



2023 Annual Report for Te Aro School

Te Aro School is an inclusive, multicultural full primary school in the heart of Wellington. The school caters for students from Year 0 – 8 and provides a wide and varied curriculum. The school is situated on The Terrace just below Victoria University of Wellington and just above the Cuba Street and Aro Valley communities.

The school has a school roll of approximately 220 children who come from 45 different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Each year we offer a number of places to international students as we are a signatory to the Ministry's Code for foreign fee-paying students. During 2023 we enrolled three international students. We enrolled one student from Switzerland and one student from Myanmar. Both students attended the school for a full year. We enrolled a third student from Spain who joined us in Term 4 and part of Term 1 2024.

As a school community we are proud of and celebrate our school's diversity.

At Te Aro School, a great deal of importance is placed on the partnership that exists between home and school. Parents are welcome and encouraged to join in with school and classroom activities. During 2023 parents supported a number of school sports teams including touch rugby, futsal, mini ball, basketball and netball as coaches and managers; during Term 1 parents supported education outside the classroom (EOTC) activities; during Term 2 parents and whānau supported our biennial school production and in Term 3 parents in our junior classes supported our annual swimming lessons at the Aquatic Centre in Kilbirnie.

The school provides a safe and nurturing learning environment where everyone is valued and respected. The use of first names is promoted for all staff, children, and adults.

Te Aro School has had a strong community presence dating back to 1854. The school community participates in the local Te Aro March Fair Day and the local pre-schools visit the junior classes regularly throughout the school year.

To complement the New Zealand Curriculum, the school provides a wide range of programmes including te reo and tikanga Māori; kapa haka; weekly technicraft classes for our Year 7 and 8 students; first language time; music tuition; school choir; environmental education including our Garden to Table programme and maintaining our school beehives; and the opportunity to participate in a number of school sporting teams including touch rugby, basketball, miniball, netball and futsal.

During 2023 we offered a series of introductory Mandarin language and Chinese cultural classes to our Year 7 & 8 students. This was made possible with the return of Mandarin language assistants to New Zealand. With the border being closed during 2020 - 2022 Mandarin language assistants were not able to travel from Xiamen to Wellington.

Due to our proximity to the central city the school is fortunate to enjoy, with relative ease, all that the city has to offer. We take advantage of local art galleries and museums; Fringe festival events; local theatre; and the Wellington green belt and waterfront.

Each year the school has traditionally celebrated Race Relations Day, New Zealand Music Month in May, Matariki in June, Diwali and the Mid-Autumn Moon festival in September or October. These annual events are much anticipated and always bring visitors and performers to the school. In 2023 we enjoyed the return of these annual events on our school calendar.

Student enrolments and student movement

In 2023 we enrolled 88 students and withdrew 40 students during the school year. This withdrawal figure does not include the 24 Year 8 students who graduated from Te Aro School at the end of the school year. We continue each year to look closely at why and where our students are going to when they leave Te Aro School. Similar to 2022, families moved out of our school zone to buy homes or rent cheaper properties in other Wellington suburbs. Thirteen students returned to their countries of origin. Seven families moved overseas. Two families enrolled their child in an intermediate school.

This year we had 126 English language learners on our school roll of 234 students. Seventy of these students were funded ELL students. Funded English language learners equated to 55.5% of all our English language learners. Fifteen students were not eligible to be funded as they had enrolled at Te Aro after 1st August which is the date of the last ESOL funding round for the year. These students will become eligible for funding on 1st March 2024.

Our English language learners (funded and unfunded) accounted for 53.8% of the school roll.

28 of the 40 withdrawals (excluding our Year 8 students) were English language learners. This was 70% of our 2023 withdrawals. Our English language learners' withdrawals have an impact on our ESOL teacher Cathie's English language learning programme planning and result in frequent readjustments to her timetables.

A definition of transient in an education setting is a student who moves to another school within the year they enrolled. Fifteen of our 88 enrolments during 2023 also withdrew from the school during 2023. In 2023 37.5% of all student withdrawals had been enrolled at Te Aro and left in the same year. In 2023 40 student withdrawals (based on a school roll of 234 students) equated to a 17.1% school turnover. Student withdrawals over a school year have an impact on the building of both class and school culture. It takes time to build relationships with students and their whanau. It takes time to build relational trust between students, whanau, and the school.

During 2023 we enrolled eleven students with complex needs (social, emotional, behavioural, and academic needs). These students were living in our school zone in emergency and transitional housing.

Three new entrant enrolments in 2023 had no preschool experience. They found transitioning to school challenging. We sought additional funding from the Ministry to ensure the safety of two of these students to help ensure they remained inside with their class and that they came in from morning tea, lunch, and our afternoon break. Settling into routines at school continues to be hard for these students.

In 2023 we enrolled three students with significant learning support needs. We enrolled a further nine students with moderately significant needs. Finally, we enrolled six students who had experienced traumatic events in the twelve months prior to enrolling with us. A further six students already enrolled at Te Aro experienced traumatic family events during 2023.

At the end of 2023 we ended the school year with a school roll of 234 students. These student numbers reflected the opening of the border following COVID restrictions. In December 2022 we ended the year with 206 students. In December 2021 we had 214 students; in 2020 we had 230 students; in December 2019 we had 250 students; in 2018 we had 245 students and in 2017 we had 242 students.

COVID

The presence of COVID in the community continued during 2023. There were several points during the year when we were not able to employ any relievers and I had to ask Cathie and Bernice to provide classroom cover rather than teach their own learning support programmes. Tessa, Mathew, Ray, and Walter each found themselves teaching on their own in their team-teaching spaces with teacher aide support. This was not an ideal situation, but it meant we did not have to ask families to keep their child at home.

Reports on Student Progress and Achievement

We report to parents twice a year on their child's progress and achievement; their child's contributions to their class and the wider school community; their participation in the arts, music, sports, Mātauranga Māori and key competencies. We hold parent teacher interviews in Term 1 and issue a written report following those interviews in early Term 2. A second written report for the year is sent out to parents and caregivers in December.

During 2022 we continued to extend the use of the app Seesaw to share student learning with parents and whānau.

Throughout the 2023 school year the Board received detailed reports on student learning, learning support initiatives, the Reading Together programme, ESOL initiatives, Mātauranga Māori, the teaching of the performing arts, attendance analysis, annual feedback from our Year 8 students and an environmental education report. These reports are in addition to the student achievement and student attendance information that is shared with the Board.

Our new entrant teachers meet with parents and caregivers after our new entrants have been at school for ten weeks, then twenty weeks and finally at forty weeks (a student's first year at school). Parents receive a written report as part of our new entrant/Year 1 reporting process.

The Arts

Across the school in Term 2 of 2023 we focussed on and celebrated the teaching of the performing arts. We celebrated the students' achievements in the arts with our school production in Week 9 of Term 2 (Thursday 29 June). With COVID restrictions behind us it was wonderful to come together once again as a school community to celebrate our students' creativity, their curiosity, their innovation, and their perseverance.

Our biennial school production is a wonderful way for the school community to celebrate our students' creativity, their curiosity, their innovation, and their perseverance. Students, individually and collaboratively in small groups, large groups, and whole classes, were encouraged to strive for excellence in their artistic endeavours as they built a body of work leading up to the school production. During the processes of preparing for production students responded to and valued the contributions others made to the final group, whole class, and whole school event. Students learnt to work both independently and collaboratively to construct meanings, produce works, and respond to and value others' contributions and skills in the performing arts.

The school production provides a context for students to actively contribute to a school-wide project and enrich the cultural life of the school community. Participation and contributing to the community (citizenship) are key values of both the New Zealand Curriculum and our own core school values of Ako, Manaakitanga and Whanaungatanga.

The performing arts learning area comprises three disciplines: dance, drama, and music – sound arts. Through arts practices and the use of traditional and new technologies, students' artistic ideas are generated and refined through cycles of action and reflection. Students are able to be creators, presenters, and viewers. They are able to explore experiences, stories, abstract concepts, social issues, and needs, both individually and collaboratively.

In dance students integrate thinking, moving, and feeling. Students explore and use dance elements, vocabularies, and processes to express personal, group and cultural identities to convey and interpret artistic ideas and strengthen social interactions. Students learn about and develop skills in performing, choreographing, and responding to a variety of historical and contemporary contexts.

In drama students explore roles and actions in time and space. They learn to structure these elements and to use dramatic conventions and techniques to create imagined worlds. Individually and collaboratively, they discover how to link their imagination, thoughts, and feelings. Students learn to communicate using spoken language, body language, movement, and space.

In music students explore the potential of sounds and technologies for creating, interpreting, and representing music ideas. Students listen and respond, sing, play instruments, create, and improvise, read symbols and notations, record sound and music works, and analyse and appreciate music. In the music curriculum value is placed upon the musical heritage of New Zealand's diverse cultures, including toi Māori, traditional and contemporary Māori musical arts.

Here at Te Aro School our arts' education embraces Māori, European, Pasifika, and Asian cultures' artistic forms which add significant dimensions to New Zealand's arts' culture and mean that our students are able to view their world from new perspectives.

This year's production **Whitia ngā Whetū** celebrated Matariki. Matariki is the cluster of stars most commonly known across the world as Pleiades. Around the world there are many names for this group of stars. In Japan it is called Subaru which means 'to come together.' In China it is known as mao, the head of the white tiger. In India it is known as Krittika. For many cultures, these stars are connected to celebration, planting, harvesting, weather, and life. For Māori, the rising of Matariki signals te Mātahi o te Tau, the Māori new year. The appearance of Matariki in the morning sky is a sign for people to gather, to honour the dead, celebrate the present, and plan for the future. In 2022 Matariki became an official public holiday in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is the first public holiday in Aotearoa to recognise te ao Māori.

The production also provided opportunities for students and teachers to focus on the key competencies. Managing self (completing work by deadlines), thinking (creativity, problem solving), relating to others (collaborative works), using language, symbols, and text (learning the language of

art, names of equipment, techniques), and participating and contributing were all covered during the school's focus on the performing arts.

Our performing arts' focus this year, allowed us to celebrate our students' talents, skills, and passions beyond the core foundation skills in numeracy and literacy. Our arts' focus, whether it is the visual arts in 2022 or the performing arts in 2023, provides an opportunity for some of our students to surprise themselves, their families/whanau, their peers, and their teachers with their hidden talents. It provides us as a school community with an opportunity to come together to celebrate our students' individual and collective artistic talents and abilities. In production year it also provides the students in the two senior classes with an opportunity to contribute to a Wellington wide celebration of the arts with some students performing in Artsplash at the Michael Fowler Centre.

Te Reo and Tikanga Māori

In 2023 we participated for the third year in the Kura Ahurea programme facilitated by Te Ātiawa. This programme has been designed to support teachers and staff to normalise te reo Māori in their school through the implementation of Te Aho Marau i Te Reo Māori mō ngā Kura Auraki. Kate has been our lead teacher and during 2023 she attended four Professional Development Days. On these days, teachers from schools across the Wellington region have shared ideas, and reflected on how their schools' approaches to implementing the programme.

The programme looks at the teaching and implementation of te reo Māori through an eight-year plan. Each Achievement Objective has a lesson plan, PowerPoint presentation and workbook to enable teachers to plan and adapt their programme to suit the level and needs of the children in their class.

The language focuses on the Achievement Objectives were linked in with our weekly school wide te reo wero (Māori language challenge).

During 2023 we held four school wide rūmaki (immersion) te reo Māori mornings. Our rūmaki reo sessions are a great way to encourage Tuakana Teina across the school. The overarching goal for these mornings is to work towards normalising te reo Māori in the school. We prepared for each of the mornings with number of staff meetings focusing on learning specific games and activities and the language needed to play and teach these in te reo. These mornings continue to challenge the teaching and support staff teams that participate in them. The mornings were all a great success, with positive feedback from both staff and students. This is the second year we have held Rūmaki Reo.

As a school we welcome with a mihi whakatau all new staff members and students to the school usually in the third or fourth week of each term. Senior students have leadership roles in this formal occasion and actively participate with whaikorero and hariru.

Kapa Haka

This year our senior kapa haka group continued to practise with Hemi for an hour session every Thursday afternoon. The group performed at Matariki, the opening of the school production, and at Avida Retirement Village in Berhampore.

In Terms 1 and 2 Hemi worked with our year 3 & 4 students once a week for 45 minutes. In Term 3 the Year 1 & 2 students shared Hemi's time with the Year 3 & 4 students. During 2023 Kristin supported Hemi to work with the junior kapa haka groups and Mathew worked alongside Hemi when he tutored our senior students.

Environmental Education

The school's environmental work links well to the New Zealand Curriculum's (NZC) vision that sets a direction that all young New Zealanders will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners. The NZC's vision has young people seeking and working towards securing a sustainable environmental future for New Zealand. It seeks connected learners that are members of their community and who are linked to the land and environment. It also seeks actively involved learners who are contributors to the well-being of New Zealand socially, culturally, and environmentally. And finally, the NZC's environmental vision seeks learners who are critical thinkers and informed decision makers. The Te Aro School community shares such a vision.

Students in Rūma Mānuka (Year 5 & 6 students) have, with the support from a local beekeeper and the Wellington Beekeepers' Association, continued to maintain our beehives which were established in 2013. In February they harvested their honey. Alongside the gardening rotation students cooked and served produce from the gardens; and researched environmental issues including information about the bee life cycle and the role bees have in pollinating plants. These environmental initiatives took place mid-morning on a Thursday.

Kiwisport

Kiwisport is a government funding initiative to support students' participation in organised sport. In 2023, the school received Kiwisport funding of \$3,061. Our 2023 Kiwisport funding was spent on meeting some of the costs for swimming lessons during the year; students participating in the Winter sports festival; and basketball coaching for all students in Term 1.

Special Programmes

During 2023 Bernice facilitated the *Quick 60* literacy intervention with twelve Year 1 and Year 2 students to accelerate their literacy progress.

In Term 4 Bernice worked with five Year 1 students and two Year 2 students during their literacy time.

During Terms 3 - 4 a member of our support staff team facilitated the *Early Words* literacy initiative working with seven individual junior children to support them to read and write high frequency words.

In Term 4 six junior students had teacher aide support to strengthen their handwriting. This initiative was to help these students to write more fluently.

- Both Cathie, our ESOL teacher, and Bernice supported the introduction of The Code into our senior classes. The Code is a structured literacy approach which teaches and practices phonic rules for spelling. Bernice worked with eleven students from Years 5 – 8. Cathie worked with ten Year 5/6 students working at an early level of 'The Code' phonics programme.

Kristin, Michelle, and Samantha facilitated a series of ***Reading Together*** workshops in Term 4. Twenty-two parents with children in the junior school attended these series of workshops. This research-based programme is designed to help parents support their children's reading at home more effectively. Feedback from the parents who participated in the workshops was overwhelmingly positive. Parents spoke about:

- Understanding more about how children learn to read
- Realising how complex learning to read is
- Learning to take more time and be more patient when reading with my child x3

- Trying not to get stressed when reading with my child so that reading can be kept enjoyable
- How much more enjoyable reading was now
- How their child's confidence had grown
- How good it was to share their concerns with other parents.
- Knowing I should give time for my child to self-correct. X 2
- Knowing the strategies my child might use to self-correct.
- Have fun reading
- Pause, praise and preview to give context.
- Supporting reading rather than teaching
- Don't push my child too hard - remember about the Brock book (which illustrates to parents how difficult it is to learn to read) x2
- Consistency - ask them for a review of what they had read to verify understanding
- Looking at the pictures and thinking about the story along with reading the text
- Not being such a helicopter parent when it comes to reading
- Knowing I'm on the right track with him with his reading
- Don't put too much pressure on words that they are struggling with

During 2023 the ESOL programmes were timetabled from Monday to Thursday. In recent years, the primary component of our ESOL programmes has focussed on our highest needs students in Years 3-8. We continued this focus throughout 2023. Cathie's focus included both foundational language work with our beginner English language learners and acceleration work with our more proficient language learners. The emphasis was on oral language, reading and writing development and generally it involved small group work. Bilingual support, funded through the Flexible Funding programme, was offered to Arabic and Farsi speaking students and included both in-class and withdrawal support. Each term, in addition to support for our core students, we identify groups of students who may benefit from targeted ESOL interventions.

The groups supported during 2023 included:

- Year 3/4 Literacy - twelve students received 3 - 4 sessions a week of ESOL support. This group included a core of six of our highest needs students at this level who have worked in this group all year while others have moved in and out of the group according to new enrolments and level of need - Terms 1-4.
- Year 5/6 Literacy - a group of six students working on a mixed literacy focus, including the Quick 60 programme and writing - Terms 1-4.
- Year 7/8 Literacy support - two groups of six students worked on a reciprocal reading programme throughout Terms 2 and 3.
- Junior Oral Language - 2 sessions a week, targeting some of our newest ELLs in Years 1/2 during Terms 2 and 3
- The Code - Ten Year 5/6 students working at an early level of 'The Code' phonics programme - Terms 3 and 4
- Science Fair - Ten senior students received intensive support over a six-week period to work through the science fair process.
- Learning Village - weekly support and monitoring of the fifteen students using this online programme
- Introductory ESOL - We established in Term 4 a group of our newest learners to focus on - providing intensive literacy support and language experience activities to build vocabulary and oral confidence.
- Year 1/2 Literacy support - A term 4 focus for six students - to accelerate and consolidate their reading and writing progress.

During 2023 three English language learners accessed the early Words programme working with a member of our support staff team. Five students participated in an additional handwriting programme. Three English language learners worked with Bernice within her literacy support programme.

Our two bilingual teacher aides Enass and Leila provided invaluable support to teachers and whānau, juggling the demands of learning programmes with the social and emotional wellbeing of these learners. We value the hugely important role these support staff members play in ensuring the communication between school and families is clear and mutually understood. These teacher aides continue to add a further dimension to the support we can provide for our highest needs refugee students which also impacts positively on their teachers, classmates and whānau.

Within education there is a call to recognise and acknowledge all our learners who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These CLD learners are not always English language learners - many are bilingual or speak English as their primary language but also connect with other places and cultures. It is important for our teachers to know and understand these learners.

Students from the First Language Time Programme were excited to be work together in Terms 1 and 2 to create a video to open our school production. This opening video showcases some of our bilingual and multilingual leaners. More than forty students participated in making the video with 18 languages represented.

In 2023 our First Language programme involved more than sixty students from six core language groups Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Samoan and the Indian languages (which includes Hindi, Gujarati, and Marathi speakers). In 2023 we added a Filipino group to the First Language programme bringing our core languages to seven. The students in the First Language Time Programme met once a week during Terms 3 and 4, culminating in an end of year shared lunch - a much anticipated celebration! It has been wonderful to see these students connecting again, welcoming newcomers, and building strong cultural and linguistic pride.

In December we held our ninth **Summer Reading** event. Similar to 2021 and 2022 books were issued during the school day to students rather than as an after school event. In 2023 800 library books were issued to students to enjoy reading over the summer holiday period.

Personnel

In 2023 we again secured some additional funding from the Ministry of Education to employ two bilingual teacher aides. One teacher aide spoke Arabic and the other spoke Farsi. Both teacher aides worked with our students who have a refugee background. This role continues to add a further dimension to the support we can provide for our highest need refugee students but also impacts positively not just on these students but also their teachers, classmates and whānau. As well as focusing on learning, within and beyond the classroom, with individual students and small groups, both teacher aides played a key role in supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of these learners. Our bilingual teacher aides help to ensure the communication between school and families is clear and mutually understood. During the year they supported families in parent teacher meetings, translating reports and assisting the transition process to school for new entrant students and their families and for students moving onto secondary school.

During 2023 we welcomed Michelle Porter and Samantha Huang to our junior teaching team. As the new entrant numbers increased Samantha joined Kristin in Rūma Tawa at the start of Term 3.

During 2023 we also welcomed Breana Fahey and Geneva Fanslow to our support staff team. Bre and Geneva worked across the school with individuals and small groups of students.

The teaching team's 2023 professional learning and development focussed on:

- Three writing webinars facilitated by Louise Dempsey and Sheena Cameron
- The introduction of The Code (structured literacy initiative) in Years 5 – 8
- Strengthening our knowledge of the Aotearoa New Zealand histories' curriculum
- Working with Mt Cook School's staff and facilitators Leanne Mason and Heather Came - Embracing Tiriti-based antiracism
- Strategies for meeting the needs of diverse students – facilitated by Bernice and Cathie
- House of Science introduction to their science kits
- Cyber safety with John Parsons
- Familiarisation and working with Te Mātaiaho (the refreshed New Zealand curriculum)
- Termly te reo Māori staff meetings facilitated by Kate Gallagher

At the end of the school year, we farewelled Kate, Michelle, and Samantha from the staff team. Kate accepted a teaching position in Paraparaumu where she had been living and commuting each day throughout Term 4. Michelle accepted a job in a secondary school as an English teacher. Samantha accepted a permanent position at Rewa Rewa School in Newlands. We were grateful to each of them for their contributions to our school community in particular Kate who provided incredible leadership in Te Reo and Matauranga Māori. We wish each of them all the best for 2024 as they assume new positions in the education sector.

Kake Tonu Te Aro

Ever Upwards Te Aro

Sue Clement

Tumuaki/Principal

22 March 2023

BOT Presiding Member's (Chair) Report for 2023 School Year

It has been another busy year for our school as we saw unprecedented increases in our student numbers as a result of our borders opening after the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.

Our roll increased significantly across the school, and we finished the year with 234 students, compared with 206 in December 2022. In addition to an increased roll, we also experienced a significantly higher proportion of high-needs students requiring additional support, which has put both our staff team and our financial resources under increased pressure this year. Like many other kura we are noticing increased levels of anxiety within our student base and our teachers and classroom support staff are dealing with ever-expanding needs across their cohorts. Attendance continues to be top of mind for us as a board, and we closely monitor students with concerning attendance rates.

As with all school communities we have continued to feel the effects of Covid-19 illness among both our teachers and students which has resulted in a challenging year for staffing. While restrictions have lifted, we strongly encourage staff and students with Covid-19 to remain at home, and Sue and her leadership team have juggled ever changing staff numbers, a challenge that is exacerbated by the scarcity of readily available relief support. We are so grateful to Sue and her team for their preparedness, and it is only due to the huge amount of discretionary effort expended by our staff team that we have not had to close a classroom this year.

On a brighter note, 2023 saw a very welcome return to our regular school community events, the highlight of which was our biennial school production in June. Once again, our wider community was entertained and delighted by the broad range of talent in our student body. Our production this year focused on Matariki and as well as recognising the importance of the event as the Māori New Year we learned about what this meant for the other cultures represented in our community. A particular highlight was the introductory video from 40 of our students from our 'First language time' programme, who welcomed us all in 18 different languages.

We launched our redesigned website this year and have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the increased useability and smooth transitions. We are thrilled to also be able to provide website content in 12 different languages to better support our international families to access our information and services.

The Board farewelled Jen Troup and Alice Sciascia from our group. We are very grateful for their guidance and mahi during their tenure. Conversely, we welcomed Chris Knox, John Kerr, and Afnan al-Rubayee to the Board and are grateful to them all for their enthusiasm and expertise heading into 2024.

Kate Brazier

Chair, Te Aro School Board of Trustees

26 March 2024