



OAKURA SCHOOL



OAKURA SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2020

2020 has certainly been a year 'like no other'. We started with lots of exciting plans and events booked, as usual. But as we neared the middle of term one we realised we were facing a very different year than the one we had planned. On 23 March the Prime Minister announced that New Zealand would be going into a national lockdown. Staff and students went into organisation mode and quickly packed up their belongings and headed home to begin distance learning. New vocabulary started being used: Covid-19, lockdown, alert levels, social distancing, bubbles, google meets, zoom meetings and distance learning. Throughout the year we have drawn on our reserves of resiliency, creativity and flexibility as we constantly faced the challenges of communicating from a distance; going through a partial return to school, then a full return to school; changing of alert levels; postponements, re-bookings and cancellations of events. In fact, the only constant throughout the year has been change.



Despite the challenges everyone faced we were incredibly proud of the way that our school community transitioned to distance learning and being at home for an extended time. As always everyone made the most of the situation and looked out for each other as we all focussed on the well-being of our students, staff and community. We heard about and saw from afar, so many moments of manaakitanga and aroha, which made us thankful to be part of such a special community. With communication through regular use of Seesaw, Google Meet, facebook and email we were able to maintain our connections with each other and see the wonderfully creative and rich learning experiences our students were doing at home. The quality of support and teaching provided by parents and teachers over this time was impressive. We have recently analysed our students' literacy and numeracy achievement data for 2020 and they remain very high, with very little difference between 2019 and 2020. This is a true reflection of the quality learning and teaching that went on through this time.

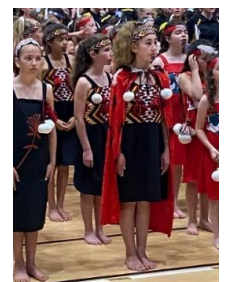


On our return to school we refocused our energy on re-establishing our school routines and procedures whilst also implementing the rigorous health and safety requirements to keep everyone safe. Our local Hauora Curriculum, which was developed in 2019, proved its worth, with our students already familiar with the strategies they needed to use, to remain calm and resilient. We prioritised well-being initiatives such as Pink Shirt Day, our 'Water Only' policy, active travel to and from school (so successful we needed to buy some more bike stands and scooter racks), mindfulness, Circle Time, fundraisers to help out families in need, and our very first 'Ruby's Rainbow Day' which is now an annual event and raises money for Starship Hospital.

Environmental initiatives also took priority. We carried out our annual beach clean-up day; we supported World Car Free Day with no cars driving up Donnelly Street; we continued to support the Predator Free initiative with our school featuring in a NZ Geographic article showing the work our students do in this important area; our year 7 & 8 students supported the Kiwi Trust by being a part of the Haupara Kiwi project; and our Enviro Kura assisted NPDC with plantings in our local reserves. This all culminated in an Environmental Open Day at our school, where we gained our bronze accreditation from EnviroSchools Taranaki. We also started an exciting environmental initiative called Te Ara Taiao where we will be collaborating with Coastal Taranaki School and Omata School to learn more about our local history and support hapū led environmental projects.



In the latter part of this year we were able to participate in some modified cultural activities. The annual Puanga Festival became a mass kapa haka performance which was an impressive event for our tamariki to be involved in. For the first time our year 7 & 8 kapa haka students participated in the Tātaraiki Festival and we joined with our local schools Rahotu, Coastal Taranaki School and Omata School for a combined Highway 45 kapa haka showcase.





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Participation in sport has been more locally-based this year, with only a few interschool events able to go ahead. The times we did manage to get together with other school groups our students made the most of the opportunity. We had experts from a range of different sports provide skill development sessions for our students, within our school physical education programme. These included: beach education, football, hockey, cricket and swimsafe. Kiwi Sport is a government funded initiative that supports student's participation in organised sport. The funding that the school received this year has been used to provide some of this specialised sports coaching and access for students to attend interschool sports events. We are also very fortunate to have the Oakura Junior Sports Club (OJSC) operating in our community. Through the dedication of this volunteer group of parents our students get a wide range of quality sporting experiences. The high level of enjoyment and sporting achievement gained by our students reflects the commitment of these parents and the students themselves.



In term three we secured funding for two new roll growth classrooms from the Ministry of Education. The board of trustees have been planning for this next stage in our school development for some time and look forward to seeing these buildings completed so we can cater for the roll growth we are experiencing. Recently we held a working bee to remove the bark from under the senior playground, ready for an all-weather surface to be installed. This is the first stage of the exciting development of rooms 6,7 and 8 and the surrounding outdoor area.

To round off the year our whole school focus was an inquiry called, 'Where in the World?' This was an opportunity to celebrate the many different countries that are represented within our school community. It was also a celebration of the arts and was totally student led. Students wrote scripts, choreographed dance, wrote music and lyrics, and created artworks and props. They researched and learned about different countries, cultures and languages. This culminated in a performance day with students sharing their learning with the community.



Friends of Oakura School Committee (FOOS) is a group of parents who generously give their time to support our students, teachers and whānau. They continue to come up with creative ways to raise money so that the school can purchase resources that complement our school programmes and school environment. We thank them for their dedication and commitment to supporting our school and the children in our community. If you are not a member of this group please consider joining in 2021 as many hands make light work - he rau ringa e oti ai - and your children are the ones who truly benefit from the events they organise.

Thank you to all the people who have supported our school programmes this year in so many different ways: supporting your child's home learning, parental involvement in sport (interschool and OJSC), Friends of Oakura School Committee (FOOS), morning crossing duty, library help, PMP helpers, parent help in classrooms, transport assistance and supervision during school trips and activities. Without your help we wouldn't be able to offer as many opportunities for our students as we do. We truly value your support.

Once again we want to acknowledge and thank our wonderful staff, students and community for all that you do to make Oakura School a special place to be. We wish you all a happy and fun-filled summer holiday with your family and friends.

Lynne Hepworth
PRINCIPAL

Chris Ferguson
BOT CHAIRPERSON