



## **LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS**

**[01/03/2010]**

### **2010 CURRICULUM DELIVERY STATEMENT**

The School will be fully implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010. Throughout 2009 the staff were provided with significant professional development opportunities to interpret the intention of the new curriculum and to trial programmes. They are now well prepared to implement the changes needed to align their curriculum delivery strategy to the New Zealand Curriculum. Further they are well placed to work towards assisting the children reach and go further beyond a set of associated national standards required by the Ministry of Education. The changes are not about taking out the things that we already know to be successful, but more about injecting new thinking about the importance of key competencies and values for living. The school has reviewed and revised the programme delivery with this in mind and is implementing its own interpretation of what the school believes is needed. The implementation strategy centres on Elmwood's Curriculum Framework created by the staff during 2008/9. Direction encompasses a vision that young people will be confident, connected, the actively involved and life-long learners.

At Elmwood Normal School the curriculum delivery approach values the importance of designing programmes towards empowering children to learn and achieve personal excellence regardless of their individual starting points or circumstances. This "empowerment" requires teaching that assists the children to learn how to reflect on their own learning, how to determine how best they can learn and how to become future focused learners. Further, they will be encouraged to value excellence, inquiry and innovation, cultural diversity, fairness and social justice, a sense of community, their environment and the components of integrity. It is expected that this focus will help the children learn about their own values and respect the values of others in order to enrich our communities for the common good of all.

The curriculum content is set out as a series of learning objectives appropriate to a child's learning readiness throughout the school year levels. Teachers will shape their own classroom curriculum programmes (English, Maths & Statistics, Science, The Arts, Technology, Health & P.E., Social Sciences and learning additional languages) around the school's "Vision for the Elmwood Learner", and the school's guiding principles through an interrelated set of five key competencies (capabilities for living and life-long learning)

In preparing children for the future, our school will be helping them develop 'a can do attitude'. We want the children making good decisions for themselves whilst recognising that they are part of a wider, interdependent, social context. It includes being given manageable amounts of responsibility and choice. Those children who are able to manage themselves well, will display an ability to make plans, set goals, and estimate time needed for activities. They will have good strategies to overcome hurdles and know when a change of course is needed. They will understand the benefits of sharing strengths for the common good. They will develop good friendships and be comfortable relating to others. It is important that our children acquire the ability and the inclination to take a variety of roles within group situations - for example leadership, conflict resolution, and negotiation - and also demonstrate consideration for others.

Children who can manage themselves well and relate to others confidently usually find it easier to participate and contribute to a wider network of friends and community. They are more likely to become the ones who are actively involved in community life. Being actively involved in community life contributes hugely to the spirit and progressiveness of the community we live in.

For our children to reach and utilise their full potential and to become successful citizens they require a “think smart” outlook on life. That ‘extra edge’ we often talk about comes from an ability to be creative and from being a seeker of solutions, reflective and intellectually curious. This is about all kinds of thinking in all kinds of contexts. It includes creative, critical and logical thinking, and the ability to deliberate, as well as self-awareness, reflection and judgment.

Further, our school has a responsibility to equip the children to be competent users of language, symbols and text (systems for representing and communicating information, experiences within the core learning areas of English, Maths & Statistics, Science, The Arts, Technology, Health & P.E., Social Sciences and learning additional languages.

High priority will be given to extending standards in English, Maths, Statistics and Science. It must be noted that while the school identifies these priority areas, the programme provision for other curriculum learning areas will continue most often through a range of approaches including, rich concept unit studies, themes and semi specialisation programmes designed to offer extension. We expect our teachers will be the creators of their own classroom programmes, sharing knowledge and ideas with colleagues and providing regular “plain language” achievement feedback to children and their parents.

It is intended that we focus on those competencies that the children will need to be successful in their daily activities. Competency development interrelates with values, knowledge, attitudes and skills and this interrelation needs to be incorporated into the choices the teachers make in their curriculum design.

We strongly believe that character building needs to be part of the teaching focus. We all want our children to have the courage to do the right thing, exercise tolerance and be considerate to others. We want them to show caring and respect, honesty and fairness and to be responsible citizens to be proud of. All these life attributes are part of character building. It is a “full on learning experience” that influences both values and life skills. Engaging the children in conversation and actions about the school’s *Five C’s* (Caring, Consideration, Common sense, Courtesy, Co-operation) that we hold as core values, will assist in the formation of their individual character. Confidence building activity such as fronting up to an audience, competing in sports events, facing the challenges presented through outdoor education pursuits, being tested, auditioning and trialing for a place in a team, are just a few examples that develop and test one’s character. We strongly believe that character building is one of the most important aspects of children’s development as it establishes a strong foundation for successful living, and we will conscientiously nurture and integrate character building into all aspects of school life.

Children's Voice is a further curriculum focus at Elmwood. Taking the time to listen to the children is a valuable learning experience for all adults. Children need opportunities to express their views if they are going to acquire the communication skills they will need in the future. They need the confidence within themselves to articulate a point of view, challenge and debate issues and contribute to the topics of today and the future. This does not mean they have the right to disobey, be disrespectful or challenge the decisions that have to be made for them by their parents, teachers or coaches. Being allowed to voice an opinion comes with responsibilities that include being sensible and courteous and having an understanding that their voice may not be in tune with other viewpoints. In making the best decisions for the children we need to gather the best information from them. Consulting and drawing on their perceptions, knowledge and ideas is a common classroom activity either through whole class or small group tasks. Learning conversations with children bring the teacher closer to understanding the learning starting points, what the child really knows and needs to know.

Thinking outside the square is an essential learning process that children need to acquire in order to develop their ability to assimilate, organise, prioritise and research further the information they receive. At Elmwood we encourage our teachers to use a range of teaching tools and models to focus on those learning habits that will produce in the children a greater sense of learning accountability and of course the sustainability needed for higher level extension and challenge.

Processes that help children "understand their knowledge" and how best they can use this acquired skill to transfer learning gains into new and exciting opportunities ought to be a classroom priority. Teachers are encouraged to design and offer programmes that will trigger the children's minds to think smart, be creative, investigate options and make good decisions, engaging them in a range of challenge and problem solving activities.

It is important to us that we actively promote the development of strong learning habits that will maintain a focused desire in the children to take their learning further and beyond. These habits require an intelligent behavioural approach. Behaving intelligently requires a child to stick to the task and be given the time as well as have the perseverance to get the task completed. Task completion needs this time given to think, affirm the learning and present the task outcome. For children's engagement in learning, it is so important to allow them the time to problem pose, sift through their sources of information gathering, check their findings, and to present the summary of achievement. It's all about reinforcing the learning habits that trigger the child's desire to be an achiever. Being a focused learner, wanting to take the learning further, taking the risks needed to delve into new learning options, using their own natural senses to be creative and being persistent about their learning desires are some habits that need to be nurtured and sustained for continued and successful learning.

An important aspect of education is to develop the children's awareness of their role in contributing to their society. We want the children to understand that the social and economic world they live in is shaped by the actions of the people within and that their own positive contribution is necessary to sustain the kind of society we all want to enjoy. We want the children at Elmwood Normal to display a strong sense of 'community'.

The culture within the school reflects the core values for living that we hold to be important and it is through the social responsibilities being nurtured within the children that the quality of our society will be fostered as it continues to evolve.

Kevin Gooch, Principal