Bledisloe School (Years 1 to 6) in Napier has about 350 students, of which half are Pākehā/European, one-third Māori, and the remainder predominantly Asian and Pacific.

The school attributes its positive achievement trajectory largely to the practice of teachers, leaders and trustees taking responsibility for the success of all learners.

“We have changed from a remedial model, where the child was withdrawn, to an expectation that it is the teachers’ responsibility to respond to every child. No-one is going to come and take them out of the class and fix them. Alongside this is an understanding that it takes a village to raise a child and it is a collective responsibility to support all students. This support extends to teachers also; no-one is left feeling isolated and unsupported in finding solutions to achievement challenges.”

Principal
A core belief of the school is ‘we will provide a positive, esteem-building environment for children, staff and whānau’. They demonstrate this by:
> building a reflective culture where evidence is used before and during the introduction of new strategies and approaches
> ensuring coherence between practices, programmes and strategic goals
> keeping trustees well informed and involved in decisions about programmes, achievement and progress
> collaborative decision making about approaches to be used with individual children
> everyone taking responsibility for children’s success through in-class interventions
> ensuring children understand their learning strategies and goals through the use of a common language of learning.

An unrelenting focus on improving teaching for children achieving below expectations
Leaders had built a culture that encouraged reflective practice by both children and staff. Every teacher was responsible for ensuring that all children can succeed. The needs of every child who is below the expected level were known and discussed by the teaching, literacy and numeracy teams before actions were agreed, and their progress was tracked. Actions were evaluated and changed as appropriate. Professional reading was valued as a source of new strategies to accelerate the children’s progress.
“When we look at the data we are most interested in the children, who they are, and then what are we going to do collectively, and then what are we going to do for each of them. Data is always contextualised and the importance of knowing our students and their families and building effective relationships cannot be minimised.”

Leaders

The numbers of children achieving below the expected level, particularly in mathematics and reading, decreased as children moved through the school. The positive trajectory is shown below as the school’s achievement trend data for reading.

Children at or above National Standards in reading (2013–15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 1 year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 2 years</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 3 years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At end of Year 4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At end of Year 5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At end of Year 6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coherence of intervention with strategic goals

Every new programme or resourcing decision had to clearly align with the school’s strategic goals. This kept leaders, trustees and teachers focused on the agreed goals and guarded against the introduction of initiatives that might have distracted them. It also made the change process more manageable.

New programmes had to:
> be supported by research that endorsed the idea, concept or programme
> have a clear link to the school’s vision, core beliefs and strategic goals
> contribute positively to children’s learning and achievement
> take account of the financial, human and time costs of making the change
> not distract from the core business of high quality teaching and learning.
Some of the recent strategies trialled and then extended across more classes included:
> a phonics programme in the junior and then middle school to improve writing
> reading comprehension strategies in the middle and senior school
> accelerated learning in mathematics (ALiM) in the middle school and then other classes
> peer tutoring in the senior school
> a small Year 6 class for children who were not confident or have a strong ‘learning voice’
> accelerating literacy learning (ALL) for a small middle-school group, taken by the literacy leader; subsequently extended across school
> a decoding strategy for senior readers
> a writing programme for junior students.

Informed trustees are involved in decisions about programmes, progress and achievement

At each board meeting trustees received information about student achievement, including interim achievement data, the progress of students named in achievement targets and the impacts of interventions.

“We get excited by the data and the progress. We look carefully into the data, especially for what’s happening for Māori and Pacific children.”

Trustee

Student learning, wellbeing, achievement and progress were the board’s core concerns. Thanks to presentations and regular reports from staff, trustees knew a considerable amount about learning programmes, interventions, and what was happening in classrooms. Guided walks through classrooms were also common practice. Before the most recent guided walk, trustees were given information about the different interventions designed to support literacy development including:
> what the intervention consisted of
> the actions involved
> the impact so far on the children
> where to and/or what was needed next.
“All of us trustees were involved in a guided walk through all classrooms during literacy time. We talked to students and found out that they knew about their learning and could talk about what they were learning across all three of the teaching teams.”

Board chair

The board resourced an extensive variety of interventions, initiatives and professional learning, but was careful not to “just throw money at anything”. Resourcing decisions were made only after leaders had presented a case for funding, complete with rationale, purpose, expected outcomes and projected costs. Trustees were kept informed about the impact on student outcomes of all interventions and professional learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share charter discussion</td>
<td>Achievement targets and leader, team and teacher actions</td>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>S-YA planning discussion</td>
<td>ALL intervention</td>
<td>Māori Student Achievement</td>
<td>Roll return, issues for BOT to manage</td>
<td>Review progress towards targets with BOT</td>
<td>Review Room 16 and 6.5</td>
<td>Discuss impact</td>
<td>Staffing and roll for 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 data discussed</td>
<td>SENCO report</td>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>E learning at Bledisloe School</td>
<td>Darren</td>
<td>Sport and active playground report</td>
<td>Sue D</td>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>Joy M</td>
<td>Share writing data (ALLI) with BOT</td>
<td>Baz/Claire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part of the board’s annual calendar of work.

The board had recently allocated funding for the refurbishment of an old dental clinic to accommodate 15 Year 6 children who had been withdrawn from senior school classes. The four-mornings-a-week programme focused on building these children’s confidence in reading, writing and mathematics. Trustees understood the rationale for this intervention and regularly asked for information about the children’s academic and social progress. Seeing its positive impact, the board committed to continuing the Year 6 intervention for a second year and decided to fund a similar intervention for Year 4 children.
“This school has the environment for every child to have their time in the light. Everyone can shine.”

Trustee

Collaborative decision making about approaches for individual students

As a rule, strategies were so well researched that, when implemented, they made a difference for many of the target students. The literacy and numeracy teams, which included staff from across the school, were often instrumental in researching and introducing new pedagogy. Progress was reported regularly to leaders and at team meetings.

Although strategies and approaches were discussed at senior leadership and staff meetings, team meetings that focused on teaching and learning were the most effective drivers of changed practice. It was in such meetings that teachers discussed children’s progress and achievement and strategies that appeared to be succeeding. For example, data from the assessment resource banks (ARBs) showed what skills the children had mastered and how effective the teaching was. Teachers discussed target group children, what was and was not working for them, and what they as teachers could do next.

“...I make sure I am at each team meeting also, either for some or all of it, as this gives me a good sense of who is on the radar, what is happening and the children involved. I am then aware of every student who is a ‘target’ student, the progress being made and the resources being used.”

Principal

Teachers used a NZCER webinar to increase their data literacy and their ability to analyse the standardised PATs (Progressive Achievement Tests) used. They looked for, and noticed achievement patterns and trends and then collaboratively planned to address the gaps. By examining questions children struggled with, they could see where deliberate teaching was needed.

“We think about what the children would have needed to be able to answer that question correctly. Doing this has provided us with useful insights to plan activities that will help children to do better and match the activities with their interests.”

Teacher
In-class interventions

Interventions usually occurred in the classroom and were often short and sharp, focusing explicitly on the particular needs of the children concerned. Leaders had recently sought to reduce the time it took from setting a goal, to taking action, and then to evaluating impact. This assigned greater urgency to accelerating progress and it kept the target children engaged and motivated. For each intervention, the plan included:

> the identified needs of the children
> the goal and expected outcomes
> expected progress
> the specific action
> relevant research and findings
> how progress would be measured.

Mini lessons for agreed in-class interventions stated each day’s focus and provided a step-by-step plan with discreet timeframes. Children always started by revising previous learning and ended by reflecting on what they had learned that day.

Teachers challenged students who needed support and made sure activities matched their age and interests. In mathematics, they didn’t wait for the child to learn every strategy before moving to the next stage. They were aware of small gaps in the child’s understanding and focused on these while working on more complex tasks. This allowed children to experience more of the curriculum and to see where they were progressing.
“Our maths learning is better this year because we know about thousands and hundreds now and we didn’t use to.”

“We are allowed to make mistakes because they grow your brain. We like being able to teach each other now.”

“I used to be stink at maths but now I am good.”

_Year 4 children receiving additional in-class support_

Instructional organisation, task design, modelling and group practices all promoted active learning. For reading activities, the text had to be interesting enough to engage less capable readers, but also sufficiently complex to be worthy of exploration and develop comprehension. Short, sharp and explicit teaching motivated and engaged students. Teachers knew what they were focusing on and used appropriate strategies. Classroom grouping was flexible, depending on the learning purpose and the interests and abilities of the children. Multilevel group activities allowed all children to engage with texts that matched the interests of their age group.

“The best thing we have done in reading this year is the literacy circles because we all get to have different roles and work with other kids. Sometimes you might be the illustrator or the connector who makes connections from the story to our own lives. Other times you can be the wordmaster or the passage picker or the discussion director. The discussion director thinks up questions that the rest of us race to be the first to answer. The questions have to be open questions so they are hard enough to make us think.”

_Year 6 child_

Children in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed opportunities to choose which group they would be in and which novel they would study.
“We don’t just read the same type of books. We read classics and non-fiction as well as other interesting stuff. It’s always interesting to look at a great variety of books. At the moment we are reading a compilation of children’s writing. We are going to do an e-asTTle test in a few weeks and it is good to have really looked at others kids’ good writing.”

Year 6 child

Children liked the variety of texts and activities and opportunities to take on different roles in reading lessons. Activities like literacy circles, video clips with reading and discussion, and the fun actions used with the phonics in the junior school were particularly popular. In the senior classes, children valued the many opportunities to choose a topic that interested them or a novel to study. They were encouraged to problem solve, seek solutions and predict outcomes, individually or as a group. Teachers were viewed as facilitators and checkers or go-to people rather than fixers-up or people who would spell everything out for you. They empowered students to actively help their peers with their learning.

**Children understand learning strategies and goals**

Teachers and children co-constructed realistic but challenging learning goals and success criteria. Children understood the purpose of their lessons and the strategies they were focusing on.

Teachers sometimes delayed talking about learning intentions, waiting until a lesson was well underway before asking the children what skills they thought they were learning. In other situations, teachers asked children to recall what they had learned previously before setting their next goal. In the middle school, teachers deliberately ‘front loaded’ learning through their literacy programmes to support the team-wide inquiry. They found Rollins’ *Learning in the Fast Lane* useful for distinguishing between remediation and acceleration. Moving forward instead of stalling until gaps are addressed can be more beneficial for learners.

To achieve their learning goals children need a clear sense of what success looks like. This meant having exemplars on display and clear progressions students could read and use. Classrooms featured displays designed to remind children of the goals and strategies they were working on. Children were able to discuss their goals. They could say why they were in a group and what the group was trying to achieve.
Children involved in classroom interventions were also very aware of their goals. Teachers told them when they had achieved a goal and explained what they were now ready to move on to. These children could talk about how they had improved and about the enjoyment they were getting from learning. They valued being able to work with more complex texts or on more difficult maths tasks.

“When Year 5 and 6 students were asked why many of them achieved well, they said ‘Our teachers expect a lot of us. Everyone is expected to put in effort. Our teachers are kind, though, and we are able to tell them when we need help.’”

Bledisloe School
Mathematics and Statistics
Curriculum and Achievement Plan

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**Beginning of Year**

**IDENTIFY**
- All students who are Below and Well Below the National Standards (Priority learners also identified from this group of students)

**HOW?**
- Beginning of year data
- Gloss
- Knowledge
- Use PAT data as a formative assessment tool (year 3 and above)
- Basic facts

**Mid Year**
- If not reaching the signposts

**WHAT?**

**Tier 1**
- Effective Classroom Practice

**HOW?**
- Using High Expectations Pedagogy (Cristine Rubie Davies)
- Flexible grouping
- Smart goals and providing choices for learning activities
- Differentiated learning (Specific targeted groups)
- Support from ALiM trained teacher (Sue Dingle)
- Student interviews (individual or group)
- Parent Education reinforcing partnership
- Two times teachers at Maths Leadership forum

**Tier 2**
- These students will be identified and tracked using available data including:
  - Student learning plans
  - Interviews
  - Gloss testing
  - Knowledge testing
  - Place value tests
  - Differentiated learning (Specific targeted small group)
  - Support from Maths Team and ALiM trained teacher
  - Effective Pedagogy including “How we learn”
  - Maths kits to support learning at home
  - Parent education reinforcing partnerships
  - Problem solving model visible and in use in classrooms

**Tier 3**
- Seek outside assistance

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**End of Year**

**National Numeracy Norms**

2-3 4 5 6

**Mid Year Signposts**

- After 1 year at school
- After 2 years at school
- After 3 years at school
- At end of Year 4
- At end of Year 5
- At end of Year 6

- If students are below Stage 1 1-1 Counting
- If students are below Stage 4
- If students are below Early 5
- If students are below Stage 5
- If students are below Early 6
- If students are below Stage 6