

TE RAPA PRIMARY SCHOOL



School / Community Description

www.terapa.school.nz

The continued urban expansion of Hamilton City to the north east continues to see Te Rapa Primary School's student roll in excess of 560+ students. This is a good size for Te Rapa. It allows the school to secure the staffing and funding levels it needs to offer the existing high quality programmes to pupils.

Our school's positive reputation sees huge interest coming from parents and caregivers residing at both in-zone and out of zone addresses, and this is a result of the school's commitment to high achievement levels in learning & teaching, but also our commitment to fostering positive student attitudes and behaviours through our "Citizenship with Excellence", our "Incentive Awards" and our "Leadership" programmes.

Roll growth is now managed by an enrolment scheme (est. 2001), and our catchment area is very much a mix of urban, rural and industrial zones.

Over time we've learnt to adapt as we've gone along, successfully evolving from a country school of 128 students with a teaching principal and 6 x classrooms (1995) to a large city school of 580+ students (Dec. 2014). In 2002 a temporary classroom was positioned in our school car park by the Min. of Education and another established in our school multipurpose room. More classrooms were added in 2003 – 2008 to accommodate an increasing student population. This has levelled out at 21 operating classrooms (2015).

Our student population sits at approx. 560+ students at mid-year and over 580+ in December. The MOE approved enrolment scheme is in place to avoid overcrowding.

Our May 2011 ERO review identified Te Rapa as a school where ***"school leaders and teachers have high expectations for students' learning and behaviour. A positive, settled and supportive climate, focused on learning, is evident throughout the school. A committed teaching staff work collaboratively to provide targeted learning opportunities for individuals and groups of students. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding about a variety of techniques and approaches to teaching and learning."*** Examples include

- * high quality classroom learning environments
- * students effectively involved in their own learning
- * the use of assessment to inform planning and teaching
- * positive relationships and interactions
- * the increased use of restorative practices and positive guidance strategies
- * effective learning support and extension initiatives
- * and increasing emphasis on higher order thinking
- * the use of te reo me nga tikanga Maori
- * the increased use of information communication technologies (ICT) as tools for teaching and learning

We were all very proud of the accolades the ERO review team shared with our students, staff and our wider school community. The 2011 report can be read / downloaded from the internet on the ERO site www.ero.govt.nz. A hard copy can also be obtained from our school administration office.

We are also extremely proud that our school has earned a very positive reputation as a highly effective school, and this is constantly reinforced by new parents interested in enrolling their child(ren) at our school. It is also mentioned by new staff starting at Te Rapa for the first time. Experienced teachers are well qualified to make these comparisons and we're grateful for their professional praise.

As a team we have collectively worked hard since 1995-96 to establish ourselves as an effective school in Hamilton City and we continue to work hard to maintain the self imposed standards we set ourselves. We have marketed our school from the inside out, rather than the outside in and we understand and appreciate that the "bricks and mortar" of a new campus (est. 1997) do not make us an effective school. We strategically focus on planning and delivering high quality learning and teaching programmes for New Zealand children in a rapidly changing global educational community.

Teachers at Te Rapa Primary are encouraged to be the best they can be, and staff are recruited based on their strengths as classroom practitioners, and their willingness to continue to work towards achieving excellence. This also applies to members of our support staff team within our school at all year levels.

We also look to secure staff who have the ability to operate effectively within our existing "team culture". They must enjoy their work, their clientele and most of all their colleagues. We believe these things are important at Te Rapa. We constantly self review what we do, with the sole intention to do it better next time. This philosophy hasn't changed over the years and we still ensure there is a generous element of "fun" associated with our teaching, our learning and in our workplace. Staff morale is high and this supportiveness and collegiality is entrenched within our school culture. School / team spirit is high.

Staff are industrious, and this certainly benefits the students we teach. Staff at Te Rapa are visible, and display high levels of energy, enthusiasm and expertise. We continue to focus on improvement in the classroom as well as constantly reviewing our procedures and practices. Collectively as a staff and a school family we are not prepared to compromise our high quality learning and teaching programmes. This has remained our no. 1 priority throughout the past 20+ years at this school.

Our school vision is therefore based around improving ourselves as teachers / support staff, and more appropriately on improving the skills / knowledge of students we teach to ensure they make good choices and take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. Staff and students are aligned behind a couple of basic ideals which include focus areas such as - foundations being in place, quality, consistency, setting goals and achieving personal best. Our identity as a school is based around a consistent application of basic teaching beliefs. The school's strong learning / improving culture is important to us and we protect it fiercely. The Te Rapa "team" atmosphere at all levels underpins what we collectively try to achieve as a staff from Yr 1 through to Yr 8. Routines are established, and management are swift in their support of students who make "poor choices". Quality student behaviour is a prerequisite to our success.

We have only 9 basic school rules for students, and our school incentives programme (re-est. 2008) and our inter-house system (est. 2004) recognises students who are doing their best, with greater emphasis placed on house points for academic achievement than for sports or cultural achievement. This initiative is designed to raise academic performance of students (particularly boys) and also highlights and models acceptable behaviours and attitudes for all.

Students are given every opportunity to act responsibly in leadership roles from as young as yr 4 and yr 5 eg. "Cool Schools" peer mediation programme. We nurture and groom our young people encouraging them to be positive role models that others can aspire to. Student leaders include librarians, recycling monitors, digital media centre monitors, road wardens, house captains & deputies and student councillors. Many act as visible role models dressed in polo shirts and / or school badges. They are Te Rapa's "Future Leaders".

Classroom teachers at Te Rapa Primary endeavour to achieve a balanced coverage in their teaching, in what is an ever changing curriculum. The relocation of the school, coupled with the construction of the campus in 7 stages over 20 years along with changing Government policy and curriculum change(s) has provided a number of very significant challenges over a fixed period of time for school personnel.



Through this however, we still focus heavily on the core subject areas, namely literacy and numeracy, and had the foresight in 1996-97 before many other NZ schools to develop strategies / plans of action to make best use of 'Computer Technology' in our classrooms.

Skilled IT staff at Te Rapa train others (staff & students) in the integration of IT in our classrooms. Te Rapa was acknowledged as the first Waikato ICT Lead School (one of the original 23 in New Zealand in 1999) and we quickly established a partnership with Compaq NZ. They stood with Te Rapa Primary supporting us in a variety of ways through to the end of the 3 year lucrative sponsorship period. Staff at Te Rapa Primary continue to act as leaders in the field of IT integration and information literacy.

Te Rapa has a very supportive "school community" and are currently well served by an enthusiastic Board of Trustees. They have the interests of the school at heart, in particular pupils and staff. An active PTA (Parent / Teacher Assn.) meet monthly and are involved in and around our school in a variety of ways. Parental participation is encouraged, and open days etc. are always very well supported. An active Swimming Pool Committee saw the construction of our school's large aquatic centre (opened summer of 2001). As a result of their perseverance our students and our community enjoy the benefits of a full sized 25m solar heated swimming pool, plus an attached 8m x 6m heated learner's pool and also our large astro-turf courts area.

There is only a small handful of current staff including the Principal, who were part of the original team who in January 1995 set about re-establishing the reputation of Te Rapa Primary within Hamilton City after a difficult period in the early to mid 1990's. The roll was a very flimsy 128 students at the time and the school was struggling to keep their Deputy Principal entitlement and their 6 x teacher status. Most staff who joined the Te Rapa Primary School team through the 1990's were appreciative of what took place and consequently were eager to assist with the ongoing improvement of our school. Knowing from where we have come, allows us to be effective and efficient in knowing where we're going to next.....

Core school values amongst students, staff and the community are what keeps us on track and provides us with our vision. We actively try to foster positive partnerships with parents, sharing samples of students work, regularly reporting on progress and inviting parental input. We carry out a full school planning survey of all parents / caregivers every 2 - 3 years. Of those families who recently responded in

- . 93% felt that the school was meeting their expectations
- . 92% felt there was sufficient opportunities for parental involvement in the school
- . 96% felt comfortable and welcomed coming into the school
- . 96% felt that the school provided a safe and secure environment for their children

Te Rapa Primary School is a safe and caring community school, with an engaging curriculum.

Expectations of the school are high, in areas of student achievement and behaviour. The school leadership and teaching / support staff team have implemented a variety of approaches where acceptable base standards are promoted, expected and maintained in all areas of school life.

The underlying objective of the school's leadership is to develop and maintain a positive and supportive school culture for both pupils and staff that clearly encourages all school personnel (young & old) to be the best they can be as they strive to focus on improvement, and be happy and productive in their work.

Our school is a place where we constantly seek the input of stakeholders and procedures and practices are frequently reviewed. We pride ourselves in having shared beliefs and values (Citizenship with Excellence), that reflect those of our school community. Our school vision is reflected in classrooms, it is one that provides security, consistency and "risk taking" as well as encouraging diversity. Our aim is to encourage everybody associated with our school to have pride for and ownership of their school.

