

Newsletter



11th December 2019 – Term 4, Week 9

Tēnā koutou

We have come to the end of yet another year.... It has been another year full of learning, fun, hard work, activities, trips, sports and more learning. It was a year of changes with Tawa moving to be a fully learning through play classroom and the senior class adapting to be a more student-led classroom.

For us, the transition to learning through play has been a success. Teachers have monitored learning closely to see that students still continued to progress... and they did. Looking at data collected this year... for students who have been at school for a year or more, in Reading they have progressed between 11 and 16– that's from 1 to 2 years progress in a year! In writing, students have made the same levels of progress, and again in Maths, we saw similar results. For children who have been at school less than a year, we had a more variable result, with some making a year's progress, some making a little progress and some between these results. This is great news, as in a normal school year we would expect some 5 year olds to take time before they really start to take off, and others being ready for school from their first day. This is also great news as our learning through play results are as good or better than we would expect from a traditional working classroom. However, what we have noticed more significantly, is that all students in Tawa have made massive improvements in their Key Competency Skills – these are the life-long social skills they need to develop and which have equal emphasis in our NZ Curriculum. Tawa students can resolve conflict on their own, they can negotiate with each other and make compromises in their play, they understand how to work in a team and how to collaborate. They can share resources equitably and can create and maintain rules they set for themselves. They can pick themselves up from failure and persevere to achieve their goals. The shift in these competencies was noticeable within a term of learning through play, and Tawa students have continued to refine these and other competency skills throughout the year – they are so much better even at cleaning and tidying, than their senior counterparts!!

For us as professionals, we see that for 5 and 6 year olds, learning through play has been a great way for students to transition into school and for those not ready to learn, it gives them the space needed to make that transition. What we have also noticed is that, when due to number pressure, we moved these students into the senior class, this transition was difficult for some students, especially the boys and It is for this reason the Board decided to fund the third classroom. Kahikatea will be the transition for students between Tawa and Rimu. It will operate as a transition class with elements of learning through play, traditional classroom practices, and elements of more independent student led practices. As students become ready to move into the senior class, they will be transitioned into it.

We held a parent evening last week to explain how this new regime will work. For those unable to attendTawa will be for students in Year 0 to 3. Kahikatea will have students from Year 3 to 5. Rimu will be for Year 6 to 8 students. As already stated, transition from Tawa to Kahikatea or Kahikatea to Rimu, will be done when number pressure comes on, or when staff feel a student is ready to move. The third classroom will operate Monday to Thursday mornings only, and for the rest of the week, students from Year 4 and 5 will return to Rimu, and Year 3 students to Tawa. This allows me release time to complete my principal work. If any parent has any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Production practice is now well underway, and excitement is building for the performance Thursday night. Our production will be performed prior to our final assembly. We look forward to seeing everyone on the night.

Before I wrap up, I must thank Eric and Rosie Hill for their amazing contribution to our school. From the time Samantha started, they have been very active parents, both on the PTA and the BoT, and with transport and camps. Eric has also helped with Electives and was always the one to beat at the Dad's cake competition. We are very sad to be losing this family but wish them well as they move on. Wishing you all the very best and a massive thank you from our school staff and students.

Finally, I would like to thank all parents, grandparents, community members and of course, our students for another awesome year of fun and learning. We are all ready for a break to relax and refresh ourselves before we do it all again. For those leaving our school, I thank you for your contributions and wish you well as you move on to new schools. For those returning, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a wonderful new year, a restful, and rejuvenating holiday, and look forward to seeing you all in 2020.

Thank you once again

Joanne, Angela, Sarah-Anne and Liz.

DATES TO REMEMBER

13th December – Last day of term
3rd February '20 – Term 1 starts

