

# Thorndon School Newsletter

18/2008

[www.thorndon.school.nz](http://www.thorndon.school.nz)  
[office@thorndon.school.nz](mailto:office@thorndon.school.nz)

24 July 2008  
[principal@thorndon.school.nz](mailto:principal@thorndon.school.nz)

I **know** numbers are beautiful. If they aren't beautiful nothing is.

Paul Erdos

## Action List

- |   |                          |  |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Have you checked out your child's class blog?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you sent in your school donation?     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you coming to our numeracy evening?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can you be a Maths mentor?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can you find time to read to children during Book Week? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can you offer some help during Maths Week? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Dear Parents

Kia ora tatou.

The start of another term and a brisk reminder that, regardless of the spectre of global warming, it is still winter. You will see in the calendar that appears later in the newsletter that we have quite a lot going on this term. All classes will be involved in an Inquiry Unit based around China and this will take up the whole term. The Olympics will obviously be a part of this but we hope to develop some wider understandings of what China means to the rest of the world by the time we get to the end of the term.

As well as this study going on over the term you will see reference to a number of "weeks". These dates are set by agencies outside the school and some resources are available to the school if we participate. We do not choose to take part in all these weeks but some make a great deal of sense in terms of our own programmes and our school community. We have Maori Language week going on at the moment, Maths Week, Book Week, Library Week and International Languages Week all happening this term and we will be doing our best to mark all of them and to ensure that activities are integrated into what we are doing with our Inquiry Unit.

One of the things we do not have to concern ourselves with this term is ERO, having had a visit in the first week of last term. The report has been confirmed and a copy of ERO's report to the community is attached. As always, ERO comment on areas of good performance, of which there are many, and suggest areas for further development, giving us things to think about, work on and develop further. It is however, a positive report and the experience was useful and affirming.

We are currently conducting a major review of maths in the school and during the holidays staff came back in for a day's discussion and planning. We have been aware for some time that the performance of our children in maths, while comparable to most schools like ours, and by no means weak, is not as strong as our performance in literacy, and the purpose of this review is to try and find out why this might be so and to develop ways of addressing this. We believe that achievement levels in both areas should be similar and our aim is to improve performance in maths, over a period of time, to a level that is comparable to our literacy levels.

We will be examining our beliefs and assumptions, taking a close look at teaching practice, assessing children's performance in specific areas of maths, doing some close analysis of the data gathered and looking at attitudes towards maths, our own as well as the children's. We have already started some of this work asking children about their view of maths. We found, contrary to what we assumed, that after PE and Sport, maths was the most popular of 14 areas of the whole curriculum. We have some other interesting data about attitudes towards maths too which we will share with you through the term.

We have Maths week coming up a little later and we have a parent evening planned on August 14 at which we would like to talk about the maths curriculum, the numeracy project, new approaches and give you the opportunity to experience some of what the children do. We would also like to extend an invitation to you to come in and observe a maths session during that week and will publish times in next week's newsletter.

Bill Sutton

## THORNDON SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

### **Term 3**

This is a manageable list of activities at the moment.

Jul 29	Lion Dance Workshops – whole school.
Jul 30	Junior school to panto performance at WGC
Jul 31	Junior school to panto performance at WGC
Jul 31	Senior School Art Exhibition – Wholly Bagels
Aug 5	Maths World Activities
Aug 7	Maths World Activities
Aug 8	The Olympics begin.
Aug 8	Enviro Group to Te Papa.
Aug 11	Maths Week begins
Aug 13	Art Workshop whole school.
Aug 13	Chess competition at Kelburn.
Aug 14	Numeracy Evening for Parents
Aug 18	Artsplash this week.
Aug 18	International Languages Week begins
Aug 19	Ballet Workshop at School
Aug 21	Group to Ballet Performance – St James
Aug 22	Central Cluster Chess Competition.
Aug 29	School disco
Sep 4	Poly Club performance at Wellington Girls
Sep 8	Book Week begins.
Sep 16	Central Cluster Speech Competition.
Sep 17	Science Technology Roadshow.
Sep 18	Science Technology Roadshow.
Sep 26	Term Ends.

### **Three Way Conferences**

As I mentioned last term, these take place over a number of weeks, and while some classes have finished others are still going on.

The feedback I have received has been very positive and I would urge everyone to make the effort to come along. The interest parents show in what their children are doing at school and the support and feedback they give are very powerful motivational tools for children.

I would also urge you to consider the logistical problems teachers have to contend with in setting up these conferences. It creates considerable difficulty if half the parents say they cannot attend at the given time. Some parents have also asked if meetings can be before school, and while teachers make every effort to accommodate these requests, it can be difficult, particularly at this time of the year, as other children need to be in the classroom because of the weather. We are asking for about an hour out of one day, once a year, and obviously, because it is our job, we regard these meetings as important – for us, for you and for your child. Please try to come along at the appointed time and **please** let the teacher know if you are unable to make it.

### **New Children**

We have enrolled 4 new children since the last newsletter.

On the last Thursday of Term 2 when we had no newsletter there was one enrolment:

Max Falconer	Y1	Room 8 - Harakeke
--------------	----	-------------------

Max joins his sister, Isabella, who is a Year 2 pupil in Room 9.

This term we have enrolled three children. They are:

Oliver Needs	Y6	Room 2 - Rimu
--------------	----	---------------

Oliver was a pupil here a number of years ago. He and his family have returned after some time in Canada.

Lily Hart	Y1	Room 8 – Harakeke
-----------	----	-------------------

Seung Young Lee	Y6	Room 2 - Rimu
-----------------	----	---------------

Seung Young is an international student from Korea who will be with us for at least this term.

We hope these children and their families all enjoy and prosper from their time with us.

We also have to welcome five Korean students who are with us until August 8, having a little taste of life and education in New Zealand over their summer holidays.

They are:

Yu Na Kwon  
Si Yeon Choi  
So Jeong Min  
Young Jun Won  
Hye In Yu

I would like to thank the parents who have volunteered to have these children to stay for the three weeks they are here.

Quite apart from the financial gain to the school there is the possibility of building an ongoing relationship with these children and their families.

We have already been asked if we can do something similar next year when Yeon Souk Park, the agent who brings the children over, would like to bring another group of 5 – 10 children at the start of Term 3. This might be something for you to tuck away in the back of your mind.

The more experience we develop with this the easier it will become.

## THORNDON SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

### **Parent Help**

Last term we asked for volunteers to come into the school to read with and to children during book week and library week – probably during lunch hours. A number of people have volunteered their time already – thank you very much. We would be quite keen to get some volunteers to help during Maths Week too. Let us know if you can help.

We also have a group of parents coming into the school working on a Reading mentoring programme and this is going well. So well that it has been suggested that we expand the idea of a mentoring programme into maths.

Is there anyone able to come in and work with either an individual or with a small group on some targeted maths? Staff here would prepare the work and the programme and parents would be taught how to deliver it.

We would be looking at sessions of about 30 minutes and would hope to be able to have sessions every day.

If you can help could you contact Zeeta Andrew or Adele Connor-Wills. Their email addresses are: [zeeta@thorndon.school.nz](mailto:zeeta@thorndon.school.nz) and [adele@thorndon.school.nz](mailto:adele@thorndon.school.nz)

We also hope to start a blog or a wiki so that we can begin a dialogue with parents – and anyone else who might be interested – about maths, the maths curriculum, maths resources for parents, maths ideas, maths experiences – anything that might help heighten awareness and understanding. Watch this space.

### **Art Exhibition**

Next Thursday sees the opening of an exhibition of art works inspired by Don Binney and produced by pupils in the senior school – Rooms 5, 6, 7.

**5:00 pm**

**Wholly Bagels**

**Pizza, beer, wine and juice available**

The exhibition will be on for two weeks and we would really like as many of the school community as possible to get in and take a look at the work the children have done.

### **Staff Change**

I mentioned last term that Susie Harcourt was leaving which created a vacancy for a teacher aide.

We have managed to fill this very quickly and I am delighted to welcome Regina Singh to the staff. Regina was a teacher aide here last year so is familiar with staff, students and the way we work, which makes life much easier.

### **Teacher Aide Positions**

Kimi Ora School has Teacher Aide positions available for 27.5 hours per week during term time. If you are interested in working with students with a disability please forward a letter of application together with your CV to Kimi Ora School, 21 Turnbull St, Thorndon or by email to: [admin@kimiora.school.nz](mailto:admin@kimiora.school.nz)

Phone 472 9045

### **Election Meeting**

NZEI is hosting a meeting involving two high ranking politicians from the Labour and National Parties.

This is expected to be a lively debate.

August 6

4:00pm

City Gallery, Civic Square

Trevor Mallard

Anne Tolley

### **The Fair**

Yes, it is getting to that time but this is a small, discreet notice to begin with.

One of the items we collect is scratch and win tickets for a raffle prize, and we are hoping that we can start collecting them now. If you ever buy a lotto ticket maybe you could consider spending an extra dollar or two and buying a scratchie for the school.

### **Circus Proms**

Sunday 27 July

**Michael Fowler Centre**

**4:00pm**

**Vector Wellington Orchestra and the Wellington Circus Trust**

Aerial performers, unicyclists, tumblers, stilt walkers and specially selected music.

\$20 per child, \$35 per adult

30 June 2008

## **To the Parents and Community of Thorndon School**

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Thorndon School**.

Thorndon School is situated in the heart of the city drawing pupils from across the greater Wellington area. The buildings and grounds are well maintained and attractively decorated. Creative works reflect the school's strong commitment to the visual arts. A playground, that invites exploration and activity has been designed and erected since the 2005 review.

This review evaluates the effectiveness of literacy programmes for reading and writing; progress in improving the achievement of Māori and Pacific students; management of professional learning and development; and provision for international students. ERO also considered compliance with requirements related to health and safety and some issues are identified.

The literacy committee provides sound leadership for reading and writing. Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional discussion and are supported through a collaborative approach.

The school effectively collates and analyses school-wide student achievement data to provide appropriate support for students in literacy. Results from a range of nationally-referenced tests are gathered and used to identify students who are underachieving or those who require extension. The board receives regular and comprehensive reports from the principal about student achievement.

The quality of teaching observed was generally good and classrooms are settled learning environments with students engaged in their work. A love of literature is being promoted through teaching strategies and particular projects. There is good provision made for students with special needs and abilities. Special programmes are provided and student progress is well monitored.

This report identifies that strategic planning could be developed to provide a more cohesive pathway to support school direction and self review. Alignment of professional development and a more rigorous performance management system with strategic plans is likely to better support ongoing improvement.

### **Future Action**

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.