



LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS

[28/03/11]

ADJUSTING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Just like many other organisations and businesses Elmwood Normal School has been significantly affected by disruptions due to the impact of the recent earthquakes. One hundred and twenty children from Elmwood did not return to school on the reopening day, 9 March. Most of these children were enrolled across the country on a temporary enrolment basis, and many have now returned to Elmwood. Today close to 90% of the roll has returned.

The staff has been overwhelmed by the supportive messages and responses received from schools and colleagues throughout the country. We also appreciate the high levels of support and cooperation from our own parent community who clearly understand that we are working hard to cope with the worries and uncertainty that exist for many in our community and for a significant number of our own staff. Yes, we are endeavouring to live up to our motto "to be the best that we can", however we do so within an environment that is far from normal at this time. Priority is being given to provide the best possible care for the children, supporting staff members who have been badly affected and supporting parents and families requiring our care and consideration. Parents will understand that we will need to make a number of adjustments to our usual programme coverage, our progress reporting and event activities. We are aware that our job to maintain our usual high standards and expectations for curriculum delivery and reporting, will be a difficult task given the situation we are in.

Last year the school made good progress with the implementation of the Ministry of Education's National Standards for Reading, Writing and Mathematics. The teachers deserve much praise for their commitment to the challenge presented to them during the trial period in 2010. Parents are assured that in 2011 the approach continues to be proactive and improvement focused. At the March meeting of the Board of Trustees, senior management provided a detailed report to share the progress being made and the 2010 achievement data summaries, trends and next steps for Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

The data information gathered at the end of last year indicated that most Elmwood students are reading at or above the standard for most age or year groups, with large groups of students reading well above the Standard. A large majority of our Y6 children who left the school at the end of their time with us were reading material graded three or more years in advance of their chronological age. For the students across the school who are currently reading below the expected standard, and need the most help, we are continuing with our endeavours to provide learning support in addition to their classroom teaching and learning programmes.

In writing, it was pleasing to note the improved progress patterns as the children move towards the Y6 level where our end of year data indicated the largest group of students writing above expectation. We know that we need to give stronger focus to those earlier years and we have made Writing the primary professional development focus for 2011.

A large proportion of our students, from the end of their third year of instruction and onwards, were achieving well above the Standard in Mathematics.

This year parents of children in Y4-6 classes can expect to receive a National Standards mid-year report at an interview during weeks 8-10 of the second term, and a final report, in December that will report on both the National standards and all other essential learning areas. Y4-6 reporting compares achievement progress aligned to the year level expectations.

However, for parents of children in Y1-3 the reporting benchmarks relate to the age of the child. Because the reporting requirement is “age related” the parents of children in Y1-3 will be receiving reports on a rolling roster throughout the year when a child has completed around 20, 40, 60,80,100 or 120 weeks of instruction at school. There may be some delay with the commencement of this rolling roster. Your child’s class teacher will advise when your first interview is to be held.

We are looking forward to getting our teaching programmes and events back to normal as soon as possible. At this time we are planning for a school-wide science fair to be held during the first week of Term 2. The children will soon be receiving information about this event. Exhibits will be set up in the classrooms for judging, there will be a school walk around, with parents invited. Notices about how the children and the parents can be involved will be sent home this week.

Kevin Gooch
Principal