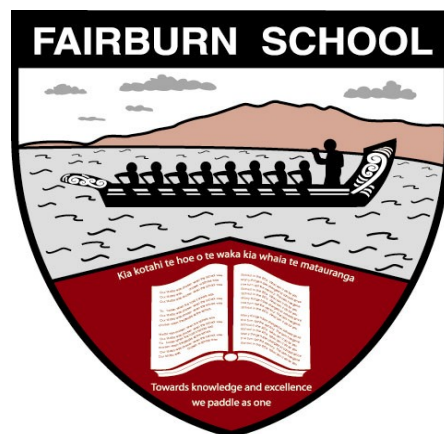


Fairburn School

Principal's Sabbatical Report



Kia kotahi te hoe o te waka kia whaia te matauranga.

Towards knowledge and excellence we paddle as one.

Proposal

To investigate the place and use of educative mentoring and coaching within performance management processes in primary schools.

To identify and implement those components (within performance management frameworks) that impact on the growth and development of teacher pedagogical practice leading to increased student achievement.

To produce materials for staff to enable us to implement the ideas and findings of this project and support the development of coaching and educative mentoring in a practical way.

Performance management systems in the context of this work include processes for induction, appraisal, teaching as inquiry and accountability (salary progression and registration) within a primary school setting.

Fairburn School Context

Fairburn School is a U7 Decile 1 multi-ethnic school in South Auckland. Our student group is largely made up of Maori, Pacifica and Indian/Asian learners with a large number of these students fitting in to our ESOL group (approximately 42%). In other words, diversity and equity are key issues in our thinking and in our work.

The following quote from the NZCER report to the Ministry of Education in 2012 – “Supporting Future-oriented Learning & Teaching - a New Zealand Perspective” has been a powerful shaper of my thinking in working with teachers who work with students:

“An idea (sic) that commonly comes up in discussions of equity/diversity is that 21st century citizens need to be educated for diversity - in both the people sense and the knowledge/ideas sense. The changing global environment requires people to engage - and be able to work - with people from cultural, religious and/or linguistic backgrounds or world- views that are very different from their own.

Alongside this is another different but related imperative. Doubts about the ability of existing paradigms to solve current social, environmental and economic challenges mean that a future-focused education system must provide learners with past paradigms and the ability to think between, outside and beyond them - that is, the ability to work with a diversity of ideas. It is argued that future oriented learning should provide all young people with opportunities to develop these capacities.”

Acknowledging the diversity of both ethnicity and religious beliefs evident in the Fairburn context, the need for us to work continuously on the adaption of our approach to teaching and learning is clear.

A further influencer is this key theme in the report -

“Changing the script”: Rethinking learners’ and teachers’ roles Twenty-first century ideas about knowledge and learning demand shifts in the traditional roles or “scripts” followed by learners and teachers. If the purpose of schools is not to transmit knowledge, then teachers’ roles must be reconceived. Similarly, if the learner’s main job is no longer to absorb and store up knowledge to use in the future, then learners’ roles and responsibilities also need to be reconceived. This calls for a greater focus on recognising and working with learners’ strengths, and thinking about what role teachers can play in supporting the development of every learner’s potential.

Our professional development and performance management processes have been developed to acknowledge and work with these key themes.

A focus on ***Student Learning and Achievement*** underpins and is a “given” for all of our work.

1. One of our 2013-2015 strategic focus areas is around ***“Developing Leadership and Mentoring”***. This involves working with leaders (at all levels) within our school through purpose-developed mentoring programmes appropriate for each group.
2. As part of our school goals relating to both Ka Hikitia and the Pasifika Education Plan, mentoring – to support relationship building - is a key area of work.
3. This is aimed at strengthening relationships between staff, students and parents through development of personal and professional skills that enable individuals to achieve their professional goals and responsibilities.
4. Our work has also spawned a whole raft of professional inquiry work and highlighted the necessity for skills development, in particularly mentoring as a way of transmitting our understanding and learning to other staff – including our teacher support staff – who work together at our school.
5. Work around developing cultural competencies/competence (Tataiako) and linking this to the RTC is also part of this work.
6. The sabbatical has been an ideal opportunity to focus on the bigger picture and what it is that we need to put in place to make this work well for everyone, especially our students.

There are multiple benefits accruing from aligning (linking/connecting) all of these concepts and creating a framework of support and development for our school. The “whole” has to be more important than the “sum of its parts”.

In thinking about, then writing up the impact of my sabbatical; a number of interesting and thought provoking things arose – not only about the topic, but about the what and how of the sabbatical process itself.

The impact of a sabbatical should, in my view, be about the resulting action rather than the writing of a treatise to show in writing that I have learnt something. I am not intending to quote the work of the many practitioners, researchers and academics that have developed theoretical frameworks or written up their research. Suffice to say, many pieces of work have been examined and been part of the evolution of my thinking for the purposes of this (sabbatical) exploration. I appreciate having such easy access to the work of others and have been influenced in a range of ways by this.

Over the period of my sabbatical –

- I read – a lot!
- I spent a significant of time thinking and analysing what I was working through
- I discussed, debated, developed and critiqued ideas with colleagues and acquaintances
- I observed and participated in a range of interesting, challenging and growth oriented activities and actions
- I created and then recreated strategies or frameworks that were intended to underpin the implement of practices at school

and, importantly

- I took the time to thoroughly examine and challenge much of the work I have previously done in relation to teaching and learning and how to best influence this positively within the school setting.

In answer to the “impact” question, regardless of what I may currently think – the proof will be apparent over the next couple of years in the practices we engage in at Fairburn School.

In keeping with this theme, I want to identify a number of people who have played a part in enabling the sabbatical work to be more meaningful. I didn't always agree with everything I saw or heard, but the rationale behind the work other colleagues are engaged in is clear in their thinking and their action. There are some excellent work practices in New Zealand (and Australian) schools that are having a profound impact on teaching practices and student learning.

My thanks to the following colleagues, not only for sharing their work with me but for encouraging me to share mine with them.

Louise Green	Principal Khandallah School	Wellington
Irene Cooper	Principal Hillcrest Normal	Hamilton
Jan Tinetti	Principal Merivale School	Tauranga
Ian Leckie	Principal Tahatai Coast School	Tauranga
Michael Bain	Principal Te Mata School	Hawkes Bay
Sara Scungio	Principal Marymount College	Adelaide Sth Australia
Phil Reid	Principal Paringa Park Primary	Adelaide Sth Australia
Peter Lind	Registrar Sth Australia Teachers' Registration Board	
Melanie Doyle	Numeracy Manager, Leading Numeracy and Literacy Improvement Dept for education and Child Development Sth Australia	

A little closer to home, I am very appreciative of the support the board of trustees has given in relation to my work and this sabbatical experience.

The teaching staff from Fairburn School have provided the motivation and the impetus to work together. We are making a difference in developing our professionalism and our teaching practices but - most of all - increasing the impact this can have on the learning of our students. This is truly - where the rubber meets the road!

What follows, is the outcome of more than just my sabbatical work. It is a much longer process of developing practices and protocols that support the daily work of teachers to deepen and broaden their impact on student learning.

Our work involves learning and developing the skills needed to have open to learning conversations, difficult conversations, up-lifting conversations and to be reflective listeners who engage with each other and our teaching practices.

We have developed a set of processes and a practice framework that enable us to focus on what matters in our teaching and learning and to collect our "evidence of practice" as we do this, rather than - in addition to what we are doing.

One of the more fundamental understandings is that if it's important, it must be properly resourced. This includes time. Time to think, opportunity to practice and the open-ness to work together in a relationship of trust.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL PROCESSES

Fairburn School Performance Management and Appraisal Processes have now been integrated to make the links between growing individual teacher capability and building teacher/leadership capacity within the school. Across the range of actions and processes undertaken, we aim to use the information and outcomes gathered, to enable us to meet our statutory responsibilities for:

- Appraisal for learning
- Accountability
- Attestation

Refer to attachment 1 - "***Coherent Performance Management***"

This area of our work is closely linked to our ***Charter Goals*** and the focus on Relationships and Values in our ***Strategic Direction - Refer*** Attachment 3.

Fairburn School has identified the following desirable ***Dispositions for Practice*** that underpin our processes:

- As professional leaders and teachers we are responsible for improving teaching and learning in our school and for demonstrating commitment to our own professional and pedagogical improvement;
- We are active learners who take responsibility for improving our practice and being able to demonstrate that improvement;
- We each aim to have a positive impact on the learning and achievement of all of our students;
- We each have a responsibility to collect the appropriate evidence to demonstrate our agency and impact.

Our ***school leaders*** hold important ***roles and responsibilities*** within the process to:

- ensure that the picture of effective teaching is co-constructed, well described, clear and moderated;
- ensure that teachers have the resources to collect and collate evidence of their own practice from the agreed sources to be used (***especially student voice and evidence of learning and achievement***)
- use a transparent and agreed process to check and moderate the evidence of current teaching gathered by each teacher
- ensure that there is a professionally focused and mutually engaging appraisal conversation about what the evidence shows and what the next steps might be so that the conversation is experienced by both as oriented towards making an impact for students and their learning.

Our *teachers* have *responsibilities* for their professional work in that they will ensure they:

- know what effective teaching looks like in our school.
- actively gather “evidence” that shows how well they currently teach
- actively critique their evidence to determine if any gaps can be seen in their practice
- actively plan to address any gaps they have identified.

Our systems and processes will provide a range of opportunities for us to collect and examine *evidence of practice*. This evidence will meet the broader range of purposes required for different contexts (including reporting and accountability requirements). The evidence will come from the following sources/processes:

- Observation of teaching practice;
- Planning;
- Student, teacher, colleague, family and whānau voice (especially Student-Led Conference outcomes);
- Professional learning communities (PLC) – teacher records and reflections; student monitoring information.
- Professional Learning Inquiry (PLI) documents and examples;
- Use of Student learning and achievement data;
- RTC/Tataiako – exemplified in teaching practice;
- PDL actions and outcomes
- other actions/activities/evidence that might provide insight to our work within an integrated system.

The Appraisal Cycle follows the school year, but will be flexible in nature to ensure that it is a “living process” that may look different for staff working across a range of contexts.

Refer to attachment 2 *“Fairburn School Appraisal Process”* flowchart.

1. JOB DESCRIPTIONS:

- Job and role descriptions will be agreed and signed by the end of Week 4 Term 1.
- Senior Leadership – Principal, DPs, SENCO, and Office Manager will take responsibility for negotiating the JD and getting it signed and copied then saved in Docushare.
- Paper copies should be kept by individual staff members and in personnel file for reference.

2. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING INQUIRY (PLI)

Each teacher will engage in inquiring in to their own teaching practice. The PLI process is flexible and fluid enough to enable each individual to meet the needs of their inquiry in a way that has impact on their practice. The PLI recording sheets are always going to be a work in progress and “a living document”. The rationale for the work is to ensure that your teaching is having a positive impact on student learning. The key questions are –

“What impact do the changes I am making have on my teaching practice?”

“What impact do the changes in my teaching practice have on my students’ learning?”

“How do I know?”

The Principal and the DPs lead PLI work but team leaders have an important role in supporting and maintaining the ongoing process.

3. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLC)

All teachers will be part of PLC work within their teams. For most of this work, the team will be class/syndicate level colleagues.

NB - Senior Team Members may also be in PLC based leadership teams as part of their ongoing PDL as leaders.

The PLC will focus on the curriculum area that our PDL or our Charter goals are looking to develop. The focus is on students, the achievement challenge they pose for each teacher and the building of a community of practice that assists each teacher to address the learning challenge they are focusing on.

There will be strong links between the PLI work and the PLC focus.

PLC groups are led by the DPs. Team Leaders have an important role in supporting and maintaining the ongoing process.

4. LEARNING “BUDDY”

Each teacher will be asked to identify a learning buddy. This must be someone other than their team leader or anyone who is directly involved with them in any of the other processes. The purpose of the learning buddies is to have an independent “sounding board” and someone who can participate in “low stakes” discussion around the work each is doing as part of the ongoing learning and development.

5. ANNUAL APPRAISAL SUMMARY STATEMENT

The final action for the appraisal cycle each year is the summary statement. Each teacher will prepare for the meeting with their appraiser by identifying how they are meeting the RTC and Tataiako using the evidence of their work during the year identified through the evidence as described in the section (above) on evidence of practice. Specific forms are used to link the evidence with the RTC/Tataiako focused on for each part of the process. A summary statement that gives an overview of the years outcomes and an area for future focus will be collaboratively written and signed off. A copy of the summary will then be given to the principal for accountability and reporting processes.

6. RENEWAL OF PRACTISING CERTIFICATE and MOVING TO FULL REGISTRATION

For accountability and/or Attestation processes to be completed, each teacher will meet with the principal to present/discuss their evidence of practice to underpin the decision. The onus is on the teacher to compile their evidence and organise it in the way that is meaningful to them. The teacher will lead the discussion on their evidence bearing in mind that if there were areas of concern, these should have been raised and addressed during the work being undertaken. This should be the opportunity to talk about the professional work undertaken and the journey of each teacher.

Implicit in the way the Performance Management Process has been designed, is the notion that it is a formative process that will meet summative purposes.

On an annual basis, each teacher will be meeting the RTC/Tataiako for attestation purposes and the renewal of practicing certificate will acknowledge the work done over the past three years. If there are issues of performance for any teacher, it is acknowledged that these will have already been identified and included in the annual performance management process.

7. For non-teacher staff members, the appropriate team leader will undertake a modified process that meets the job/role requirements. PDL to meet their development needs must be identified at the goal-setting phase and undertaken in a timely way to ensure that each member of the non-teaching team will be able to carry out their role with confidence.
8. The key components for these staff members will be an agreed job description, goal setting for new work and identified PDL to ensure the goals can be achieved. Team leaders must schedule progress discussions during the year to enable confidence that goals will be achieved or modified.

Attachments

Reference Material and Templates for Performance Management and Appraisal Processes:

1. ***Coherent Performance Management*** - flowchart
2. ***Fairburn School Appraisal Process*** - flowchart
3. ***Fairburn School Strategic Direction*** – chart
4. ***Tataiako and RTC Links*** – chart
5. ***Reporting on Appraisal Actions and Outcomes*** – Annually
6. ***Annual Appraisal Summary*** – template