



Principals Report to the Community May 2006.

Children's Learning (Foundation Skills)

In 2004 we could show that 90% of children at Toko School were reading at or above their chronological age at the end of the year.

In 2005 we could show that 92% of the children at Toko School were reading at or above their chronological age at the end of the year.

The senior school 'Book project' has been an important addition to the school reading program, particularly in year 7 and 8 over the last two years. This has been valuable and has created a lot of positive talk about children's reading in the senior school. Because of the positive feedback it is now being funded in year 5 and 6 as well.

A teacher was trained to be a reading recovery teacher in 2005 working intensively with approximately 6 children. Incidentally this training has been continued in 2006. Another teachers skills are being enhanced and along the way 6 year old children with reading needs are being worked with intensively.

At the end of 2005 88% of children from Year 2 up were spelling at or above their chronological age. This includes all children including special needs and newly arrived children at the end of the year. Spelling has been a school focus for 3 years and has impacted on all classroom spelling programs. Throughout this time spelling programs have improved. Children's spelling achievement has improved. Considerable money was spent on learning resources to support the spelling program.

End of year mathematics testing showed that across the school children are at levels consistent with, and in many cases better than, NZ wide trends. Numeracy testing indicates we have a significant number of children performing beyond their age in this area. In 2006 the teachers are still practicing the skills and using the number strategies which we were learning in 2005. It is fair to say that we have had significant discussions and debate on the merits or otherwise of the program. At the end of the time teachers see the benefits of many of the strategies used to improve children's number knowledge. As a result of looking at the numeracy data we gathered in 2005 we developed a learning target for 2006 which ultimately will be reported to the Ministry and the Community. We never thought that our children were underachieving in mathematics. But as a result of the new knowledge, changes in teaching practice have occurred and I believe these are beneficial to our children.

Learning Stars

The staff developed the concept of 'Learning Stars' in 2004 and this was introduced in 2005. Our children are "learning stars." The existing merit mentions system was overhauled. Our goal was to introduce this to the children and it went very well, quickly being accepted as the main form of reward received. Charts are maintained, stickers given as well as certificates. Most children can tell you about the schools learning stars and what they mean. However, these learning stars go much deeper than just a reward system for children.

Toko Schools key focus is:

1. Partnership
2. Foundation skills
3. Personal Best
4. A Challenging Curriculum
5. Learning to Learn
6. Our Learning Environment.

All we do at school can be related back to learning stars!

Quality learning for all In a Caring Community

It is a simple and effective way of thinking about our school and our children's learning.

Teachers Learning (Personal Best and Challenging Curriculum)

ICTPD contract

Teachers received in class support to effectively integrate information technology in the classroom. 2006 will be the last year of a three year contract. We have a strong IT infrastructure.

Reading Recovery.

A teacher was trained throughout 2005 and now training is occurring in 2006.

Numeracy

Senior school teachers attended many mathematics training afternoons.

Spelling

Teachers attended a in-service course with Joy Alcock, whose resources we have purchased and which form the basis of the junior school spelling program.

Thinking Skills

Staff attended two days of training on integrating 'thinking skills' into the classroom.

The result of Professional Development is to improve the skills of teachers. It also acknowledges the many changes in education and the diverse nature of the teaching profession.

Partnership

Toko School is rich in resources. We have benefited greatly from an active and able fundraising Committee. All staff appreciate the effort involved by the FC and the impact this has had on the day to day tools teachers have to use.

The school staff feel supported by a friendly and able PTA . Toko School events are better because of PTA involvement. PTA play an important role in our school.

In a variety of school programs we call on parents to assist. A special aspect of Toko School is the level of parental involvement. This is greatly appreciated.

We had an ERO report in 2005 which went very well. They affirmed all we are doing here at Toko School. Of course their job is to make suggestions. 2006's professional development focus arrived out of a suggestion in the 2005 ERO report. Staff professional development is expensive but I have never had any difficulty getting the required funding to train and up skill staff. The BOT obviously give this priority and for this I am thankful.

There were no changes to staffing in 2005. Toko School has a stable skilled and committed staff. I refer to teacher aides, office staff, cleaner, and teachers. These people interact daily with all children. These people make the difference moment by moment, day by day in the classroom. Our success or failure in developing children as learning stars, and all this implies, is the direct result of the combined staff of our school in partnership with our parents.

At the end of 2005 we were aware that we would be having Douglas School children enrolled in 2006. This allowed us to employ a 5th teacher at Toko. One hundred children divided amongst 5 teachers is a lot better divided amongst 4 teachers! Douglas children have been a wonderful addition to our school.

Finally I am very positive about the future of our school and future initiatives.

EDI funding is beginning to come on line from the closure of Stanley School and eventually the closure of Douglas School. We are developing educational plans to improve children's learning by using these funds wisely.

Richard Bradley
Principal