



## Principal's Annual Report December 2023



E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e rau rangatira mā  
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

It is with immense pleasure that I present my annual report to the Board of Trustees and our community in Ōmata School's 170th year. We began 2023 with 203 students and we are finishing with 215.

Having been part of this incredible school for the last 20 years, it is a privilege to reflect on the remarkable growth and development that has shaped this place over that time; from the additions and physical upgrades to the property, to fostering a supportive and welcoming learning environment for the growing number of staff, students, whānau and community - all of which contribute to a positive, nurturing experience for all.

A highlight has been all the wonderful people that have come through our doors to be part of this special place and the deepening connection with our hapū; especially Matua Keith, Whaea Carol, Whaea Sharron and Whaea Cathryn whose ongoing guidance and generosity of support plays a crucial role. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire Ōmata School Community for making these two decades truly memorable, and I look forward to continuing our collective efforts in nurturing the growth and success of our school in the years to come.

2023 has been a year of 'Whiowhio', heartfelt joy, as our students excelled in many endeavours while the school forged ahead without the clouds of doubt that hung over the previous three years.

Although clouds of a different kind brought us 'Gabriel', a huge cyclone that wreaked havoc throughout the country and we were not left unscathed. As well as tree and property damage, our road sign was pulled away and strewn across the road. It was a 'sign', in more ways than one!

Replacement became an opportunity to align our image with our evolving vision and values. Through an exploration of local histories, involving our hapū, staff, and senior students, the clouds of uncertainty dissipated, revealing a clear direction. Drawing inspiration from these sources, ensured that the refreshed sign embodies a meaningful representation of our shared journey and values. While some elements have been retained to preserve our sense of identity, they are woven with meaningful new elements. The design symbolises a clear and intentional shift towards our updated vision and shared history. The storm, both metaphorically and literally, became a catalyst for positive change, authentically reflecting our collective aspirations and growth.



The property refresh project has successfully revitalised our learning spaces, with every classroom benefiting from refurbishments, excluding the Ruru spaces. The primary focus of the project involved the installation of new carpeting, LED lighting and a fresh coat of paint providing a significant aesthetic upgrade. In addition, some classrooms saw the introduction of new doors, and the old wood-burners were replaced with new ones, ensuring we retain the country school feel. The installation of solar panels underscores our dedication to actively engage in sustainable practices.

These improvements contribute to the overall 'feel' of our learning environment. The investment in modernising the classroom and reception areas aligns seamlessly with our vision, ensuring that our facilities are not only functional but also reflective of the atmosphere we aim to create. This intentional effort to create a welcoming, calm, rural, community feel underscores our commitment to providing an environment that nurtures positive experiences for visitors, staff, and students alike.

Tiakina te taiao Kia hono ngā akonga  
Nurturing environment Connected learners

## Staffing



Mrs Tania Scott was welcomed as a fixed term reliever for Laura Griffiths this year in Pūkeko, and we were very pleased when Tania won the 2024 permanent position at Ōmata. Tania is an excellent teacher who has many skills and interests that she is willing to share.

Our teachers really appreciate the work of all of our support staff. To our teacher aides; we thank you for your support with our students. Particular thanks to Caroline this year who has had to work around the renovations and totally, remove and then reinstall, the shelves and books. We are fortunate to also have TA trainees regularly gaining experience at our school. Thank you to Bridgit, teachers and the TA team for

supporting them.

To Mel in the office, we express our gratitude. You are the central hub of our school, serving as the warm and welcoming first point of contact for our visitors and parents. Your exceptional support for me particularly, in managing the myriad tasks involved in running a school, is truly appreciated. Thank you for your dedication and outstanding contributions to the smooth functioning and welcoming atmosphere of our school.

I extend special thanks to Stuart Bennett, our Deputy Principal, for his exceptional leadership. With integrity and professionalism, Stuart capably supports me in leading this learning community. Additionally, I express gratitude to Bridgit Barleyman, our Assistant Principal and SENCO, for her dedication to ensuring the unique needs of every child are met.

A heartfelt thank you to our teaching team for an incredible year of teaching and support for each other. Your unwavering commitment and mahi have made a profound impact on the educational journey of our students. Your passion, creativity, dedication and willingness to engage in

development, have created an enriching and inspiring environment for all. Thank you for your outstanding efforts this year.

### **Curriculum**

Staff have been involved in professional learning and development around the areas of NZ histories, mathematics and cultural competence; building our knowledge and ability to be more responsive for all learners.

Through our continued involvement in Te Ara Taiao, we have developed strong collaborative relationships with Sustainable Taranaki, Regional Council, hapū and our local cluster of schools. Students in the group have been involved in releasing kiwi, planting out coastal areas for Taranaki Iwi and an across-school hikoi. The development and upkeep of the orchard and gardens remain integral to our students' learning in authentic contexts. This effort seamlessly aligns with other environmental actions, including predator trapping and cultivating plants in our new shade house. Special appreciation goes to the Garden Club and the Te Ara Taiao group for consistently prioritising sustainable practices in their mahi. Thank you for your ongoing commitment as kaitiaki of the environment.

We consistently prioritise the intentional and comprehensive instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics, ensuring that our teachers are well-trained and proficient in these fundamental areas. These foundational skills along with the promotion of curiosity and innovation, serve as a gateway to access rich learning and critical thinking across the curriculum areas. Concurrently, we cultivate a school culture anchored in compassion, integrity, and responsibility. This deliberate focus on fostering a community where aroha prevails has a ripple effect, creating a positive impact that extends beyond the immediate school environment. Indeed, research shows that children are influenced through this '*prosocial modelling*'. (Jung, H., Seo, E., Han, E., Henderson, M. D., & Patall, E. A. 2020).

### **Student Achievement**

Achievement targets were set for the year in literacy and numeracy for Year 3. With targeted assistance from staff we were able to get 85% of our Year 3 students reading at 8 years and above. In Numeracy for Year 3, 92% of students were able to reach Early Additive or above.

Most of our students read, write and calculate at, or above, age expectations with many excelling. In reading 85% of our students are at or above the expected level for their age. In writing, 85% are at or above the expected level for their age. In mathematics, 85% of students are at or above the expected level for their age.

Our students' progress has also been excellent, and we are delighted to share that, with the support of our families, we have successfully accelerated the achievement of targeted students, positioning them for continued success. The collaboration between home, school, and the child through Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) and other means establishes a robust foundation for each child to reach their full potential. This collaborative approach involves identifying strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, and providing the necessary encouragement, learning opportunities, and resources. By doing so, we are committed to meeting the unique needs of every individual.

We acknowledge that students progress at varying rates and attain different levels of achievement. There are many diverse and unique factors that make learning difficult, or different, for some students. Every effort is made to nurture these students and cater for their needs, to grow their confidence to tackle challenges and be successful at their level.

We continue to foster children's engagement in 'circle time' within their classes, providing a valuable platform for them to collaboratively address and resolve disputes and issues. This practice has proven to be highly successful, equipping children with essential skills to navigate social situations. Recognising that each year group presents distinct challenges aligned with normal stages of child development we support our students through these situations, aiming for them to develop decision-making skills independently.



A particularly noteworthy moment was witnessing our year 7 and 8 students during the Wellington camp. Their exceptional support for each other and their representation of our school and its values was truly outstanding. It showcased the effectiveness of our collective efforts in preparing students not only academically, but also in fostering positive social interactions and values that extend beyond the classroom.

### 2023 Highlights

#### Sporting

We have had these events:

Swimming Display Day, Swimming Year 7 and 8 to Opunake for lifesaving/swimming skills Swimming coaching with Liz Aiken

Beach Education at Oākura Beach Year 5-8

School Triathlon

Weetbix Tryathlon

AIMS Games

Year 5-8 Inter-school Sports exchanges

Teams and individuals have played or been involved in these sports and sporting events throughout the year:

Basketball, mini-ball, cricket, netball, volleyball, touch rugby, rippa rugby, rugby and football

Students have taken part in these Inter-school Sports Cluster events:

Swimming Year 6-8 Full Primary Inter-school Sports Competition at Bell Block Pool

Y1-4 Movement Madness with Oākura School at Ōmata

Y1-4 Ball Skills at Oākura



Y7/8 Athletics at CTS and Inglewood

Y4-8 Cross Country at Ōmata

Y7/8 TempoFit Running

### Curriculum

Many special opportunities for rich learning were provided by in-school and out-of-school education including:

Kapa Haka with Wharekuka Tonga

Y5-8 Puniho Marae Visit

Kawaroa and Tapuae Beach visits

Art Gallery Visits

Art Exhibition

Y7/8 teams in the Police Competency Test

Year 8's to Young Leaders' Conference in Palmerston North

Year 7's to the 'LEAD 2023' conference

Y7/8 technology at Devon Intermediate -weekly

Y7/8 Science Roadshow at Highlands Intermediate

Y6-8 Otago University Problem Solving Challenge

Y5-8 WITT Science and Technology Fair

Y5-8 Chess tournaments

Y7/8 Wild About AI

e-Pro 8 Tech Challenge

ANZAC commemoration

Puanga celebration

VLN (Virtual Learning Network) sessions for Ruru -Spanish Lessons, Complex Thinking and Web design

Y7/8 Camp to Wellington

Puke Ariki Mobile library visiting every fortnight

Life Education Trust - Health programmes with 'Harold'

Speeches and Taranaki Speech competition

Folk Dance display -videoed

Te Ara Taiao Leadership Group -environmental outings and planting

Garden Club

Student Council

### Grants and Donations

Home and School     \$6400

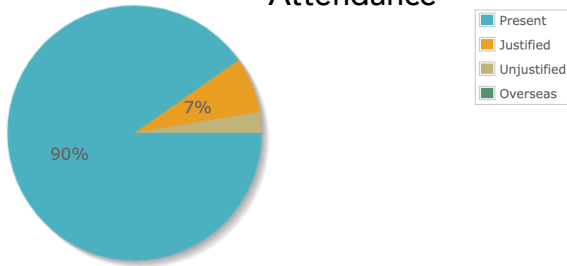
KiwiSport             \$3179 Specialist coaching in swimming/Equipment

We are also appreciative of the fundraising parents did for the year 7 and 8 camp, and donations from our Home and School Association which have gone towards purchasing many resources, Kapa Haka uniforms and upgrading the pool. These will be enjoyed and used by our students, and in some cases, the community, for many years to come.

### Reflections

The year twenty twenty-three has proven to be exceptionally positive, marked by the successful engagement in all our regular events, overcoming only minor weather-related challenges.

## Attendance



In contrast to nationwide attendance issues faced by many schools, we are pleased to report a commendable 90% attendance, with 7% justified absences (due to illness, appointments, etc.) and 3% unjustified absences (related to holidays).

I extend my sincere thanks to the Board of Trustees Josh Johnson, Ginni Douglas, Josie Roberts, Charles Widdicombe, Fiona McIntyre and Stuart

Bennett for their unwavering support which allows our staff to focus on creating a wonderfully nurturing learning environment, and who consistently support and challenge us in our mission to provide the highest quality education for all Ōmata students.

A special expression of thanks and appreciation goes to the families bidding farewell this year. Your time, energy, and commitment to the school have made a significant impact, and we are truly grateful for your contributions in whatever way you've been able to offer. Additionally, our best wishes extend to all departing students. We eagerly anticipate hearing about your future achievements, of which we are confident there will be many.

As we approach the holiday season, I encourage everyone to enjoy a well-deserved break. Looking ahead to twenty twenty-four, I am excited about the challenges it will bring and the opportunities for growth and success that lie ahead.

Karen Brisco  
Principal