



## Sherwood Board Of Trustees

Dear Parents and Caregivers

### **Update - Modern education for our children**

Modern teaching is focused on teaching children strategies to derive answers, and inquiring minds are fostered. It is believed that this approach will stand our children in good stead, as they enter a fast changing adult world where adaptive skills, good citizenship and motivated inquiring minds will endure.

As always the BoT has considered the best ways to provide a quality education for our students. This includes keeping up to date with technology, providing quality resources and equipment, keeping class sizes manageable and providing an environment to stimulate learning.

Over the last few years we have been challenged with problems associated with 'Leaky Buildings'. We have been involved with planning and negotiation with a project team which includes Ministry of Education representatives, an architectural firm, and BoT representatives. This is continuing to be a lengthy process, as the Ministry is the legal owner of our buildings, and decides on the budget for the project. So, in the interim, we are concentrating on providing a good, safe learning environment for our children, and delivering good educational outcomes.

### **Buildings**

Over the Christmas break there will be work done to start the demolition process of whole main block and the Year 1 block, which has the sandpit at the end. A fence will be constructed around this site. Eight extra relocatable, brand new, classrooms are currently being brought into the school so all our classes are accommodated for the building period.

Plans for are currently being developed for:

- ★ A new, larger, free standing hall - with an attached kitchen and toilet facilities.
- ★ A new administration block (so the library will eventually be reclaimed).
- ★ A new teaching block with the equivalent space of 11 classrooms.

### **Greater use of technology in the classroom**

As of next year there will be a greater focus on using online tools to enhance learning, parents of the older children are most likely to be the first to see evidence of this change. Teachers will be provided with additional training on how best to integrate these tools in their teaching

### **Specialist Teachers**

We are continuing to provide specialist teachers in Music and Physical Education. These are core areas in the New Zealand Curriculum and quality programmes are provided. This also provides teachers with time to plan and meet with outside agencies etc - which is a requirement of their job. We will also continue to have an ESOL teacher and a teacher for Reading Recovery. The BoT recognises the importance of providing support in the classrooms, through having teacher aides so we are increasing this number from two to three for 2015.

Although we value learning a second language such as Spanish, this is not funded by the Ministry and we cannot continue to fund this programme, whilst supporting key areas like having more teacher aide time for our classrooms. We have also found that parents have differing views on which language should be taught. As a result we will not be offering a second language, other than Maori which is part of the New Zealand Curriculum, during school time.

We will support second language learning by making a room available for Mr Fernandez, for students who may wish to learn Spanish after school, in private lessons. We are also talking to Northcross about the possibility of them expanding their after school language classes in other languages, including French and Mandarin.

### **Inquiry Teaching**

As a school we are committed to using inquiry learning and teaching. To this end we have been part of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) who have similar goals and under whose direction we have been able to develop our inquiry learning philosophy. We now believe we can better deliver on the curriculum by developing our own approach, building on the strongest features of inquiry learning, but with the freedom to make changes where we think they would benefit our students. Therefore we have opted to withdraw from the IB organisation. The most notable change for students will be a reduction from six to four inquiries per year, which we believe will allow more in-depth inquiry opportunities for our students. We are still committed to using inquiry learning and the ongoing professional development of our staff to best provide education for our children.

### **School Camps**

The 2015 5 / 6 syndicate camp will be held at the end of term 1. It is hoped that this will help the children bond at the start of the academic year and get to develop relationships with staff that will enhance their learning. It will also give students, and staff, the Easter Holidays to recover from camp.

*Thank you to those parents who completed the recent surveys on Health, PE and the General Survey as well as those who have provided informal feedback. This has all helped us formulate our plans for the future.*

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