



# A Model For Change

## Madeleine East

In her project Madeleine East, principal of Pakuranga's Farm Cove Intermediate School, writes about how a team of younger staff led the development of realigning the school's curriculum delivery with *The New Zealand Curriculum*. The development group worked with the guidance of the assistant principal. The project looked particularly at ways to move the pedagogy of staff from an outcomes-based to an inquiry-based approach.

“How effective are we really?” This was the question we asked ourselves as part of our curriculum review process. We were looking at curriculum delivery and implementation as well as pedagogical practice. The question prompted open and honest discussion. Feedback from staff indicated that we could certainly do better in several areas:

- We could make better use of assessment data to inform planning and strengthen formative assessment.
- We needed to develop a critical tool – learning conversations – to use as a consistent platform for planning meetings.
- There needed to be greater involvement, ownership and use of teacher skill, knowledge, expertise and passion in curriculum development, specifically to Rich Task (Unit Study).
- We needed more flexibility in our approach to classroom practice which would rekindle both our creativity and our passion for teaching and learning.

We clearly needed to make changes and some risk-taking was required!

### Putting a change process in place

1. A team was established based not on our “old guard” or traditional school leaders, but on interest, passion, and creativity mixed with knowledge. We looked to our younger staff for this.
2. At a full staff meeting we discussed what a model for change for our school should look like. Features we decided to include were:
  - Keeping the good things we already do.
  - It must be grounded in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.
  - There must be appropriate coverage of achievement objectives because assessment is integral to the plan.
  - Changes must be based on staff input.
3. From this discussion the team drafted a model that included these features. They presented it to staff for further analysis and refinement. An updated model was developed for a school-wide trial over two terms. This first model did not include key principles, values, essence statements or cross reference to other curriculum areas – it was a standalone trial.

4. At the end of the time the model was reviewed. Feedback was very positive, requirements were met, and staff felt a genuine ownership and freedom to add their own thinking and ideas to planning. There was enough flexibility for other interesting or motivational topics to be introduced while still meeting achievement objectives.

### Refining the model

This trial generated positive interest and an enthusiasm among all staff to become involved in developing a wider curriculum framework.

As a staff we recognised there needed to be far greater collaboration across all curriculum areas in order to create a cohesive pathway and consistency of achievement across the school.

Links needed to be strengthened between all teachers to ensure there was greater knowledge and understanding around curriculum content areas and the connections between them. We saw that we needed to abandon the silo-type model we had become locked into.



Our approach to curriculum development has been refined and now allows for a tandem approach to our redesign. As a school we have agreed on four major strands: numeracy, literacy, social sciences, health and physical wellbeing.

All teams have had a specific brief including timelines and expected outcomes, and we plan to have full staff involvement to explore this on a teacher only day. Included in the outcomes will be agreed values, essence statements and frameworks for developing the four major areas.

This redesign has provided different leadership options and has developed into a great vehicle for growing leadership across the school.

While a team functions best in an environment that distributes leadership, it is also important that teams operate in an environment of trust. This happens when the systems and networks are in place, and relationships are honest and strong. A good leader is critical in establishing this environment and being a good leader encompasses all four leadership qualities: Manaakitanga, Pono, Ako and Awhinatanga.

## Where to next?

For the next stage of our change process we will:

- continue to develop curriculum statements;
- maintain the integrity of our strategic learning pathway, but make it more inclusive and reflective of the school's philosophy;
- provide a basis for the board of trustees to participate in our charter and strategic planning;
- provide a curriculum framework which is supported and understood by the whole staff;
- provide leadership opportunities for more staff according to skills, abilities, passion, and vision;
- explore further questions: What does leadership look like at Farm Cove Intermediate School? What does a team look like at Farm Cove Intermediate School?

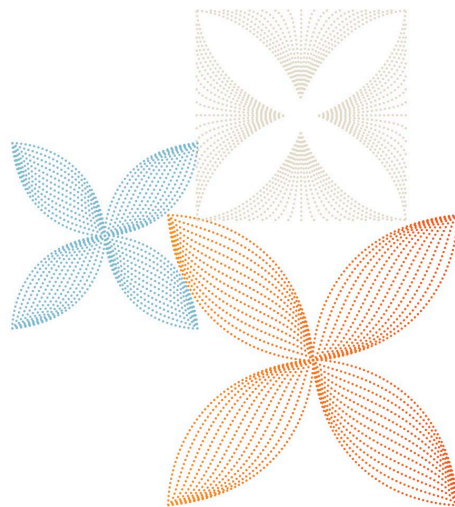
## Final reflection

**Not finance. Not Strategy. Not Technology. It is team work that remains the ultimate competitive advantage, because it is so powerful and so rare".**

*Lecioni (Acknowledgement to Karen Clarke)*

Was it easy? No! Is it worth it? Yes! It is important to remember that before embarking down this pathway of self reflection, analysis and navel-gazing, a school needs to enjoy a well established culture of trust, professional integrity and a willingness and desire to do even better to improve student learning outcomes.

See the overview of this project on the following page.



## REFERENCES

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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KLP Project

**KLP PROJECT – FARM COVE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL: Overview**

