

Forest View Kindergarten Staff Community Report

High quality learning delivered - Learning outcomes for children; The learning environment both inside and out; professional learning undertaken; purchases, plans for change, Te Ao Maori

Professional Learning

- Over the last terms, all teachers have been working on their Inquiry question for Appraisal. This is a significant change from former ways of documenting appraisal and collecting evidence, and the importance of developing a meaningful and living question, that provoked and promoted inquiry into our practice and the outcomes for tamariki, whanau and Kaiako. Our collective strength and unity in meeting individual goals makes our growth and learning even greater! We are finding that as a teaching team, the work that we are doing, and the way we are all feeding into our individual learning, is building our collective knowledge and having a positive effect on our team and on the learning happening for our tamariki.
- Our Kahui Ako, Community of Learners cluster is meeting regularly and the Early Childhood participants are creating networks and liaising with the Primary and Secondary Schools. The achievement challenges set by the schools and Early Childhood Centres in our Kahui Ako have now changed and we will be meeting again to ensure there is communication across the sector in working towards our achievement challenges. Our Achievement Challenges will facilitate student learning and development through provision of an environment that fosters: 1. Cultural Responsiveness: 2. Wellbeing: 3. Authentic, Relevant Learning. Karen and Shelley attended a meeting at Tikipunga Educare, where the focus was on the Achievement challenge of 'Wellbeing'. The schools in the group are developing a survey for children around wellbeing, that will be the same across all Kura. The early Childhood part of the group, will also be investigating ways in which we can provide data to this survey, by coming up with one of our own that suits the age group. We look forward to this development!
- As a teaching team, we completed reviews/internal evaluations on our Social competenc statement. We also reviewed our procedures relating to Self Review, Building Evacuations, Hygiene Practices, First Aid and Administration of Medicines, Laundry Procedures, Caring for Animals, Profile Books and Transitions. Our inquiry based questions are also looking at the ways in which we are supporting oral language learning, developing our sustainable practices, how we build meaningful attachments and relationships to support children in developing their sense of whanaungatanga and exploring mindfulness within our curriculum design. These reviews and our inquiry questions, ensure that we are current in our practice throughout many aspects of the curriculum.
- We continue to be supported by Gillian Armit, our Professional Practice Manager with the Northland Kindergarten Association. She visits us regularly and provides insights and discussion points on our current practices and the culture of the Kindergarten as a whole.

She provides us with a picture of where we are sitting and ideas for improvement. We very much value the support and guidance that she offers us on a range of topics.

- Karen has completed a successful appraisal, using the new inquiry based process and all members of the team have had their termly appraisal discussions.
- Shelley attended Head Teacher Hui this term and heard some interesting discussions around mindfulness and the Hikiro Schema which has become a foundation for practice at Hikurangi Kindergarten. Head teacher Hui's provide an important platform for head Teachers to discuss impacts on Early Childhood Education, our individual and collective work in Kindergartens and to build leadership.

Staffing

- This term we have started 6 new children and their whanau and have had a few tamariki and whanau return to us after some time away. Nau mai, haere mai! We are ending the term with our roll numbers full on most days. Many of our whanau have increased the number and length of the days that their tamariki will be attending, which is fantastic. We have also started a number of younger siblings who are enjoying spending time alongside each other within the environment. This fosters a strong sense of tuakana/teina, where the older sibling looks after and guides the younger, showing responsibility and care.
- Our Teaching team has remained the same, and Michelle has increased hours this term, due to the availability of targeted funding. We have used this funding to increase teacher:child ratios, which enable all Kaiako to work 1:1 with children across the week. This is increasing the attachment and sense of belonging that children are feeling and allows Kaiako to coach and support our tamariki to build their language and social competence skills.
- We are very lucky to have a regular set of relievers who cover for staff during illness and when we are absent for professional development. Their regular inclusion into the programme means that our tamariki feel safe and relaxed around familiar people and look forward to the special characteristics and strengths that these professionals bring to the curriculum. Thank you to Angie, Denise, and Madhu for the support you give us.

Learning Outcomes

- This term, we have continued developing our programme around children's inquiry based questions. These questions arise from our analysis of the learning that we see happening on a daily basis. It comes from our 'noticing' the dispositions that are coming through strongly in our tamariki, which we then respond to. The number of children that have started with us, both this term and last term, and the way that they connect their existing knowledge and relationships to this place and time, meant that the question became 'How do I make connections?' This question also linked to the story-telling question but came from Kaiako noticing the ways in which children were connecting what they know, their way of knowing, with new or different information that they were exploring within this environment and beyond. The connections that they made between their existing and prior knowledge and the inquiry and exploration that occurred within this environment, formed the basis for this question. Young children love to ask questions and to challenge themselves. It's one of the

ways in which they make sense of the world and their place in it. Questions are also a powerful tool for Kaiako to promote children's thinking and learning. Children exercise their sense of agency and develop valuable and complex problem-solving skills. When children are able to pose questions and investigate the answers, they feel in charge of their own learning. Inquiry-based approaches to learning harness this spirit of investigation, creating an interesting, engaging and meaningful curriculum that uses children's interests and questions as a starting point for effective learning. Inquiry-based approaches reflect a view of the child as a constructor of their own knowledge and learning rather than simply as a passive recipient of someone else's. This active view of the learning process reinforces the need for learning experiences that allow children the chance to follow their own interests and shape their own learning. A new question has also arisen over the last couple of weeks. That question is "How do I show Manaakitanga?" This question has come from Kaiako observations of children and their interactions with each other and the environment. Manaakitanga is a measurement of people's ability to extend aroha. This question will highlight the way we and the tamariki help each other, tautoko, awhi and tiaki-support and care for each other and be considerate and respectful of all within this space.

Kindergarten Environment

Our vegetable garden has been a huge success this term! The seed potatoes that were planted have grown with gusto, and we have had a committed group of tamariki caring for the patch every day. The plants have been watered, sung to, weeded and watched for weeks on end and all of that care and attention netted a bumper crop! We have been able to dig up, wash cook and serve a number of plates of yummy chips and some mash and gravy! It was all delicious! This caring for the garden links with the children's inquiry questions..."How do I make Connections?"...what better way to connect that to the land!

In Māori tradition and history, Papatūānuku is profoundly important. Papatūānuku is the land, a mother earth figure who gives birth to all things of the world and imparts many blessings to her children. She is seen as the birthplace of all things and the place to which they return, and is considered a foundation for human action. Papatūānuku is the first kaupapa (platform) in the traditional world view.

- A big thank you to NKA Management and Maintenance for cutting down our rotten trees. One stump is now being used to create a wonderful piece of garden art, designed and made by the children. Have a look in the bush area to see what's developing!
- The children are continuing to enjoy being creative with carpentry. A regular supply of wood has been sourced and the children have been utilising the vice, using saws safely and accessing a variety of resources to support the learning from the re-instated carpentry cupboard.
- The Monkey bars and the rope swing are still proving to be very popular and a wonderful tool for providing children with the opportunity to be tenacious, develop resilience, and to challenge themselves to meet a set goal. It has been wonderful to see the way in which the children have been supporting each other in gaining success in this area.

- The kindergarten environment continues to provide provocations and opportunities for children to explore and engage and build relationships. They have opportunities to work independently and with and alongside others, sharing their knowledge and expertise. We have noticed the children's confidence and sense of ownership growing as they set their own learning challenges and make their own learning choices.
- Using loose parts to build huts, boats, obstacle courses and a whole range of other imaginative buildings has been a large part of our programme this term. The availability of these 'junk' materials allows children to really build their imagination and participate in positive learning alongside their peers, being in control and making decisions about their learning.

Facebook

- We continue to use this as a tool for communicating what, how and why we do the things that we do. It serves multiple purposes, as these interactions support and informs the learning and our curriculum design. Children's inquiry questions come directly from the photos and learning that we document on facebook. The photos that we take each day highlight a significant learning moment for that child or group of children and shows the way that we are noticing and recognising the learning happening for our tamariki. We use these posts and the photos to reflect and review our tamariki's interests and strengths, provide opportunities for our whanau to participate in review, and it helps to promote and build our community profile. We thank all of our whanau for their feedback. We love reading your comments.

Te Ao Maori

- As a teaching team, we remain committed to ensuring that our Maori tamariki are supported in their ways of being and knowing, and that we as Kaiako, support their learning through the things that we do.
- We continue to be supported by Roimata Macfarlane, our Pou Whakarewa Tikanga Maori Advisor, in strengthening all that we do around Te Ao Maori. Her feedback to us this term included the following:

'The whakatauki "Mā te whiritahi, ka whakatutuki ai ngā pūmanawa ā tāngata - Together weaving the realisation of potential" comes to mind as you slowly start to weave together your kete mātauranga (knowledge basket). Together with whānau you help mould children who are valued and value others through:

Mana manaaki – building the mana of others, through nurturing, growing and challenging (i.e. being the best that you can be, growing the strengths of others, actively supporting whānau).

Aroha – giving with no exception of return (i.e. affection and appreciation, loving, nurturing, acceptance).

Kōrero awahi – positive communication and actions (i.e. communicating positively, acting with compassion, being honest, doing what you say).

Whanaungatanga – it's all about being connected (i.e. connected at many levels, feeling that you belong, supporting and being supported in good times and in bad, value and respect for individuals).

Whakapapa – knowing who you are and where you belong (i.e. identity, a sense of belonging, knowing where you come from, showing commitment & responsibility, comfortable in your identity) and

Tikanga – doing things the right way, according to your/their values (i.e. doing what is right, consciously 'living' our values).

The word '**kotahitanga**' comes to mind when I think of the cohesion of all your inquiry questions coming together. Kotahitanga – as a collective, any group has the potential to pursue their own goals. Each individual has a role to play, each person works towards achieving the common goal, thus when all individuals unite under the same objective it is more likely to be attainable. There's a real sense of this happening in your space and that always excites me.

Values and being true to these I feel are massive contributors to what makes teams like yours enter your hoe into the water that little deeper and push harder to ensure a smooth and purposeful haerenga for your tamariki. When we use values to make decisions, we make a deliberate choice to focus on what is important to us. When values are shared, they build internal cohesion in a group.

Perhaps this is why the sense of kotahitanga is so strong, as a collective, any group has the potential to pursue their own goals. Each individual has a role to play, each person works towards achieving the common goal, thus when all individuals unite under the same objective it is more likely to be attainable. I also think what lies within this mahi of kotahitanga is the term 'mahi tahi'. Mahi tahi is a term used to describe the unity of people working towards a specific goal or the implementation of a task often in a 'hands-on' fashion. Whereas kotahitanga is the state of being united, mahi tahi is the act of carrying out the task or activity for which you have come together in a common purpose. The solidarity that mahi tahi engenders in a group of people is powerful and this kind of relationship is known to sustain itself well after the goal has been fulfilled or the project has been completed (Berryman et al., 2002). The philosophy of mahi tahi comes from traditional times. Working together was vital for activities such as construction, food production, child rearing and warfare. The tamariki at Forest View Kindergarten are ALWAYS at the heart of your mahi and I absolutely loved watching and listening to all your interactions, all the while ensuring the mana of a child is always kept intact. '

Relationships – Strong sustained relationships and partnerships: Community Engagement:

Pumanawatanga, transition to school visits, trips, visitors into the kindergarten, special events, etc

- Our involvement in Kahui Ako is building our networks and relationships with other Early Childhood Centres in our community. This sharing of ideas and thinking is building an understanding of our point of difference and the similarities we share in striving for quality in Early Childhood Education.
- Visitors to the Kindergarten have included support from professionals at Special Education and Kaiako from Glenbervie School and Whangarei Primary School
- The end of term will see our annual End of Year party, with whanau coming together for a picnic and entertainment as we celebrate another fabulous year at Forest View Kindergarten.
- A parent/whanau breakfast was held on the 8th of November to welcome our new whanau and to gain insight into one of our reviews on how meaningful our portfolios and assessment documentation is to children and their families.
- We enjoyed having Karma, a student from Open Polytechnic, join us for 5 weeks this term. Having a student challenges all Kaiako to keep current in their practice, and have the ability

to articulate what and why we do the things that we do. It also provides an opportunity for students to have a positive experience in a quality early childhood centre.

Promotion – Lifting the profile of the kindergarten within the community: newspaper stories and photos open days, kindergarten out in the community, promotional flyers sent out, etc

- Our facebook posts continue to receive positive feedback and extended whanau in particular, that may live further afield, have expressed their delight in being able to see our tamariki playing and learning in this environment on a regular basis.
- We are still waiting for the old sign along the front fence to be revamped and we have also requested another sign along the fence, pool side, which can be seen as you travel from Glenberrie, would add to our public profile. Hopefully these will be up in the not too distant future.
- The active role that we are playing in our Kahui Ako group is also leading to the development of relationships within the early childhood sector with positive outcomes for all parties.

Finance – Financial Stability: Management and administration (roll numbers, variation report explanation, fund raising, grant applications etc

- Our roll numbers have built over the term and have increased to full or over-full capacity! The option to stay for a full day has also been taken up by our whanau and we now have very limited spaces on only a couple of days. Thank you to Lizzie for all her hard work in striving to meet a 100% enrolment.
- Resources and equipment have been maintained throughout the term, whilst keeping within our budget requirements.

Services – Services delivered that are relevant to the communities they serve: Ensure our services meet our communities' needs. Working alongside of NKA: PPM, speech and Language therapist, Pou Whakarewa Tikanga Maori visits. Environmental sustainability,

- Gaye Easterbrook , Speech-Language Therapist with the NKA, continued her work with some children towards the end of this term
- Roimata, Pou Whakarewa Tikanga Maori Advisor has visited us this term and supported us with our bicultural practices and our journey with Mihi Whakatau. We continue to actively seek Roimata's guidance and value the input she has into delivering a high quality programme
- Thank you to Property manager Keith, and builders Jeremy and Bevin, who have helped with maintenance this term.
- We are continually supported and greatly appreciate our Professional Practice Manager Gillian Armitt, who has visited us throughout the term.

General Comments:

Term four 2018 has tracked along nicely and it was wonderful to add some extra hours for Michelle. I would like to take this opportunity to really thank our relievers, in particular Denise, Angie and Madhu for their regular input into the daily programme. Your consistency allows for a seamless

transition to changes of staff due to illness or other factors and enables our tamariki to feel safe and secure with the adults in the learning environment.

Juliann, Jodi, Karen, Michelle and Lizzie continue to show their passion and dedication to providing a quality learning environment and experience every day, and a strong commitment to ensuring that the relationships and interactions that occur are positive and empowering for all.

- Acknowledgements: Thank you to our generous and supportive whanau who contribute in so many ways. This could be through donations of kai, doing the gardening, participating in our programme and sharing skills and knowledge, and taking care of our environment and resources.
- Thank you to all of the relievers that support the Kindergarten and bring their individual skills and knowledge to the mix. We value so much that you make the time to provide us with the time we need for Professional Development or to get better!
- Thank you to our cleaners and grounds-people that maintain our learning environment and make it such a lovely place to be every day.
A special thanks to all of whanau and tamariki for spending time with us. It's such a wonderful place to be because you are a part of it!

Shelley, Karen, Juliann, Jodi , Michelle and Lizzie.