



PRINCIPAL'S DESK [23/11/09]

Preparing for 2010

As the school year draws to a close, upon reflection we need to take heart that much has been achieved and a well-earned break isn't too far away. We were so pleased with the success of the Junior Pet day last week and thankful that the pets were well behaved! The senior classes had some wonderful experiences at their outdoor education camps and we thank the many parents who were involved with supervision support.

School life over the remaining weeks will be busy. It will be about achievement reporting, completing curriculum goals, preparing for the school production in the Town Hall, the year six leaving ceremony, strategic planning for 2010 and of course the important task of setting class placements for 2010. The school's 2009 overall student achievement report that is presented to the board, the community and to the Ministry of Education, through its Annual Report procedure, is an impressive read and will be posted on the school's website shortly. Student achievement data collected across the school over 2009 indicates and affirms that the school is a high performing school in terms of its curriculum delivery.

Of particular interest to us is the performance level of our year six classes as that really can provide a picture of the child's learning journey over six years of schooling at Elmwood. Many thanks to the parents of these children who have recently provided us with some valuable feedback through the Y6 Exit Survey. Achievement indicators provide good evidence that these children achieved well in advance of the national norms for literacy and numeracy. Our Y6 children will be moving on to intermediate schooling next year and will be leaving us well placed for the challenges ahead. For the majority, this school has been their main learning world for the past six years. I am confident that they will look back in years ahead with fond memories of the experiences that made a big difference to their learning pathway. The music, the drama, the sports and the cultural activities, along with the everyday learning in the basic curriculum areas have all contributed to the learning package they have enjoyed and will take with them. The children have also been involved in many added activities, that have provided some very specialised and exciting learning opportunities.

At this time staffing and class placement arrangements for 2010 are being considered. We ask parents to refrain from making recommendations for teacher choice. This needs to remain the responsibility of the senior management team in consultation with current classroom teachers, as there are many variables relating to the teaching and learning needs of every child that require careful consideration when making placement decisions.

For 2010 the classroom teaching will be managed through two syndicate teams. Caro Searell (Senior Manager) will be leading the senior classes and Sandra Johnston (Senior Manager) will be leading junior classes. In line with the school's roll management procedure it is anticipated that classes in the Y1-3 area of the school will have an overall lower pupil/teacher (1:23) and the Y4-6 will have an overall higher ratio (1:29). Children in their first year at school (Year 1) will be supported with a 1:15 pupil/teacher ratio where possible. It is important to understand that while the school endeavours to keep the pupil/ teacher ratio as low as possible, roll fluctuations throughout the year do occur. However the school employs additional staff to compensate for this and these teachers are utilised to support the teaching and learning programmes, particularly in-group teaching for literacy and numeracy.

Staffing appointments and class allocations are still being considered and will take some time to firm up. Parents will be advised of class placements when the pupil achievement reports will be issued on Monday 14 December.

We look forward to seeing you all at the school's end of year production on Wednesday 9 december at the Christchurch Town Hall. Don't forget to get you tickets.

Kevin Gooch
Principal