

Maori Consultation Report

March 2010

Introduction

Every three years the Board of Trustees is required to consult with the parents of children who identify as being of Maori ethnicity. This is an opportunity to discuss the general progress of Maori children at our school. This was last completed several years ago as part of the regular review cycle. In 2010 we have 16 children from 13 families who identify as being of Maori ethnicity. This is 5% of the school roll of 330 children.

At the time of the last review, the school principal, Mrs Shirley Hardcastle, organised a meeting at the local Navy Marae and did invite other schools to attend. While she was satisfied by the discussion, there was a small turnout and only 2 the invited schools chose to attend.

In light of this, I spoke to Mina (Kapa Haka teacher) and Toni (mother of Kahuki in Year 3) about the best way to consult with the Maori community about the progress of Maori children at our school this time.

They both felt a more informal meeting one evening in the staffroom, with refreshments supplied would be the best way to go. They also felt that a face-to-face invitation or a personal telephone call, rather than a standard invitation in the newsletter, would go down particularly well.

In terms of discussion it was felt that parents should be able to discuss the general progress of the children, their place at Devonport Primary School, the things that are going well and any areas for development or improvement.

We sent a personal letter home to all parents with children who identify as being Maori, inviting them to a meeting on Monday, 29th March from 7:00pm to 8:00pm in the school staffroom. Pip McNair, who volunteers in the school office, followed up the letter with a personal telephone call to each parent to see if they were able to come to the meeting. The majority of parents indicated that they were unable to attend the meeting, but all indicated that they were very satisfied with the progress their children were making and their place as a child of Maori descent at Devonport Primary School.

The Meeting

The meeting was attended by the following people:

Callum McNair (Chairperson - Board of Trustees)

Bruce Tilby (Acting Principal - Board of Trustees)

Beverley Booth (Staff Representative - Board of Trustees)

Toni Vaughan (Parent)

Carol Braithwaite (Parent)

Helen Kapma (Grandparent)

Rod Enoka (Parent)

While the meeting was once again limited by the relatively small numbers in attendance, the conversation over the course of an hour was particularly valuable.

The decision was made to give everyone the opportunity to speak and share opinions on an informal basis.

As the Acting Principal, I started with a short poem that reflected our philosophy at Devonport Primary School.

I asked the parents to comment on the positive things about Devonport School, in terms of their own children. Each of the parents were very effusive about the quality of education that their children were receiving and were particularly positive about the teachers that their children had, previously and currently.

Rod Enoka spoke about the role of the Kapa Haka at our school and how special it is that this group is so valued. Rod said he gets great satisfaction in being able to teach the boys the haka and with their enthusiastic response. All parents in attendance had children who had been or were involved with the Kapa Haka and they all felt it was a tremendous focal point for the whole school and particularly for Maori children.

Helen Kapma said that her three grand-daughters had been made very welcome when they arrived from Waiheke Island and that they had loved every minute of their time at the school.

The parents also felt that the inclusion of aspects of Maori language and culture as much as appropriate in our concept work was another positive factor at the school.

I asked the parents if there were any areas that they felt required further development and they could not think of something specific. They felt that their children were an integral part of the school community and they were very pleased with their progress and with the systems in place when extra support was required.

Bruce Tilby
Acting Principal
Term 1

In Term 2 this report was shared with staff.

The staff then reviewed the school policy, reviewed our te reo overview sheet and added ideas for possible inclusion in our programmes.