



Worser Bay School

TAUTORU

Parent Information Term 2, 2009

WELCOME TO TERM 2

This year our programme builds on from 2008. Our big theme is "Relationships - Cause and Effect". We also continue our focus on student engagement and how we provide opportunities for our wide range of learners.

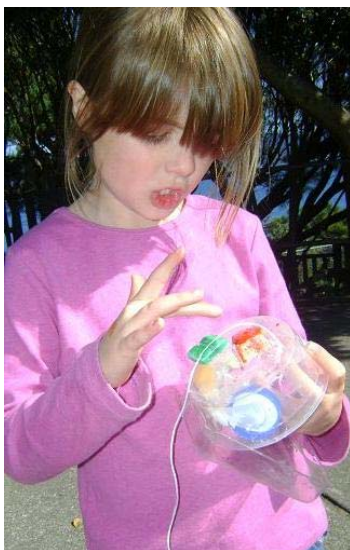
Following the success of our science/technology focus on simple machines last term, we will build on the work already covered by introducing a visual art component. Our question for this term is "How do ideas connect?"

We look forward to sharing our progress and learning with you at our 'Arts Expo' at the end of the term. The visit to 'Monet' will provide context for the students as they take their creations to many different levels and are encouraged to take risks to strengthen their skills in visual art.

We had a fantastic response to the Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) last term. You will have all received the written summaries of this discussion. We are excited by the success of the SLCs since their introduction in 2007. The development of our approach to SLCs is guided by the intent of the New Zealand Curriculum and making sure we are providing clear information on students' progress.



This term, school-wide data will be collected in numeracy. Individual students will continue to be monitored in their reading and writing progress. Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) results are now back for students in Years 4-6. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be sharing this information with the students. Please remember, we look at a range of data before making a decision as to whether a student is what we consider 'at risk' of achieving. You will be contacted, by us, if we have any concerns and wish to set a home-school plan in place.



On Monday 18 May at 6.30pm, we have a seminar on "Writing and Your Child" presented by Murray Gadd. Murray is a Wellington-based literacy and education consultant who works nationally and internationally on reading and writing projects. This is a great opportunity to learn about your child's writing and also catch up with your teacher.

We continue to seek opportunities to develop Key Competencies and Enterprising Attributes in our students, staff and wider community. A major initiative we have been involved in is Education for Enterprise (E4E). This is about promoting an active and authentic approach to learning – one that is real, relevant, and encourages students to share responsibility in the learning process. The enterprising attributes represent many of the skills that students will need when they leave school. They also align to the key competencies of the *New Zealand Curriculum*. You will have experienced your child talking about their progress in these areas at their conference.

TAUTORU

Tautoru welcomes all new and returning families. This term, our big question is about how ideas connect. The learning activities will challenge students to think of new ways to understand and organise the information they receive. We will revisit the thinking and creating processes worked on last term and students will reflect on the connections between colour, feelings, texture, line and shape. We hope that Monet's art at Te Papa will be an inspiration for students to communicate their own interpretations of Worser Bay using the impressionist style of painting.

Last term, SLCs gave all children the opportunity to lead a conversation or be part of a discussion about their individual learning goals. Progress with these will be reviewed this term and new learning steps decided upon. We often refer to the importance of the quality of the conversations we have with our children and without exception this term we are all working together to help students become more aware of their learning journey. We will be making a deliberate choice to use specific vocabulary - terms like "WALTs", "Success Criteria", "learning goal", "feedback" and "next step". These key words will become a cue to think about the what and why of the learning task, and prompt students to share and celebrate when they have achieved a specific goal. Our teacher aides, Carolyn, Nicola, Nicole and Sue, are a great support during these classroom conversations. They, too, will be working alongside each child prompting them with questions about the learning task and fostering their independence.

KEY COMPETENCIES AND ENTERPRISING ATTRIBUTES

The Key Competency focus this term is primarily on 'Thinking' and 'Using language symbols and text'. The E4E Attributes that align with these include:

Key Competency	Enterprising Attributes	What this means for the Student
Thinking	Generating and using creative ideas and processes.	Thinking up new ideas and ways to do things that work well.
	Identifying, solving and preventing problems.	Looking ahead for things that can go wrong, thinking of ways to solve problems and planning ahead to avoid them.
Using Language, Symbols and Texts	Collecting, organising and analysing information.	Getting information and sorting it to make sense of it.
	Communicating and receiving ideas and information.	Sharing and taking in ideas from a range of sources.

For more information on the key competencies, visit:

<http://www.teamup.co.nz/AllAges/Curriculum/SchoolCurriculum.aspx>

And for information on the enterprising attributes, visit: <http://education-for-enterprise.tki.org.nz/About-E4E/The-NZ-Curriculum-and-E4E/Enterprising-attributes>

TOPIC AND RESEARCH

Our topic begins with a brief investigation into the cause and effect relationship of Earth's natural features and resources. We will consider how everyday life is affected or changed by weather. The learning contexts will involve observation of the clouds, sea and sky colour, rainbows, fog and thunderstorms. We hope to host a range of speakers from the wider community to help us understand how dependent we are on the weather. The speakers' expertise will range from local Miramar artists to Wellington air traffic control and meteorology experts. When we go to Monet and see masterpieces painted 'en plein air' (painting outside) the children will have a deeper appreciation of how the elements and our ideas are influenced and connected - not only for the impressionist artists of the nineteenth century but for contemporary society too.

During the term all students will have the opportunity to express their connections with the sea, sky and local environment through dance, music, and visual art. During this exploration they will complete an art piece for display at the end of term Art Expo.

ENGLISH

Reading and Writing

The guided, shared and independent reading programme continues. Our more capable readers will be honing their skills in comprehension to locate and interpret ideas and summarise main points.

Emergent and Early Fluency readers will concentrate on relationships between sounds and letters and how to work out unknown words, and developing reading fluency. An increased emphasis on poetry is appropriate since we are looking at the surrounding environment to describe how we feel and how we connect with it. In both reading and writing activities, we will be deconstructing a sentence to find the phrase within. The students' understanding of phrase will benefit their reading fluency, creative writing, and at a more basic level, it will explain the progression from sound to letter, letter to word, word to phrase, and phrase to sentence.

Students will work towards next steps in writing by discussing current goals and checking on how well they are doing after receiving specific feedback from their teacher.

Learning intentions (goals) will be clearly displayed and evaluated against success criteria. The National Exemplars and AsTTLe writing indicators will guide teachers' assessment. Last term, we worked with Murray Gadd on how to improve the surface and deeper features of writing. Your child will share their progress in their portfolio. Come along to meet Murray and hear more when he facilitates our information evening on 18 May.

We've put more thought into daily activities that will help a greater number of children establish correct grip, starting point, size and shape of their lettering. Our ultimate goal this term is to develop writing fluency. A small but steadily increasing number of students are practising a cursive writing style.

Spelling

Last term, we introduced the Joy Alcock spelling programme and this term Rachel and Fleur are teaching more formal lessons in spelling using the smaller spelling notebook for home revision. You can find out more about this programme at <http://www.spelling.co.nz/>.

MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS

Your child will know their knowledge stage and strategy stage when solving addition and subtraction problems. Maths comprises 80% number using the Numeracy programme. This term, we are also including geometry and measurement teaching to make up the remaining 20%.

In Term 2, learning outcomes for measurement include reading and comparing prices, telling o'clock and half past time, identifying time as day of the week, month, year, and measurement using estimates and centimetres. In geometry, we are taking a fresh look at naming simple geometric shapes and how these are transformed in artworks by New Zealand painter Milan Mrkusich. Milan is an expressionist and his works explore colour and the arrangement of shape. In Wellington, his work is prominent in the coloured enamel windows at Te Papa. His art style will enable students to generate creative ideas of their own and provides a strong comparison to impressionism.

PE AND HEALTH

Based on the assessment from last term, this term's learning objectives include skills in movement, and throwing and catching at different heights and varying distance. Later in the term, we will prepare the students for our Cross Country event.

We will continue with 'Circle Time' which was introduced last term as part of the health curriculum. 'Circle Time' offers a safe and supportive environment for students to share ideas and feelings. It is an opportunity to raise their self-esteem and encourages positive attitude and behaviour.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of student progress provides teachers with comparative data and tracks individual and cohort progress. It identifies which teaching practices have been effective with our diverse range of learners and prompts us to explore new ways of keeping all students motivated and engaged.

All new incoming students are assessed using a numeracy assessment (the diagnostic survey). This term, we are gathering comparative numeracy data to evaluate student progress since the recent data collection at the end of 2008. This will help us to analyse the mental processes (strategies) that our students are using to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems with numbers.

Running Records will be taken monthly for students who are receiving Reading Recovery or who are part of the Parent Tutor Reading Programme.

After 6-8 weeks at school, 5 year olds complete a School Entry Assessment to give teachers useful information about how well each student is progressing. When students turn 6 years old, they are assessed using the Six Year Observation Survey.

Teachers and teacher aides plan collaboratively with each child to record and celebrate learning outcomes and identify their next learning steps. The SLCs gave your child an opportunity to talk about their learning progress and set individual goals. Talk with your child about their specific learning intentions or 'WALTs' and celebrate their progress. Look for current learning goals on display in the classroom.

CLASSROOM SET UP

In Tautoru, when new 5 year olds feel well settled at school, they become part of the larger teaching space for literacy and numeracy learning. There is no time frame around this event. In the afternoon, all junior students learn in small cooperative groups. This is an opportunity for them to develop leadership, take responsibility, interact positively and problem solve. Keep in touch with your child's home group teacher if you have questions about any part of the learning programme.

HOMEWORK

Home learning provides an opportunity to consolidate and enrich classroom related learning. Ten minutes homework is sufficient for the junior school. Check out these websites for ideas on how to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable task:

<http://www.nzmaths.co.nz/families/index.aspx>

<http://www.teamup.co.nz/AllAges/FunActivities.aspx>

http://www.tki.org.nz/r/wick_ed/index.php

REQUEST OF ALL PARENTS

It's what teachers do moment by moment that has a big impact on student learning and achievement. The drop off at 8.55am and pick up at 3.00pm routine is working well, however we also value parent help and support in the classroom and recognize the importance of your understanding of what happens at school so that it can be followed up at home.

If you have time to spare, talk with your child's teacher about helping out. If you have a question about curriculum, assessment, or would like to check on how your child is doing, please arrange a time with us.

Our weekly staff meeting is on Monday afternoon and Tautoru teachers meet each Wednesday. On both occasions, we begin promptly at 3.15pm. Other than these two afternoons, we are always available to meet.

Thanks in advance for your co-operation and support!

Maria, Fleur and Rachel