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Vol 41, No 19

OWAIROA PRIMARY SCHOOL



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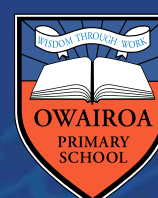
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OWAIROA PRIMARY SCHOOL

50 1962-2012

School celebrates 50 years of Excellence

Providing first class education to the children of Howick since 1962, Owairoa Primary School's Golden Jubilee celebrations marked a highly successful 50 years and also focused on a progressive future.

Principal Alan McIntyre says Jubilee events were well attended by former staff members and students who took great delight in checking out the archive display.

The school's beginnings were detailed in a logbook kept by foundation principal, George Kenny, whose tenure spanned nearly nine years from 1961 to 1969.

This logbook is currently on display at Owairoa along with an extensive range of photographs, outdated audio-visual equipment, old uniforms, news clippings, school magazines and more for the public to peruse over the next few weeks.

Opened on February 5, 1962 with a roll of 365 students and 12 teachers, the school was originally named Nelson Street School.

Formed, initially, as an offshoot of Howick Primary School, the new school took the overflow of Howick Primary students as well as some younger pupils from the newly created Howick Intermediate, which had transitioned from a 'district school' to an intermediate school.

The school's name was changed to Owairoa Primary School at the first school committee meeting and the committee also settled on a badge design, which has changed over time.

Officially opened more than a year later on March 30, 1963, Owairoa comprised of



11 classrooms in three buildings which still stand today but are set to be gutted and modernised this year.

Work on the first addition, the school hall, commenced in September 1966. It was completed in 1967 but just four years later in 1971 had to be extended.

Current principal Alan McIntyre took the reins in 1990, and steered the school into 'Tomorrow's Schools', presiding over a number of changes which were occurring in schools nationwide which included the introduction of Boards of Trustees.

Today Owairoa has a strong focus on the environment and the school has achieved its

Silver Enviroschools award. It is now working towards the top award, the Green-Gold Award.

The 'Super Start' transition to school programme has achieved national recognition. Students in the junior school enjoy some of the lowest class sizes in the area.

The most recent Education Review Office report stated "the school is very well resourced and has a focus on environmental sustainability... the school's culture is inclusive and there is strong sense of care and collective ownership for the wellbeing of students, staff and parents."

This enthusiasm about the environment led the school to establishing a native walkway in

1995, providing students with a unique educational environment.

Likewise, the Chinese Garden of Friendship which opened in 2002 provides students with a haven during lunch breaks and shows the school's strong ties with international students.

In fact, the school offers an extensive international student centre and transition programmes for these foreign students who are encouraged to participate in intensive English programmes as well as in sporting and cultural opportunities.

In fact the ERO report notes: "Students make the most of opportunities to engage in a wide range of co-curricular

opportunities which complement their class programmes."

Under Mr McIntyre, the school has grown to 40 classrooms accommodating more than 600 students and 70 staff members.

A highly popular school in the Howick area and further afield, Owairoa's top reputation attracts families Auckland-wide.

The education report states the school "is making a positive difference to learning outcomes for children.

"Students are highly motivated and keen to learn and present as capable and independent learners. They are well engaged in classes and are able to talk about their learning".

Mr McIntyre says many parents of students have moved their families into the traditional school zone specifically so they can attend Owairoa. "We have also had parents enrol one and two-year-olds to ensure their child's spot is secure," he adds.

And while it's still early in the 2012 school year, big things are already happening all in line with the school enterprising approach to all-round education.

"We've just completed a fantastic fitness trail along the boundary of the school and we're planning to build a heated indoor pool complex as soon as possible so students can swim all year round."

The Jubilee festivities kicked off on Friday with an in-school celebration, PTA sausage sizzle fundraiser and open afternoon school tours.

Saturday saw a staff brunch for current and past staff and Board of Trustees members followed by grand school tours, hosted by Owairoa students and ex-students.

Classrooms were open for viewing and a tree planting ceremony followed at which members of the Howard family planted a gorgeous kauri tree by the flagpole.

After the tree was blessed, the Jubilee ceremony kicked off in the hall where the school ukulele group, dance group and school choir performed before the lighting of the jubilee candle and cutting of the cake.

The school's time capsule, created at the 25th Jubilee in 1987, was also opened and the 'Chatter and Platter' continued late into the night. Final verdict – what a way to complete 50 years!

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