

Description for Appointment process

Windy Ridge School - Every learner will find their passion and achieve their potential.

Windy Ridge School is a decile 7, U5 contributing school on Auckland's North Shore. The school was built in 1967, and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. We are a zoned school, and operate a ballot process for out of zone applications for enrolment.

The roll sits at around 300, and there are 20 teachers and 10 support staff. We are a multi-cultural school, with around 22 different ethnicities represented in our community. Approximately a third of our school is on the MoE ESOL register. We host a satellite from Wilson School, and integrate those students and staff as much as possible – we have named them Team Kiwi to indicate they are an important part of our school. We are part of the Kaipatiki Kahui Ako and have one staff member working as an Across School leader (Pedagogy) and two others identified as In School Leaders; one for wellbeing and one for pedagogy. We are a PB4L school, and the four values (respect, kindness, integrity and resilience) are central to how we build relationships in the school. We believe in whanaungatanga and demonstrate restorative practices when dealing with issues or conflict.

In the last 10 years our journey as an ILE school has been working towards an understanding of what children need to become happy, kind and contributing members of society. We have struggled with the concepts of traditional education that conflict with accepted understandings of child development and brain science.

We have 4 teams (Fantail, Pukeko, Falcon and Tui), all with composite classes grouped by age, working collaboratively to better meet the needs of students and use the strengths of staff. We are committed to designing education around the learner, not redesigning the learner to fit an adult focused system.

We believe that quality relationships are central to human development, and that before academic learning can be successful the learner must have a sense of emotional regulation, social confidence and self-management. We prioritise oral language in our early literacy programmes, and understand that this is vital to a successful transition into reading and writing.

Our learners are encouraged to demonstrate agency in their learning; being assessment capable, knowing their learning journey and goals, contributing to the content of their tasks and activities. This looks different in every team but the central goal of student agency remains. In the younger teams there is a very strong focus on developing learning through play; recognising urges, providing provocations to develop those urges, inserting opportunities for literacy and numeracy within the play, and articulating the learning in the activity. As the children move through the school there is a stronger focus on inquiry based approaches to learning, encouraging the students to ask questions and find solutions to issues and problems in their world.

We believe that the learner's journey is supported by a team, and so we meet three times a year to discuss this with children and their families. We promote student voice and so the student is encouraged to lead the conferences, explaining their learning and what their goals are. Goals are co-constructed with the child's team – self, teacher and parent.

We believe in inclusion and equity, providing for each child what they need to be successful. This does not look the same for every child. Progress is celebrated and expected, and we look closely at those students who are not progressing as we would expect. The school has excellent systems and processes for identifying and addressing learning and behaviour needs, and has a strong history of supporting families and students at risk.

As an enviroschool, the environment is particularly important to us and we promote sustainable practices; travelwise, walking school buses, waste free lunches, local enviro projects. We consider our environment to be part of our learning space and our students are encouraged to interact safely with the outdoors as part of their learning.

Our families are very involved in the school, and see this kura as a central part of their community. They support the school in a range of ways; PTA fundraising, volunteering on trips and in rooms, offering expertise in learning hubs. The Board is visible in the school, and have a strong and positive relationship with the staff. This is a community that is very invested in their school, and proud of what it stands for.

This school has a strong commitment to Te Ao Maori and weaves a number of values and tikanga into our everyday lives. We celebrate new students and families at the start of each term with a whole school powhiri, we have a school karakia, each class receives lessons in te reo Maori, and we look for opportunities for learners of different ages to work together (tuakana/teina). We demonstrate manaakitanga in the provision of breakfast each morning, and promote the value of ako by encouraging each learner to also be a teacher and share their skills. This commitment to learning is shared by the staff and Board, all of whom participate in professional learning opportunities to challenge our thinking and improve our practices. Our school kapa haka is strong and well supported. We also have a small but growing Pacific Islands cultural group.

As the school roll has grown quickly, the Ministry has approved a new build to replace an old block and remove a number of prefab classrooms. This is a two storey multi class block that will start towards the end of 2020. The design of this block will support the pedagogy of the school by providing spaces for teachers and learners to work together using a range of different resources.

We have a range of opportunities for digital learning. The junior school uses iPads and we have chrome books available for our senior students. There are a number of other digital resources (robots, coding software, flat screen tv's, chromecast) available and they are used to collect, organise and present information, share learning with families and friends and learn or teach new skills.

Systems and processes are implemented well, including appraisal. There is a strong commitment to staff growth, and professional learning is part of all employees' job descriptions. The support team delivers a high standard of service to the school, and the administration of the school is sound and well managed.

This is a school with a history of serving its community and growing kind and self-managing learners.

Brenda McPherson

Former Principal