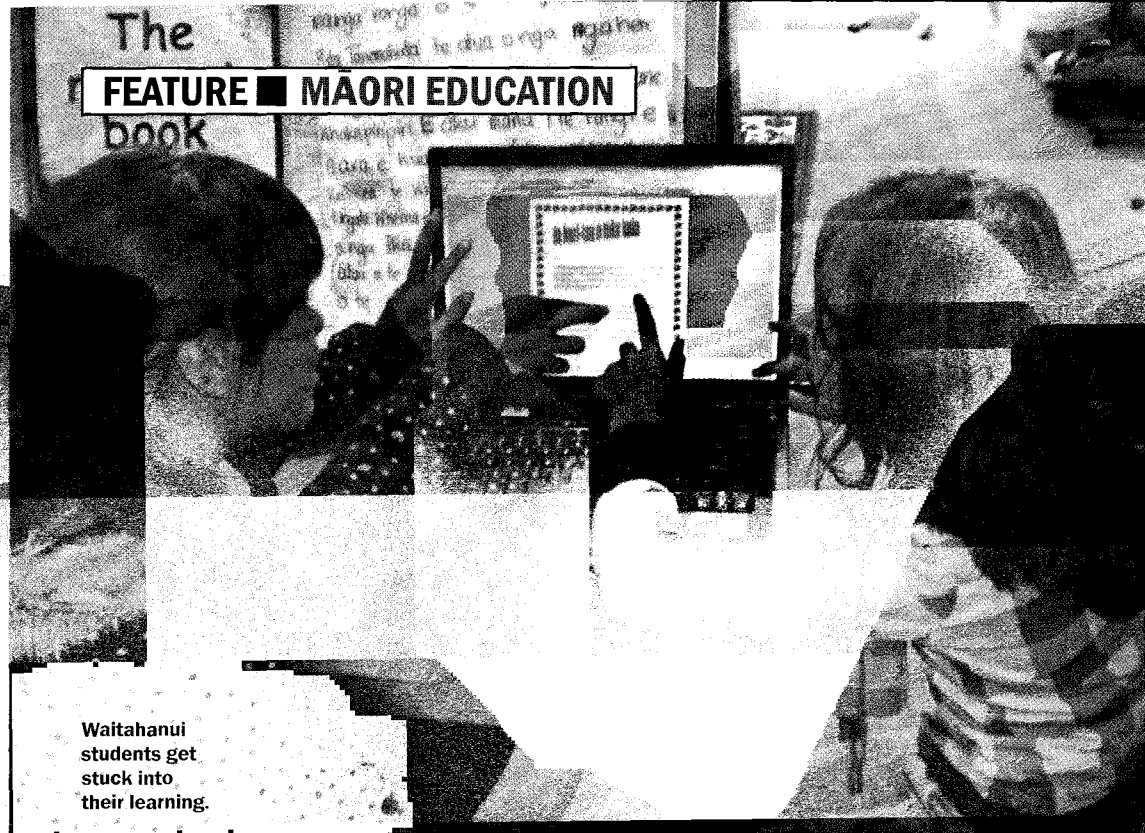
To find out about professional development, contact Nancy Wyrill. Ph 07 854 7284; email ngahihi@actrix.gen.nz

## The resource

A PDF version and instructions for ordering paper copies are online: [www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/Assessmentforlearning/TeWhatuPokeka.aspx](http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/Assessmentforlearning/TeWhatuPokeka.aspx)







Waitahanui students get stuck into their learning.

## Ministry of Education guidance

Boards of schools with levels 1 and 2 Māori-medium settings should be clear that programmes in these settings are based on *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, the students' progress and achievement must be assessed against *Niwhanaketanga Rumaki Māori*.

# Learning that reflects a people

A curriculum built on local Māori values is the result as a school creates its marautanga-a-kura. **WAYNE ERB** reports

**Y**oung students living on the shores of Lake Taupo take their learning down to regenerating native bush, to the lake or river's edge, all special places for local people.

The tamariki use scientific equipment to test the water quality and other times they return with their teacher and whānau to learn traditional fishing.

Learning doesn't just take place in the classroom at Te Kura Reo Rua o Waitahanui; instead it is firmly set within the wider world of its students' lives. Now a local curriculum – its marautanga-a-kura – reflects what is valued by whānau and school community.

The school roll is due to reach 24. Students learn in Māori immersion from Years 1-4 and transition to English in Years 5-6.

Tumuaki Mereana Taputu-Pearson says she worked for several years with the community to develop a curriculum that reflects their aspirations for their children while drawing on *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Aho Matua* (the guiding kaupapa for many kura).

"It's about taking what is the best from all of those documents and strengthening our own curriculum here," she says.

Mereana says the location of the school, the key commitments and tikanga of the hapū Ngāti Tūtemohuta are an important source for the curriculum. Trips to the river mouth are an example of the learning that results.

"That is about letting Tūtemohuta tell their stories, why and how they catch the inanga, why they do it a certain way and that it is only in a certain season."

Hui were held for whānau to explore what they wanted for their children. As a result, five key commitments (ngā mātapono) were created that underpin the marautanga-a-kura. The kura's ōhāki (vision) is 'Tū pakari ki tōku ao' (I stand strong and confident in my world) and was a culmination of the hui.

Students know the vision, key commitments and values and these form the basis for how they learn across the curriculum.

"It's our vision and we don't see it as separate from what we do in our daily mahi," says Mereana.

These commitments call for students to stand strong and confident in their learning, in their Māori language, in who they are and where they belong, in their connections to other people and in the global world.

Teaching and learning also builds on the kura's tikanga, which Mereana has mapped against *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

"When the key competencies came up they fitted beautifully into our tikanga," she says.

The little kura beside the lake, now open for 105 years, faced challenges in recent years just to stay open. It is now on a stronger footing, with improved governance and community involvement.

Mereana says that when she arrived five years ago she told whānau that the schools was theirs and not just hers. Relationships were built on that premise and responsibilities shared. The development of the marautanga-a-kura grew from this new beginning.

"I think this is just an outcome of all the relationships we have had with the community including kuia and kaumatua."

She also cites the assistance provided by advisers, other schools and teachers and providers of professional development.

"I believe in the law of attraction, and I truly believe that what you give out, you get back ten-fold. People have appeared in the right place at the right time to

make this happen."

Mereana says curriculum development included putting mātapono and tikanga into child-friendly language so the students can learn what is expected of them.

"The children can understand the particular values we talk about and the language and positive behaviours we use around that," she says.

She considered in some depth the implications for teaching and unit planning. Mereana and other teaching staff will find ways to empower students in their learning. Lessons cross traditional subject boundaries, taking an integrated approach to 'rich topics' ranging from the local environment and history to issues of global significance.

"I love the NZC and the Marau for the fact that you can be creative and you have the opportunity to integrate what is important to your local community," says Mereana.

For example, tamariki will bring their learnings from science and social science to learn about life between healthy water, healthy land and healthy people: ora ngā wai, ora ngā whenua, ora ngā tangata. ■

# Teachers lift up *Pasifika student*

Evidence from schools shows that effective teachers are making a difference for Pasifika students.  
**WAYNE ERB** reports

**J**immy Hewitt is a 12-year-old with enough charisma and clarity of thought to speak confidently to a large room full of teachers.

Yet, during his early years in school he was a different child. He didn't look forward to school at all, and struggled to catch up after long absences caused by asthma. He was a little Samoan boy who thought he was stupid.

Jimmy's transformation began in Year 7 and he knows just who helped him become the confident learner he is today; Karori West Normal School teachers Olivia Sisley and Vivienne Rathbone.

"They encouraged me to have a go and it was okay if I mucked up because I could have another go. They believed in me and trusted me. They knew I was struggling in school so they helped me set goals and pushed me to become a leader."

In Jimmy's own words, it was teachers who made the difference, and that is increasingly the case for Pasifika students across the education system.

Successful practices are growing in early childhood services, primary and secondary schools and backed up by system-wide initiatives under the Ministry of Education's *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012*. So what works?

As speakers repeatedly made clear at a conference organised by the Teachers' Refresher Course Committee there is no single answer for improving Pasifika outcomes.

Each school has used a mix of initiatives depending on their circumstances. Trends include leaders making considered use of resources, teachers using student to decide what is important to focus on, the development of respectful relationships between teachers and students and efforts to encourage parental support for learning. Looking nationally, we are getting results. Few students are passing NCEA in greater numbers, for example. In 2009, 52 per cent of Year 11 Pasifika students passed Level 1, up from 37 per cent five years earlier.

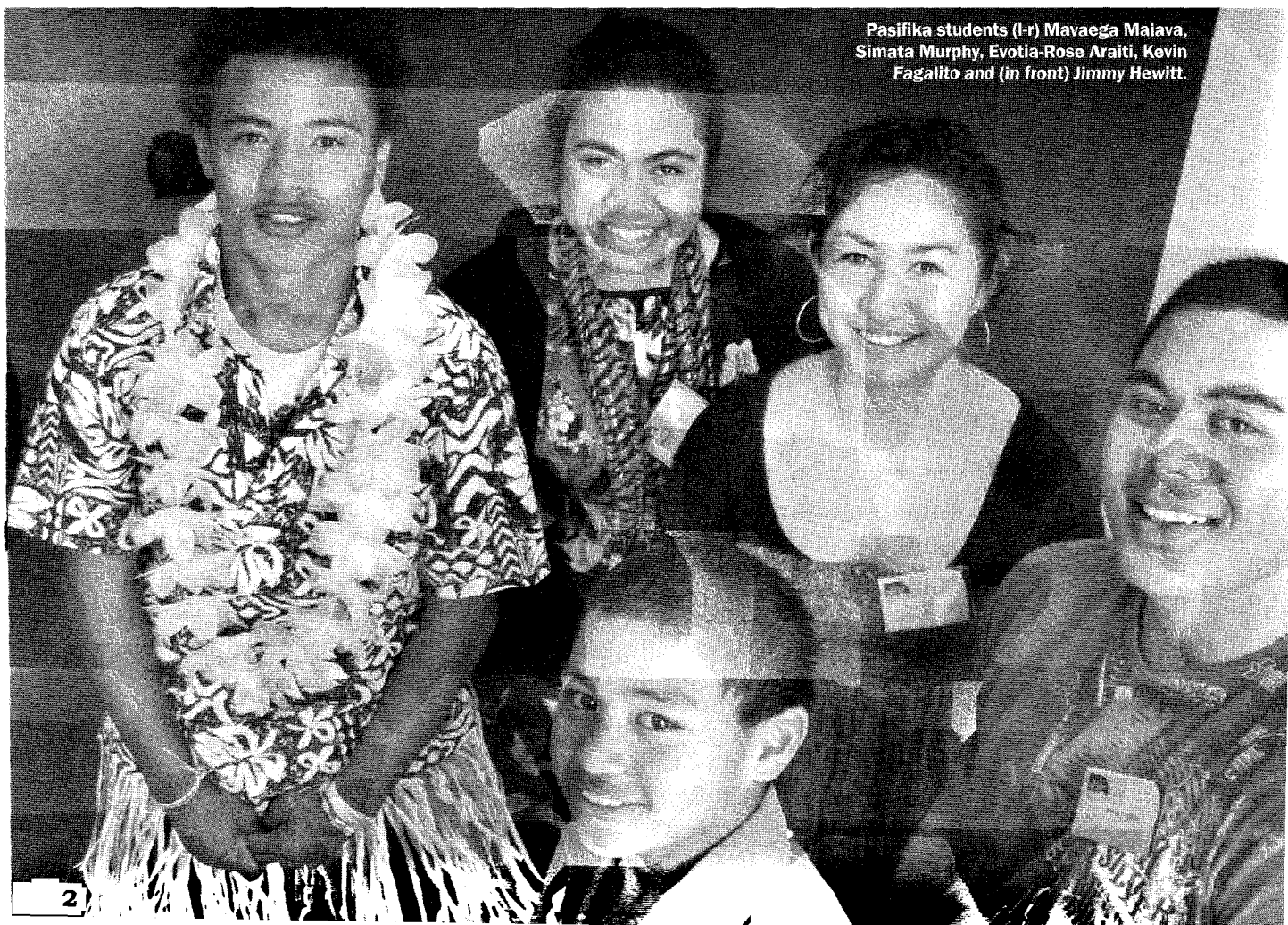
"The results have gone from not so good to good, the next step is from good to great," says Ministry senior official Fatulatetele Tolo.

If more schools take effective steps, that's a real proposition. The Education Review Office found that schools are doing the right things yet.

ERO gathered evidence in 2008 from 32 Auckland schools for a pilot evaluation of the progress of Pasifika students. Results from a larger national study are due this year.

ERO found literacy and numeracy achievement improved for students in Years 1-10 in about half of 2008 sample schools since their last review, but in a third of the schools had insufficient information to know way or the other.

The study did find examples of good practice in



Pasifika students (l-r) Mavaega Malava, Simata Murphy, Evotia-Rose Araitu, Kevin Fagalito and (in front) Jimmy Hewitt.



All the people quoted in this article spoke at Carrying the Tapa, a conference run by the Teachers' Refresher Course Committee. TRCC provides professional development courses for teachers by teachers. The committee itself is comprised of teachers nominated by teacher unions.

TRCC organises courses to meet specific needs of teachers from ECE to tertiary and also welcomes proposals for courses from the wider educational community.

» [www.trcc.org.nz](http://www.trcc.org.nz)

The TRCC conference heard from Pasifika students about their experiences of school and what they thought teachers did well.

Wellington Girls' College student Simata Murphy says the language barrier was a challenge when she moved from Tonga as a child, but one-on-one reading tuition built her confidence and her trust in teachers.

"As my schooling went on, I became more confident as a person. I wanted to participate in class discussions and I wanted to put my ideas forward."

She likes teachers who interact with the students and keep things interesting.

"Being more involved with the class would help rather than standing in front of the whiteboard all the time."

Take notice of where students sit, says Rongotai College graduate Kevin Fagalito.

"Is he in a noisy group of workers or is he near the window or the back of the classroom? Sitting the child near other good students might help."

St Bernard's College student Mavaega Maiava says understanding what is expected from teachers is important.

"If a student is new to New Zealand like I was and English wasn't their first language, then take extra time to explain slowly and clearly."

And he says ask individual students if they understand; they may be reluctant to ask for help.

Making learning relevant to the lives of students is a winning strategy, says Evotia-Rose Arait, now a student at Victoria University.

"For students of any ethnicity, getting them to relate their learning to something in their own reality can help them grasp the knowledge better and retain it."

And she emphasises the power of belief.

"Probably the most important thing for Pasifika students, and other students, is to instil in them a belief that they can succeed."

## WHAT TO DO

Access collections of relevant teaching resources through the Pasifika kete on TKI:

» [www.tki.org.nz/e/community/pasifika/](http://www.tki.org.nz/e/community/pasifika/)

Read the literature review on the experiences of Pasifika learners in the classroom.

This report explores available research of how teaching can impact on Pasifika students. It looks at dimensions including consciousness of cultural difference, interpersonal relationships, language pride and knowledge acquisition.

» [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika\\_education](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_education)

Model your practice on the 10 characteristics of quality teaching reported in the *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis*.

» [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/5959](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/5959)

Consider how your school can encourage, model and explore both the values of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and the Pasifika values listed in the *Pasifika Education Plan*.

» [www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/PasifikaEducationPlan.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/PasifikaEducationPlan.aspx)

schools. Teachers were responding to data and changing what they do, for instance giving better feedback to students. They were backed up by good leadership, and by boards that were well-informed about educational issues affecting Pasifika students. Over half of the schools had at least one Pasifika staff member.

ERO found that the quality of teaching was the most significant factor in raising Pasifika student achievement. In other words, it is what every teacher in a school does in the classroom that counts.

Ministry senior advisor Nila Lemisio-Poasa says the *Pasifika Education Plan* is the government's strategy to improve the education system's performance. The plan has goals, targets and actions from early childhood through to tertiary.

A compass diagram describes Pasifika values, identity and educational levers of change. "The Pasifika compass for success indicates the need for us to consider the multiple worlds Pasifika students live in, if we are to be effective." ■

# Closer connections

Building stronger relationships with students and with their families are both important tasks for schools

Secondary principal Iva Ropati led One Tree Hill College through a time in which the Education Review Office notes "the achievement of Pacific students has improved significantly".

He did sabbatical study on effective education for Pasifika. Now principal at Howick College, he says his findings include that teachers of any ethnicity can support Pasifika students.

"It came back to this – the best teachers of Pasifika children are the best teachers. It's empathy and not just ethnicity that is important."

Knowing your students and their lives can lead to a better connection. Watch them outside the classroom, such as during sport. Help them negotiate the different 'worlds' they live in, he says.

"If they see you as a classroom teacher and nothing else then that is what you get."

Some students suffer violence, drug and alcohol problems but teachers should not over-compensate by

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"If you don't have Pasifika parents and families and communities working with you and the student, you only have half the student," says Ministry of Education senior adviser Fatulatetele Tolo.

Such is the importance of family, church and other commitments in the lives of young Pasifika.

"It's vitally important and its backed up by evidence that you need to have Pasifika families and communities on board with you."

Parents want to know how much their child knows and will work with teachers but barriers include language, work commitments or a view of teachers as authority figures, she says. Schools need to take the first step.

"It's a lot harder for the community to break in than for you to break out," says Fatu.

Lee Walker, principal at Linwood Intermediate School in Christchurch, says working with Pasifika families should not be rushed. He says a three-stage approach works well.

First, get parents coming into the school. This could be through cultural nights or other events.

Second, get parents and teachers talking to each other.

Third, have meaningful conversations about what achievement information says about how their children are doing and how they can be supported.

"Just because they have come into the school for the first time doesn't mean you can hit them with asTTle and STAR. It is better to wait till a relationship is developed."

He also found that meetings between principals and church ministers in Christchurch, set up by the Ministry of Education, help build shared understandings with the community.



**Howick College principal Iva Ropati.**



**Linwood Intermediate School principal Lee Walker.**

<< Continued from page 3  
expecting less from them.

"They are waiting for people like us to give them an excuse not to succeed. Don't make excuses or exceptions for them, but do understand them."

At One Tree Hill, a Pacific Pride programme gave extra support and kudos to top Pasifika students. With that came increased leadership as role models for younger peers.

All students work to individual plans outlining career and education goals and their progress towards achieving NCEA. Tutor teachers help them keep on track.

"If the kids matter, you'll talk to them about where they want to go in education," says Iva.

He says there is good guidance in the *Best Evidence Synthesis* report series, which takes out a lot of the guesswork for schools.

Iva, himself Samoan, recalls his own school years.

"I sat at the back of the classroom and I didn't say a word because I didn't want to be the centre of attention. I wasn't prepared to raise my hand and ask for help."

There are still students who are the same, he says. Teachers can make a difference. ■

## Postgraduate Education Evening

**POST GRADUATE WEEK**  
17-21 MAY

You are invited to attend a free presentation on postgraduate study and professional development options at The University of Auckland, Faculty of Education.

**Date:** Wednesday 19 May 2010, 5-7.30pm

**Address:** Epsom Campus, Gate 3 Epsom Ave, Epsom, Auckland

**Presentation:** 5-6pm, followed by information stands and refreshments

**Location:** J2 lecture theatre, J Block

### Join us and find out about:

- our programmes and how to choose what is best for you
- entry criteria
- pathway options from degrees through to doctorates
- academic and pastoral support
- scholarships and study awards
- online, evening and block courses
- course planning and techniques
- how to engage in research and the support available

This is also your opportunity to meet lecturers, programme leaders, consultants and current postgraduate and doctoral students.

Register your attendance online at [www.education.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz) by clicking on the Postgraduate Evening Link.

### For more information contact:

Kate Winn

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[k.winn@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:k.winn@auckland.ac.nz)

[www.education.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz)

**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
Te Kura Akoranga o Tamaki Makaurau  
Incorporating the Auckland College of Education



# The right way

A secondary school renews its supports for students and is rewarded with a rise in achievement

**T**here has been an important culture shift at Aorere College – not in the ethnicity of students, but in the values and behaviours that the school promotes.

From focused teacher talk and professional learning to enhanced pastoral care, there are many signs of a renewed culture of learning.

The result is encouraging. About half the 1550 students of this Auckland college are Pasifika, the rest are mostly Fiji Indian, Māori and Asian, and all groups are passing NCEA in higher numbers.

“The upward trend in Pacific student achievement is noteworthy,” recorded the Education Review Office in 2009, giving credit to effective leadership, committed teachers and heightened expectations of students and staff.

Deputy principal Lynne van Etten says work began in 2003 through the Ministry of Education’s Eliminating Violence programme.

The school roll, finances and neighbourhood crime all reached crisis point in the preceding two years. Monday mornings became a tally of the latest vandalism or break-ins.

“I came back one morning and even the staff dishwasher was gone with the dishes inside it,” says Lynne.

The programme resulted in a new school vision called the Aorere Way, along with a committee to drive projects that made the vision a reality.

“We take care of the whole culture of the school,” says Lynne, who leads the committee. “We are multicultural and everything we do is about Pasifika and Māori. We plan lots of initiatives around the students and staff.”

The Aorere Way includes a mnemonic describing a set of values: attitude, organisation, respect, expectation, routines, enjoyment.

Lynne says the school started with getting the basics right – a common refrain was attendance and attitude equals achievement. Students were shown a graph at assemblies to explain how attendance at least 80 per cent of the time is necessary to pass NCEA level 1.

A swathe of student support and mentoring programmes followed, while the college sharpened professional development.

Year 9 students sign an agreement outlining expectations and teachers ensure consistent routines are used across classrooms.

“Student of the month has been a fantastic initiative,” says Lynne. The winner only finds out at assembly, but the school invites their parents and keeps them backstage. The event

has proved a hit with Pasifika students.

“Our students love their parents being there and being part of it.”

Aorere puts the deans, careers advisor, nurse and counsellor together in a student service centre to make holistic pastoral care more feasible. Deans share cultural expertise as they work in one large room. Restorative practices are taking the place of traditional approaches to discipline.

An achievers group was started for top Pasifika students. They attend after-school homework sessions with teachers, their parents get advice on giving support and celebrations are held. The popular programme has spread to other ethnic groups. There’s a lot going on.

“Any new initiative has to dovetail into what you’re already doing. It’s not about starting over again,” says Lynne. So it is with the structured approach to PD.

Teachers learn how to make more use of student data, especially what it means for how they teach. They take part in four-week cycles in which teachers learn new techniques, use them with their students and then give feedback on what works well. Cycles have covered use of data, effective planning, cultural awareness, behaviour management and more.

There is more emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the school recognises teachers by issuing literacy certificates. A level 1 certificate means a teacher knows about relevant literacy strategies, level 2 is awarded when they can use these, and level 3 is given to teachers who have firmly embedded these strategies in their practice and use them at the right time.

Teachers can turn to the director of learning and teaching for support, and are sometimes directed there. Senior managers make flying visits to classrooms and they are seeing a new attitude among staff, says Lynne.

“We really do have a strong learning community. Teachers are now in the corridor talking about data, talking about achievement and that didn’t happen before.” ■



Aorere College  
deputy principal  
Lynne van Etten.



The Aorere College Year 13 Pasifika Achievers' Group meets with tertiary student mentors.

# Transformation

A concerted approach to improve teaching helps Pasifika students at a primary school

**C**aterpillars tell a great story about personal transformation and they've become a neat metaphor for learning in a school.

The large cardboard caterpillars on junior classroom walls at Mangere Bridge School are a record of student progress in reading. As each child improves, he or she moves their name tag towards the head. They love to tell principal Judy Hanna how they are doing.

"If I go into a classroom, someone will come up to me and say 'can I show you where I am on the caterpillar?' It's a really great way to get children hooked into tracking their achievement."

The teachers here are investigating how to improve the learning of Pasifika students identified as most in need of support. The emphasis is on reading and results are getting better, with further room to improve.

Professional development, use of assessment data, links with other schools and parental involvement are all factors in play. There are 390 students at Mangere Bridge and around 38 per cent are Pasifika.

Judy says the school generated baseline data using e-asTTle and the analysis showed that of all students, Pasifika boys were the cohort most in need of support. What has followed are cycles of improvement in each classroom, linked to the appraisal system through teacher inquiry projects.

"Each teacher had target students. They chose Pasifika children who were not achieving in reading or were not where they were expected to be," says Judy.

Teachers write a record of how they help each targeted student. This includes a goal for the child's learning, a description of strategies used and learning conversations held with the student, and results of assessment.

"It was really important that the teachers got it in their heads and hearts how to help these children better achieve. There were children who weren't moving who we knew we could move," says Judy.

Successful strategies include building stronger relationships as teachers talk about their own lives and find common ground with students. This forms points of connection and builds trust. Students are less in awe of their teacher and are more comfortable offering their ideas during guided reading.

The teachers also use formative assessment techniques developed during continuing involvement in an assessment for learning programme.

Staff meetings cover high expectations, use of data and literacy strategies, says Judy. An external facilitator provides literacy training too. The aim is to empower teachers with skills and knowledge.

"We gave the responsibility for things to happen to the people who are making things happen in the classroom," she says.

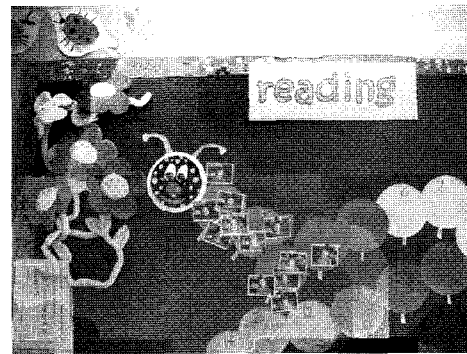
Her teachers also work with other schools (Royal Oak Intermediate, Onehunga Primary and Te Papapa Primary) as part of a Pasifika School Community Parent Liaison cluster. Ministry of Education funding pays for a community liaison officer. Networks are forming across the schools as a result.

"This has been most powerful, because now teachers from our school are visiting classrooms in the other schools. They are talking about what is working and having conversations on a professional level."

Assessment shows positive gains for many of the target students. From Term 1 to Term 4 last year, the number of students below where they should be in reading dropped from 38 to 22. Those at expected levels went from 12 to 17 and the number above expectation shot up from 10 to 26. It's a promising sign in a continuing journey. ■



Above: Mangere Bridge School principal Judy Hanna.



Top left: A Pasifika lunch held at the school to form better relationships with parents.

Left: The reading progress caterpillar used at Mangere Bridge School to hook students into their learning.

## Working with parents

Sometimes a corner of a classroom will be taken over by Pasifika parents and grandparents reading to students in their first language.

Recently Mangere Bridge School has expanded parental involvement by using the Reading Together programme developed by Jeanne Biddulph, which is available nationally.

The programme is effective and concise – in four one-hour sessions, parents and their children meet with a trained teacher who shows them good ways to support the child in reading. Previous evaluations show children have made long-term gains in reading.

"It works really well," says Judy.

A Pasifika lunch was held at the school to encourage parents to visit and let them talk with teachers.

"We talked to them individually and as a group about their children's achievement and how we need them on board to help."

She was pleased to see almost half of the 50 parents who came were fathers who had taken time out from work.

"I said to them you're saying to your children school is important."

And during parent-teacher interviews everyone plays their part. Teacher, students and parents all write down what they will do to support the child's learning.

## After more ideas?

Judy Hanna says a useful resource is the Ministry of Education's *Connections and Conversations: Making links for learning* DVD and handbook. This is full of ideas about how to work with Pasifika families to help their students learn better.

Quote item number 11061. [www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz); email [orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz](mailto:orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz); ph 0800 660 662.



Karaka School Years 3 and 4 'Big Day Out' at Goat Island marine reserve

# Tag-team

Two teachers share their approach to working in tandem, which they honed over the years.

**WAYNE ERB** reports

If you catch Judith West and Ann Montgomery poking their heads through their classroom windows it is likely they are sharing a bright idea about teaching.

"It's quite instant you know," says Judith, joking about the randomness of their communication style in an era of email and text-messages.

Talking between classrooms is only the half of it. The two primary teachers have developed a close working relationship over 12 years, having worked in the same teams all that time in two different schools.

Judith teaches Year 4 and Ann shares the Year 3 class with another colleague at Karaka School, in the countryside south of Auckland. They can together, share professional learning, team-teach the two classes at times and they reckon it all has a positive spin-off for students.

The story began not far away at Puni School where both were teaching in the late 1990s. Come 2000, their principal tasked them with developing a middle years syndicate, as part of a new structure for the school.

That meant plenty of planning together and the two women found they shared expectations for behaviour and student work. A common outlook has carried them through to the present day as the middle-years syndicate at Karaka.

Joining them there is Sue Corlett who shares the Year 3 class with Ann, while Ann takes on additional duties at the school. The work done together starts before each term.

"We always come in the holidays for at least a day to plan the term ahead," says Judith. They put together a term overview so both know which topics the other will teach in their class. They've learned to trust each other and share responsibility.

"We actually use each other's strengths. Ann has a real talent in visual art so she takes a lead in planning for that while I'll take a lead in planning music," says Judith.

"It shares the load. For some subjects you're the lead person and for some subjects you're the support person."

This approach helps the children too, she reckons, as each teacher uses their expertise to plan high quality lessons for both classes.

Ann says the shared approach leaves the pair feeling confident and this flows through to the students.

"I think the children feel relaxed and comfortable when the people leading them feel the same way."

The two teachers also make times to mix classes together for team teaching. They'll buddy up children from each class and form two groups, with Ann teaching dance and drama to one, and Judith music to the other.

As Ann explains, the mixed-age sessions help students relate to others and develop leadership skills. They put together children who think they will have a good effect on each other.

"It's great for the older ones because it gives them responsibility and for the younger ones, it often lifts their behaviour and their learning. Often, the children become teachers," she says.

"The Year 3s see that they will be looked on as the leaders next year so it gives them something to aspire to."

It's another way they've found to build on their strengths through cooperation, though a lot of shared understanding has been forged to make it succeed.

"For that to work, you do need teachers to share the same vision, the same standards and goals," says Judith. "I couldn't do it with someone who didn't share my views and have the same expectations."

However, while the two teachers discuss what they learn from professional development, they are not clones in the classroom.

"We both actually deal with behaviour in quite a different way but we expect the same things for the children," says Ann.

They've also worked together to create class traditions that give students something fun to anticipate. These include annual events such as a sleepover in the school hall – a first night away from home for many – and a Term 4 'Big Day Out' to places like the Waitomo Caves. These days out give children experiences that are educational, formative and fun.

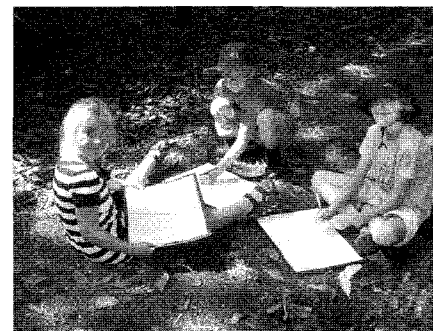
Ann and Judith's partnership began with new responsibilities at one school, continued at another and keeps growing. As Judith puts it, how they work together "continues to evolve". ■



Ann Montgomery and Judith West have worked closely together for years, bringing advantages to how they teach.



Ann's students enjoy 'bubble day' at the end of each summer to mark the closing of the school pool for the season.



Karaka School students visit Totara Park during a day that combined the living world strand of science (studying native forest) and visual arts. Here they sketch leaves and trees.

## Key points

Two teachers plan together for their Year 3 and 4 classes, drawing on each other's curriculum expertise.

They mix the classes together for teaching some learning areas, giving children time to develop key competencies such as relating to others and managing self.

## Who else?

Know of other teachers who have worked closely together for a long time? Email us their photo with a couple of sentences about who they are and what they do. We may publish the results in an upcoming issue. Email: reporter@edgazette.govt.nz



# No throw-away kids

Dr Avis Glaze is now advising our government after a leading role in successful education reform in Ontario, Canada. **WAYNE ERB** finds out what drives her

**A** child not reading after a year at school could well become a problem later. Still not reading after two or three years and you can predict a high likelihood of future difficulties, says Dr Avis Glaze.

"If children do not learn to read in primary school and we do not intervene early, the challenges multiply. Reading is the gateway to future success in school. Many children who are not achieving success often start dropping out psychologically before school-leaving age."

Talk with Avis, who led the Ontario provincial government's approach to lifting literacy and numeracy achievement, and you'll soon sense a determination to change such outcomes for the better.

"Education is the primary means of securing the prosperity of our nation and the life prospects of our children," she says. And as long as she can move, she'll help.

"When I was a little girl growing up in Jamaica, I felt I would choose education because educators can help change the world. As long as there are still children to educate, my mission is not accomplished."

As a young teacher, she moved from

Jamaica to Canada for postgraduate studies and stayed on to teach and work in many parts of the education system.

She was in charge of a school district when the Ontario government picked her to be the first Chief Student Achievement Officer and establish and lead the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat in 2004.

"The secretariat was created by Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education to work directly with schools and drive change in the system," says Avis.

She hired teachers and school leaders who were experts in literacy and numeracy. Consensus was built around the professional development, research, target-setting, school planning and assessment strategies that followed. There were focused interventions in low-performing schools, and many schools in challenging circumstances have made significant improvements.

Ontario students are doing better and the morale of teachers is higher than six years ago. Last year, Avis retired from the secretariat and now works with educators in several countries. Recently, she visited New Zealand and joined an independent advisory group to support

## Dr Avis Glaze

**Role:** Member of the independent advisory group for National Standards.

**Noted for:** Taking a leading role in lifting literacy and numeracy outcomes in Ontario, Canada.

**Has learnt:** "There is a place in our society for each and every one of our children."

# Highlights from the Ontario story

Dr Avis Glaze is the latest visitor from a Canadian province with a good track record on schooling improvement

implementation of the National Standards. Avis has repeatedly said there can be no "throw-away kids"; every child deserves to learn and society needs them to become contributing and productive citizens.

She tells the *Education Gazette* that every student, regardless of his or her background or special needs, has potential and can learn with time, support and effective teaching. In spite of the inherent challenges, schools have responsibility for the students who come through the door.

"Whatever that potential is, the school must find it and enhance it," she says. "They are not all going to be doctors and lawyers, or whatever occupations a society values, but they must all reach their potential. There is a place in our society for each and every one of our children."

She says there are also moral, economic and health concerns behind education reform. We either pay now or pay later. Societies that close the achievement gap fare better.

How would Avis respond to anyone who considered her stance overly idealistic?

"I would debate the issues with them. I would show them the evidence of schools around the world that have raised the achievement levels of children from diverse backgrounds. As well, if you are a parent, you don't want your child to be one of those throw-away kids. Education is here to serve children and their parents."

She does not absolve parents of responsibility to be involved in education but she does not blame them either. A trust of the strategy in Ontario was to increase meaningful parental involvement in education so their voice was heard in the improvement strategy.

She left her job in Ontario seeing many signs that the education sector has a clear focus on improving student achievement. Teachers have positive energy. There is a surge of confidence among educators in their abilities, and she thinks New Zealand is heading in a similar direction.

"New Zealand is focused on excellence with equity. These are not polar opposites; they are two sides of the same coin."

She feels excited about our potential if we pursue a robust education strategy that meets the needs of all students. She said much the same during a presentation at the Ministry of Education, speaking to policy makers but clearly referring to the important role of teachers and principals.

"You are building in your classrooms each day, the future New Zealand that we all envision. Improvement happens with your skill and goodwill. That is the power and privilege of being an educator today." ■

**H**ow Ontario improved literacy and numeracy has captured the interest of our policy makers. Beside Dr Avis Glaze, influential Ontario figures Michael Fullan and Ben Levin have both visited New Zealand in the past two years. So what's been going on there?

Dr Avis Glaze told her part of the Ontario story at the Ministry of Education's national office.

The province has over 2 million school students (compared with 760,000 here) so the system-wide improvements that Avis supported were large-scale.

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat backed a range of projects to increase the capacity of teachers to support learning.

Academics were hired to write monographs so "teachers could be steeped in research" on what works in the classroom. It also found schools in challenging circumstances that were doing well, and it shared their knowledge.

"In our strategy the intention was to adopt a humane approach that built upon our knowledge of what motivates and inspires people to do their best work. We were going to bring out their will and sharpen their skill," says Avis. By the same token, change where necessary was expected.

"We made it clear that failure was not an option and that we had to improve with a sense of urgency. My common refrain was 'the children cannot wait'."

The secretariat worked with school districts to set ambitious targets for student achievement, while avoiding blame or one-

size-fits-all approaches. It advised schools on writing improvement plans with a few priorities and goals and clearly defined strategies.

It ensured school budgets were aligned with school plans. It rejected league tables. Instead, her team developed a 'statistical neighbours tool' that let school leaders identify schools with similar characteristics that had improved. This was a powerful way to overcome unhelpful beliefs about poverty and achievement, says Avis.

"As a leader, I did not accept cynicism or unwillingness to focus on the strategies that we know work well."

When reviewing school data in the early days of the strategy, she found a few schools where a large percentage of students were not being assessed provincially, ostensibly because of special learning needs. She took it on herself to discuss the issue with principals and superintendents.

"I told them it's not about scores, it's about learning. They could not leave those kids out, they had to teach them."

The secretariat's student achievement officers help schools to set up effective professional learning communities, says Avis. Their role is to help build capacity rather than be an inspector.

"They are looking at inquiry - are they talking about student achievement, are they sharing successful practices? This is about whole school improvement."

The story isn't over in Ontario, but large improvements in the percentage of students at or above provincial standards have been made across all school types. ■

