

Thorndon School Newsletter

16/2010

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Some people walk in the rain, others just get wet.

Roger Miller

Action List

Are you coming to a National Standards session?

Have you sent in feedback on three way conferences?

Have you ordered or sold an entertainment book?

Have you checked the netball draw? www.nsnetball.co.nz

Dear Parents

Who else is SAD? I am sure that by now we must all be suffering from seasonal affective disorder and in desperate need of a dose of melatonin! I keep telling everyone who complains about the weather to remember the wonderful late summer and autumn we had but I am beginning to struggle to recall it. It seems longer than it really is since we had a sunny day. The children are remarkably chirpy but we adults are not coping well. I can see some blue sky as I write this so perhaps relief is in sight.

Feedback on the three way conferences keeps trickling in and we have now had about 15% of parents send us a comment or suggestion. If you haven't sent anything in please don't think it is too late. All the feedback we get is useful.

Last night we were supposed to have a meeting to talk with parents about the National Standards but it didn't happen because there were only 2 people who said they were coming along. I must admit I was quite happy to get home a little earlier than I had anticipated. We have another session – a lunchtime session – on **June 9th** and there are, at the moment anyway, only a couple of people intending to come to that. I have organised one more session in the early evening and hope that this will make it easier for people. The details are later in the newsletter.

While we are determined that they would not take over what we do it is frightening to see how much the standards and reporting dominate our conversations at the moment. This is at least in part because teachers are thinking about and preparing mid-year reports on progress towards reaching the standards at the end of the year and this is something quite new to the school. Because the standards have been introduced so quickly and with so little training for teachers all schools are feeling their way and there is a distinct lack of confidence and certainty. It will take at least two years and possibly longer for the standards, the assessment of the standards and the reporting on them to bed in and I am sure that over that period we will tinker with our systems to get the best from them.

Ah well, a long weekend to look forward to and the forecast at the moment does not look too bad. Maybe we will get a little burst of melatonin and vitamin to carry us through to the end of term.

Bill Sutton

School Disco



More later.

HOT LUNCH WHOLE SCHOOL BBQ

Tuesday the 15th

We will be taking orders and collecting money on:

MONDAY 14th

Sausages/sauce/bread/onion.

Fruit punch.

Sausage with bread \$2.00

Fruit punch \$1.00

Term 2 Calendar

Jun 7	Queens Birthday – school closed
Jun 9	National Standards lunchtime session.
Jun 11	Inter-school Chess Tournament in hall.
Jun 15	Inter-zone Cross Country
Jun 15	Lunchtime sausage sizzle
Jun 16	Wellington Girls' College Open Morning
Jun 17	Wellington East Open evening.
Jun 23	Maori/Pasifika parent evening.
Jun 24	Chess tournament – Newlands Primary.
Jun 25	Disco
Jun 29	BoT meeting
Jul 2	Term ends

Arrival Times

There seems to have been fewer children getting here before 8:00 recently. Thank you everyone. Another small problem has cropped up at the other end of the day. As everyone knows we have a very large after school care programme which has roughly a third of the school on its roll. These children use the playground for supervised free play and organised games.

From time to time we have children who are not at after school care but stay on for some time at the end of the day. Almost inevitably they either become involved with after school care activities or they begin causing problems for the supervisors. Our policy is that children who are not part of the after school care programme should leave the school grounds by 3:30pm unless they are involved in some other supervised school activity such as netball practice. Your assistance would be welcome.

National Standards Meeting



There will be an information evening for parents at 5:30 on **June 16** in the library. We will arrange to show a DVD with supervision in the hall for children and will buy in some fish and chips for them. Perhaps a glass of wine and soup for parents?

We hope that this will make it easier as you will be able to come along on your way home from work. Because we will be catering we will really need to have a pretty clear idea of how many people will be coming.

Please let us know if you plan to be here – number of adults and children – as soon as possible.

After School Care

Invoices for After School Care will be coming home shortly and with them is a letter explaining changes to charges and some administrative details.

We have recently reviewed our charges and some increases will be applied next term as a result. Some of these changes are to take account of increased costs faced by the school and others have been introduced to rationalise the administration of the programme.

One example is the new charge for statutory holidays if a child would normally attend on that day. Just like all other workers ASC staff are paid for statutory holidays and the school needs to recover these costs from our users.

We have reviewed the definition of a casual user also and for much the same reason. In the past children attending on a regular basis but only on 1 or 2 days a week have been treated as casuals and have not been charged if for some reason they have been away on the day they regularly attend. We will now classify them as part-time regulars. The programme has to be staffed on the basis of the numbers booked and if 10 or 12 children are away unexpectedly the supervisors who are rostered on still need to be paid. Casual users are those who ring up asking to book their child in for a day or two now and then.

We have compared costs with other ASC programmes and we are still providing a programme that is cheaper than most and offers very good value for money, working out to about \$4:00 per hour. We would encourage as many of you as possible to set up automatic payments for After School Care as this is another way of reducing the administrative load the programme entails.

I am happy to discuss this if anyone wishes to get in touch but it is probably a good idea to wait until you have the details contained in the information pack being sent out with the invoices.

Drumbeat Drumming Tuition

Beginners Onwards
Competitive Rates

Save \$50 when buying 10 lessons
call or text Ferdinand on (027) 249 4217
or (04) 472 2938

School Holidays

Norman the Gnome needs your help!

Norman the Gnome wakes up one morning in a completely strange place. It's not his comfortable little spot at the bottom of the Armbrewsters' garden, amongst the bugs and fairies – it's somewhere overseas!!! Norman really wants to get back home and he needs your help!

Join **The Improvisors** at **Circa Theatre** (1 Taranaki St), **5-17 July**, as they present the tale of a plucky garden gnome and his adventure to get back to the bottom of the garden.

GNOME ON THE ROAM! is a totally interactive show for kids that uses the audience to steer the course of Norman's adventures and even come and join him on stage.

Following on from last school holiday's show **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** ("*...celebrates the magic of mass imagination*", **Theatreview**), **The Improvisors** are performing 11am & 1pm weekdays, 11am Sat, with no show Sun. Bookings are available at www.circa.co.nz Tickets are \$10 each.

Earth Nuts Update

Hi my name is Tabitha and my name is Lily, and we are here to tell you about World Environment Day. It's a day to take care of the earth, to do a rubbish pick up, plant a tree, go to the Botanical Gardens, go to **Zealandia** at the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, use less power, use less plastic than other days and lots of other things. World Environment Day is on the **5th of June**, that's **this Saturday** so get ready for... **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY!!!!!!** Thank you for reading this!

Written by Lily and Tabitha!! ☺ !! Room 8

During the last couple of Envirogroup meetings, the group designed posters with catchy slogans, which they are going to display around the school. The group also did a major cleanup in the sad area behind the library and then came up with some great ideas for making it look better. More information later....

Meta Beyers



School holiday - netball skills clinic

Where?: Newlands Intermediate, Bracken Rd, Newlands

Who for?: All Students up to year 8

What will we do?: Netball skills, injury prevention and management, nutrition, guest speakers, fun!

When is it?: July 5-7,8 & 9, 12-14, 15 & 16
(2 or 3 day clinics)

10:00am - 2:00pm each day

Limit: 32 students per group **Cost:** \$25.00 per day

Bring: Netball shoes, drink bottle, suitable clothing, lunch and snacks, a great attitude.

Contact: Neil Hargreaves 477 6066 or neil.acorn@xtra.co.nz

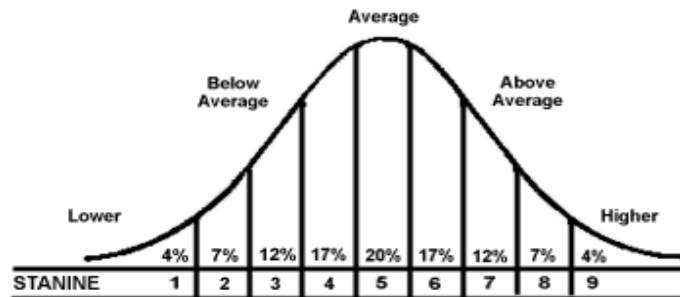
Please book early!

National Standards

The national standards are based not on an average of achievement determined by test results but on where the government believes children should be achieving at any particular level of schooling.

Up to now much school reporting on academic achievement in Literacy and Maths has, in large part, been based on the results of nationally normed tests such as the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) STAR (Supplementary Tests of Reading) and asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning). These tools, particularly PAT and STAR which we use early in the year, are nationally normed and place children on percentile bands and stanines. The percentile ranking indicates where a child is when measured against all other children in the country. If a child is on the 65th percentile this tells us that 64% of children nationally have not scored as well. This ranking is based not on a raw score but on a scaled score. The stanine (standard nine) which most schools use more than they use the percentile, places children into one of nine bands forming the bell curve most of you will be familiar with.

Stanines 4, 5 and 6 are regarded as the average bands and 54% of students are in this band. The automatic assumption would be that children achieving at these levels, particularly at stanine 5 or 6 would meet the standard. This is not in fact the case. The standards are aspirational and the Ministry is not necessarily expecting *all* children to have met them at the end of the year.



The results of formal tests are just one measure of a pupil's progress and achievement and should be approached with a degree of caution and our end of year school reports discuss much more than this narrow view of learning. One could draw the analogy of looking at 100 children in a cross country race. The first 4 children would be stanine 9, the children from 5th to 23rd would be in the above average band, those from 24th to 77th would be in the average band. There are many reasons why children finish where they do in a race. Some of it may be their particular physical attributes. They may have the muscles and lungs of a runner. Some of it may be their motivation to do well. There may be some who are good runners but whose pet cat died that morning and they were just too upset to do well. There may be the child who took a wrong turning and couldn't catch up in time.

This analogy also demonstrates why stanines are not a great measure of progress. If the same race is held 12 months later the child who finished 50th, had joined a harriers club, had a very good diet, plenty of rest (the equivalent of good teaching and plenty of home support) *might* finish 35th. It is unlikely that he or she would finish 1st or even 5th. It is also possible that a child's time might improve by 2 minutes but his or her place has not changed because the other 99 children running are also a year older, stronger and faster. A good teacher will know whether the 50th place was an accurate reflection of this child's ability.

Decisions on whether a child has met the standard for their year are not made on the basis of a single test but on what is being referred to as OTJ (acronyms and jargon abound) or Overall Teacher Judgement. Teachers will use a system of triangulation with test results being just one indicator of whether a child has met or is likely to meet the standard.

At present there is no process to ensure consistency between schools and until there is it is quite possible that a child could be judge to have met the standard at one school and be below or above the standard at another. This is a concern and we are hopeful that some sort of process will be developed that does not involve any form of national testing. At the moment schools can choose and use the assessment tools that they believe are the most useful and these differ from school to school.