

Thorndon School

Report to on 2023 Annual Plan



Strategic Goal 1: Poutama

Progress and Achievement in Literacy and Maths

In 2023, Thorndon School strived to improve student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. The following comments are from analysis of variance (from Feb to Dec) in reading, writing and mathematics based on teacher-moderated judgements of student work and assessments, aligned with the expectations of NZ curriculum levels.

This analysis covers achievement for all students from year 1-8.

Mathematics:

- The school almost reached its goal of 85% to be working at or above expected levels.
- 78% of students met or exceeded expectations in math by the end of the year.
- Asian demographics performed the strongest, followed equally by Pākehā and Māori students. Pacific learners are behind those groups, but some showed impressive progress.

Reading:

- The school fell short of its reading target of 90% with 81% of students on track to be working at or above expectations.
- Māori achievement is similar to those learners who are of Asian ethnicity.
- Pacific learners are not where they should be – actions are underway to review how to uplift these.

Writing:

- 68% of students met expectations in writing, below the goal of 85%.
- Māori achievement is similar to Pākehā
- Pacific learners were not where they should be here too. To support them to achieve their potential, teachers will need to improve their expertise in this subject and/or take a more culturally responsive approach to their teaching.

Standardised Tests:

- Standardised tests painted a strong picture; Thorndon students at year 4-8 generally scored **higher** than the national average in reading, vocabulary, listening, and mathematics.
- While Thorndon students have a strong foundation in these areas (especially a strong reading vocabulary), some students struggle with comprehension. Teachers will focus on helping students understand the meaning of what they read, particularly in relation to critical thinking and application of that in contexts.
- The mathematics results showed a need for improvement in achievement in problem solving -particularly in geometry, measurement, and statistics.

Looking Ahead:

- Thorndon School has a lot to be proud of! Students are making progress, especially in mathematics and reading. The school identified areas for improvement in how teachers use adaptive expertise and culturally responsive approaches to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners.
- Improved evaluation of how to meet the needs of diverse learners, providing appropriate supports, setting high expectations by leaders and teachers, and being culturally responsive, Thorndon School can meet its goal of enabling success for all learners as who they are.

A Focus on Culturally Responsive Education for Identified learners

We are committed to ensuring all students achieve their full potential. This part of the report highlights some key areas where we're placing emphasis in 2024 for Māori and Pacifica students as well as others who may not be achieving, based on the 2023 data.

- **Mathematics.** Māori students are performing similarly to those of Asian ethnicity and Pākehā in maths. However, Pacifica learners are achieving at lower levels. To address this, we're implementing culturally responsive education strategies specifically focused on supporting Pacific students in maths.
- **Prioritising progress for identified learners in maths.** This year, 17% of students overall need extra help in maths. Notably, two-thirds are new to this group, indicating a recent decline. In 2023 most of these were in Years 5 and 6. We will be providing targeted interventions to ensure these students catch up.
- **Reading.** Similar to maths, in 2023 Māori students are performing on par with those of Asian ethnicity and Pākehā in reading. Reading results from Pacifica learners indicate that we have not supported them as well as needed to address the learning challenges. To improve reading outcomes for Pacifica students in 2024, we'll be incorporating culturally relevant materials and approaches to teaching.
- **Prioritising Progress for identified learners in reading.** Sixteen percent of students require additional support in reading. Again, a large portion (60%) are new to this group. We'll be implementing targeted strategies to help these students reach their reading goals. It's also encouraging to see some students who previously needed help are now performing well.
- **Writing.** Māori achievement in writing is similar to Pākehā students, particularly for those meeting expectations or close to them. However, Pacifica learners' results are behind other ethnicities. We'll be developing culturally responsive writing instruction to address this gap.
- **Prioritising progress for identified learners in writing.** The largest group of students needing help (28%) is in writing. Most haven't required intervention before. We'll be providing targeted instruction and support to get them back on track.

By focusing on culturally responsive education and implementing strategic interventions, we aim to close the achievement gap and ensure all students, regardless of ethnicity, thrive in maths, reading, and writing

Strategic Goal 2: Ukaipōtanga

In 2023, Thorndon School continued strengthening its foundation for learning and teaching and to build positive relationships between learners, teachers and learners and staff and communities. In the review of successes and next steps for this report, leaders used achievement data, observations of teacher practice, wellbeing and engagement surveys completed by students, and feedback from the Thorndon School communities. Two areas in particular we wanted to highlight:

- **Whanaungatanga - Relationships for Learning (R4L):** Thorndon established clear expectations for communication and positive interactions throughout the school. This approach builds on a Ministry of Education programme called “Positive Learning 4 Behaviour”. R4L refers to the work of Māori educationalist, Russell Bishop and it applies to everyone, from students to teachers. Teachers received training throughout the year to ensure consistent implementation. The concept of whanaungatanga is a goal for 2024, setting expectations that all stakeholders interact respectfully. An exciting development for 2024 is the investigation of digital reporting tools to enhance communication and learning between teachers and with whānau.
- **Celebrations and Cultural Gatherings:** While there's no formal plan yet, Thorndon recognises the importance of celebrating culture and community. We're working with whānau to create more opportunities for these celebrations in the future.

Strategic Goal 3: Hanga Whare

This goal is about ensuring our school resources, processes and decision-making supports and environment for our tamariki to thrive.

- **Quality Teaching and Learning:** Thorndon acknowledges the impact on learning with staff turnover and changes. We're working on providing better support and professional development for new and existing teachers to grow collaboration and a commitment to effective evaluation and teaching strategies to better meet the diverse needs of learners.
- **Digital solutions and cyber safety:** The implementation of the digital technology goals of the NZ technology Curriculum is a priority in 2024. This includes ensuring our tamariki understand how to keep themselves safe online and the wider-community are educated on how to utilise the power of technology in a safe way.
- **Quality Management and Governance:** The Board of Trustees (BOT) is implementing best practices in financial management. They've established clear processes for allocating resources and are developing a system for reviewing policies and procedures. Thorndon School is committed to being an Equal Opportunity Employer and has followed processes to ensure all applicants for positions are considered equitably and with the needs of students as a priority.

Looking Ahead:

There is a lot to be proud of in what we achieved as a school in 2023. We are excited for the year ahead and want to build on the foundations of the school with particular emphasis on three areas:

- **Partnership with Local Iwi:** Thorndon is committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and building a strong relationship with local Iwi through the Kura Ahurea programme to guide teaching and learning and with direct engagement through the Board to guide governance and management.
- **Building a sense of Community:** We are committed to bringing our community closer together, looking at how we engage the parents, whanau and teachers together. We are seeking to refresh our school values through wide engagement with students, teachers and the parent-community to act as a foundation for relationships.
- **Accountability and Support:** The school is establishing clear accountability measures for teachers and leaders to ensure the success of R4L and quality teaching practices. This includes effective appraisal processes to support school leadership from the board. They're also seeking

additional support for teacher professional development in 2024, particularly in developing adaptive teaching expertise and cultural responsiveness in literacy and maths.

Overall, Thorndon School is making steady progress in building a strong foundation for a curriculum and agentic student learning. By focusing on positive relationships, quality teaching, ongoing improvement, and a relevant, engaging curriculum, the school is creating a bright future for all its students.

Ben Szeto

Acting Presiding Member on behalf of the Board of Trustees.