

Westland Community of Learning

Te Poutini hapori o te akoranga

*“He kapiti hono, he tātai hono
That which is joined together becomes an unbroken line.”*



Photo by Kate Veale

Westland Community of Learning

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Our background

The Westland Community of Learning is a group of 9 schools consisting of:

Haast School, Fox Glacier School, Franz Josef Glacier School, Whataroa School, Ross School, Kokatahi-Kowhitirangi School, Kaniere School, St. Mary's School, and Westland High School.

Most Westland schools are small, rural schools isolated by distance, or located near the small urban centre of Hokitika. These schools include 5 full primary, 3 contributing, and one high school, years 7 to 13. The combined roll of these schools is 862 students, consisting of 429 girls, 433 boys, 219 Maori, 5 Pacifica (2014 data) and 55 FTTE staff.

The schools are considered 'neighbours' yet cover a distance of approximately 300km from Kokatahi-Kowhitirangi School, inland to Hokitika and Haast School, the furthestmost school in South Westland. Each school services their own small community, with its unique identities and characteristics and some commonalities across them. Our school communities are very passionate about their individual identities and feel this is a strength within the cluster, and an aspect to be retained.

Schools in the cluster have participated in the past on shared projects such as improving literacy achievement through the Wolf Fisher Project. This was West Coast wide and led to further collaboration which was fantastic for teachers' development. Schools have also gathered together for various training opportunities on the coast, and various schools have worked together on shared projects such as developing e-Learning strategies. The South Westland Schools have an ongoing programme of interschool cultural and sporting events throughout the year. Regular support between Westland schools also occurs in two groups: within the northern schools, centred in and around Hokitika, and within the southern schools, from Ross to Haast. We work within these two smaller groups largely due to the distances involved. Westland schools continue to have supportive relationships across schools within the Westland region as well as the wider West Coast. Westland schools are looking for a way to build and sustain improvements collaboratively.

School ERO reports between 2012-2015, state that Westland schools typically receive very good support and involvement from parents and their communities. They provide a central focus within their small community and enjoy mutual benefits such as the use of buildings and expertise. School environments are generally well maintained. Students benefit from the high expectations and strong support they receive from the whole community.

ERO reports further state that schools are making appropriate use of achievement information to improve outcomes for learners and also note that within our schools, use of achievement information ranges from very good use to increasingly effective. In discussion, principals believe this is an area that needs further development across the cluster to ensure consistency and improve the sharing and tracking of data.

While ECE centres have not yet been involved in discussions around the formation of a Community of Learning, principals agree that it would be beneficial to invite these learning centres into our collaboration to ensure we have identified all achievement challenges and are able to put strategies in place as early as possible to ensure all ākonga have the best learning opportunities. There are established relationships between ECE and primary schools which will facilitate this inclusion.

Initial analysis of Collated 2014 data

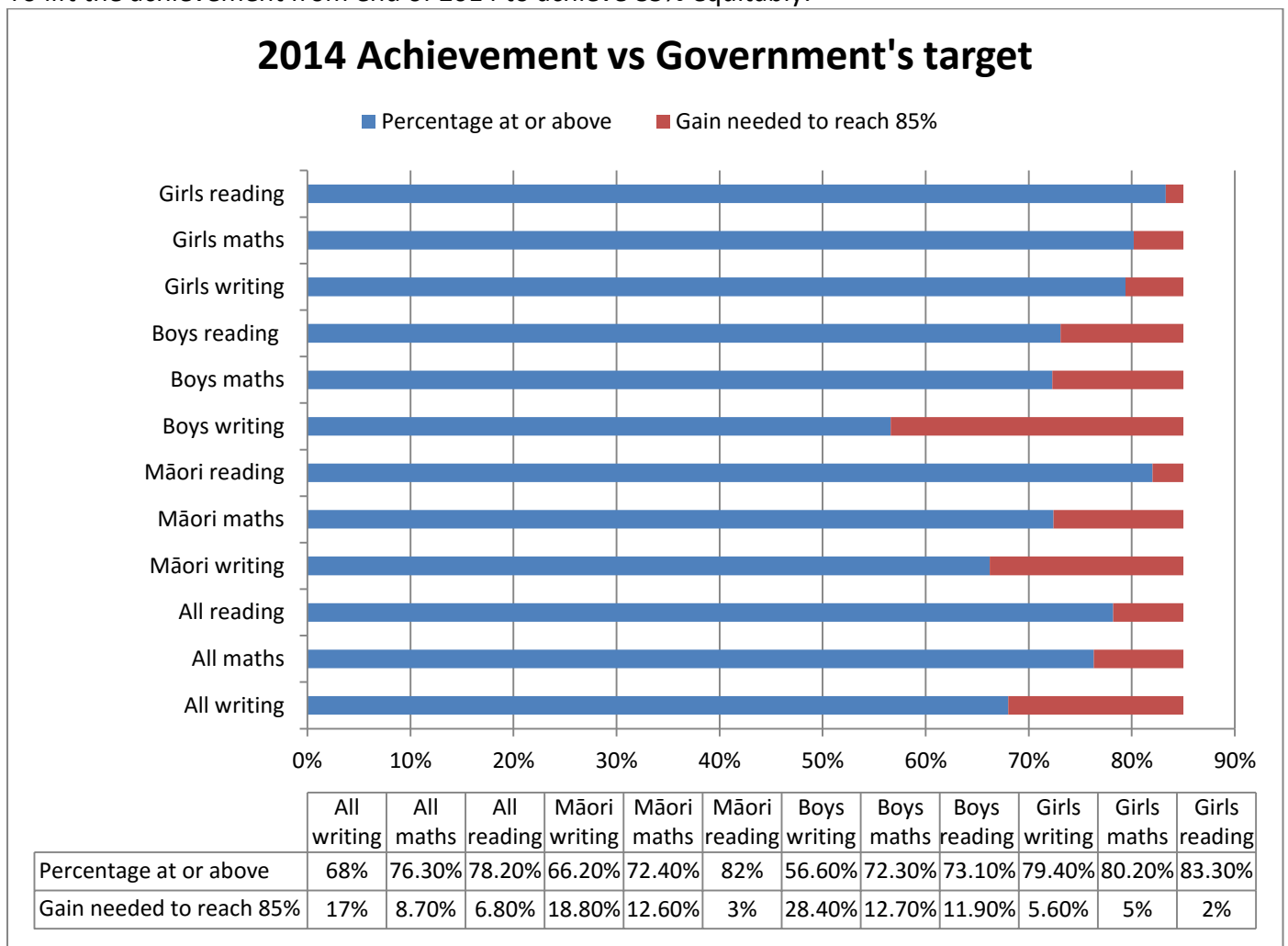
Year 12 and 13 students in Community of Learning schools **not reaching** their NCEA benchmark:

| Year 12 / Level 2 | | | Year 13 / Level 3 | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Year 12 national average | | | Year 13 national average |
| All year 12 students (56) | 32% (19 students) | 26% | All year 13 students (38) | 40% (15 students) | 41% |
| Boys | 34% | 30% | Boys | 62% | 48% |
| Girls | 33% | 22% | Girls | 23% | 35% |
| Māori | 33% | 34% | Māori | 44% | 54% |

Year 0 - 8 students in Community of Learning schools **not reaching** their national standard benchmark during 2014:

| | Writing | Maths | Reading |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| All students (572) | 32% (183 students) | 24% (135 students) | 22% (124 students) |
| Boys (285) | 43% (123 students) | 28% (79 students) | 27% (76 students) |
| Girls (286) | 21% (59 students) | 20% (55 students) | 17% (47 students) |
| Māori (133) | 34% (45 students) | 20% (27 students) | 18% (24 students) |

To lift the achievement from end of 2014 to achieve 85% equitably:



Achievement Challenges

After considering the data there are clear areas of need. The most notable is in writing with boys and Māori students. Some principals would also like to track math results. They feel having two focus areas will gain more buy-in from teachers. However the agreed initial focus will be on writing in an effort to develop an effective collaboration process which can then be extrapolated across maths.

The Government's goal is to have 85% of students achieving their National Standards by 2017 to ensure that students have the skills needed to access the curriculum and achieve at NCEA. The achievement target for NCEA L2/BPS 5 is to also have 85% achievement in 2017.

We feel this is a very ambitious goal however, we believe with the right supports in place we can collectively achieve this and sustain this level of achievement.

| Focus Area(s): | Baseline Data (2014): | 2016 Goals: | 2017 Goals | 2018 Goals |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Address the achievement challenges below across the Community of Schools Note National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori goals also set by individual schools and kura | Current year 0-8 achievement in writing shows: 162 boys of 285 (57%) reaching expected National Standards level 88 of 133 Māori students (66%) are reaching expected National Standards level | To have 285 boys (75%) reaching their National Standards, an increase of 40 students. To have 102 Māori students (77%) reaching their National Standards, an increase of 14 students | To have 242 boys (85%) reaching their National Standards, an increase of 26 students. To have 113 Māori students (85%) reaching their National Standards, an increase of 7 students | To sustain or exceed 242 boys (85%) reaching their National Standards, an increase of 14 students. To sustain or exceed 113 Māori students (85%) reaching their National Standards, an increase of 4 students |
| Our collated data shows the area of most need is writing. Low achievement in writing, in particular with boys and Māori students, flows on to low achievement for this group in NCEA. | Current achievement in NCEA shows: 75% of Māori leaving with Level 2 or equivalent 38% of eligible boys and 66% of eligible Māori students achieving at Level 3 | To have 81% of Māori leaving with Level 2 or equivalent 48% of eligible boys and 64% of eligible Māori students achieving at Level 3 | To have 85 %of Māori leaving with Level 2 or equivalent 55% of eligible boys and 67% of eligible Māori achieving at Level 3 | To have 90% of Māori leaving with Level 2 or equivalent 60% of eligible boys and 70% of eligible Māori students achieving at Level 3 |

Areas of investigation to identify strategies to support Achievement Challenges

Further research will need to be done to clearly identify the factors that are having the most impact on our students. Through discussions with the principals and teachers working within Westland, the following factors have been identified as areas which are assumed to be having a negative impact on student achievement. It is important to note these are **possible** factors and assumptions, and not confirmed as impacting all schools or students.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Distance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students spend a significant time travelling to and from school each day, some students leave for school by 7:30 • Travelling to doctor / dentist appointments often takes most of a school day (this is more common with South Westland Schools and data needs to be gathered to confirm the frequency of this) • Distance between schools limits interschool activities |
| Community attitude towards education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption there will be entry level jobs on farms etc and qualifications are less necessary • Assumption quality of education on the West Coast is low • Mindset – aiming for achieved and not merit / excellence • Low value placed on education • Lack of understanding of NCEA qualifications |
| Attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transient students – gypsy day/seasonal workers • Parent condoned absences – shopping days / busy weekends • Term time holidays (farming calendar/tourist season) • Retention of senior students • Health issues - (attending dental / medical appointments, frequent illness) • Stand downs, suspensions, exclusions, expulsions (there are limited incidents of these within the cluster, but it is assumed disproportionately high within target groups) • lateness |
| In schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ongoing professional development due to high cost, small budgets, and distances to travel • Dual roles as principals / leaders and teachers • Assessment – validity, consistency, moderation, and analysis • Varied teaching styles within and between schools • Small staff / limited local peer support • Difficulty in attracting and retaining high quality staff to the West Coast • Very limited funding • Pedagogy – schools are keen to explore and develop effective modern pedagogy supported by learning with digital technologies • Environment (developing and maintaining modern learning spaces is difficult due to funding and building ages) |
| Transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions between learning levels: ECE to primary, primary to secondary, secondary to tertiary or employment • Transitions within schools • Funding issues with ECE to primary (confusion when funding ends for ECE and begins in primary between ages 5 and 6) • Limited tertiary opportunities locally |
| Students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindset – Self-belief, lack of confidence as a learner • Social relationships / peer pressure • Low employment expectations • Limited visibility of careers on West Coast • Well being • Learning challenges / disabilities (diagnosed and undiagnosed) – we aim to clarify our data to clarify the number of students who are not achieving due to unsurmountable learning challenges/disabilities such as ORRS funded students • Cultural – as part of our pedagogical development we would like to investigate innovations to present learning in a more culturally responsive way • Behaviour– create greater understanding of behaviour issues, and the causes of poor behaviour and consistent and effective strategies to improve behaviour for learning |
| Weather | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits some activities • Affects mood of some learners and teachers • Most schools have very limited space for students to play when raining • Affects some students health (mental and physical) due to cool / wet conditions |

How our Community of Learning may work together to address these issues

Process:

- Schools to identify their individual challenges from above as their focus and to align with their school's annual planning
- Develop a Community of Learning Leadership team incorporating the leadership roles stated in the CoL agreement. This leadership team will work in close collaboration with all principals and lead teachers within schools to facilitate innovations throughout all schools.
- Leadership team to research and propose draft action plan to help address common challenge(s) focusing on developing teacher capabilities in pedagogy and assessment
- Leadership team to facilitate shared/collaborative actions to mitigate challenges and improve student outcomes
- Schools and leadership team to track progress of target students to measure success of innovations

Research and development goals

These initial ideas will be further developed by the leadership team once the Community of Learning is fully established.

Outcome 1 Improving student achievement by improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning practice within Westland schools

| Actions to meet the outcome | Time frame | Personnel | What we will see happening differently |
|--|---------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Identify and name target students and their achievement challenges | Initial stage | All schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets and challenges will be shared between schools to identify commonalities and ways to support each other |
| 2. Gather student voice on learning challenges and aspirations from target students | Initial stage | All schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student voice will be used to inform and guide teacher inquires and to measure success |
| 3. Gather teacher voice on learning / teaching challenges | Initial stage | All schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders using teacher voice and researched change models to support teachers in their inquiries |
| 4. Survey Westland community on perceived challenges for learning in Westland and aspirations | Initial stage | Leadership team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear vision of 'a successful student profile' developed and shared • Community voice used to inform and guide innovations within schools |
| 5. Build support network for teachers to share best practice in teaching | Initial stage | Leadership team / all teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared formal and informal professional development meetings for all Westland schools • Facilitate PLC within Westland for teachers exploring similar teaching inquiries |
| 6. Explore innovative education developments to increase boys / Māori academic achievement | Ongoing | Leadership team / all teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes made to classroom practice based on research of effective pedagogy for boys and/or Māori |
| 7. Explore digital technologies to engage and motivate struggling learners | Ongoing | Leadership team / all teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning with digital technologies is effectively used to support learning innovations throughout Westland |
| 8. Implement successful innovative education developments to increase student engagement with writing | Ongoing | Leadership team / all teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased achievement in writing sustained long term |
| 9. Provide regular opportunities for teachers to discuss assessment methods and moderate against curriculum levels | Ongoing | Leadership team / all teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers regularly moderate assessment and OTJs are consistent throughout the cluster |
| 10. Develop greater understanding of integration of writing across curriculum | Ongoing | Leadership team / all teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater consistency of pedagogical approaches within and across the schools • Greater integration of learning / achievement goals within secondary learning |

Review Dates: to be set

Progress to date: (what specific actions from above had an impact on accelerating achievement – How, why, when)

Next Steps: (identify specific actions from improvements achieved to continue impact on accelerating achievement – why, when and who)

Outcome 2 Increasing awareness of and ability to lead within their profession to raise student achievement outcomes

| Actions to meet the outcome | Time frame | Personnel | What we will see happening differently |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Identify best practice using BES/RTC/Tātaiako/Ka Hikatia/ School Evaluation Indicators and develop teacher expectations for Westland | Initial stages | Leadership team & principals in consultation with teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to discuss supporting documents such as BES RTC etc. with colleagues • Teachers will be leading discussions within and between their schools about best practice (with a writing focus) • Teachers will openly sharing ideas and seeking feedback or support from colleagues • Open sharing of inquiry outcomes between all teachers • Celebrating teacher exploration of teaching as inquiry (perhaps a day to share findings) • Quality resources are regularly available and resource teachers too |
| 2. Develop opportunities for teachers to lead within their school and cluster | Ongoing | | |
| 3. Develop a culture of ako among teachers and principals | | | |
| 4. Explore innovative education developments to increase student engagement with writing and maths – with a focus on male and Māori students | | | |
| 5. Use initial information gathered regarding teacher confidence / needs to personalise teacher professional development | Initial stages | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers feel supported to make positive change in their own practice |
| 6. CoL innovations support teacher inquiry goals as set within their appraisal and performance management processes | | Principals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have access to wider supports and PLG to facilitate their inquiries • Teacher inquiries are more robust and effective due to collaboration and peer support |
| 7. Coordinate long-term professional development opportunities for Westland | Ongoing | Leadership team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Westland wide PD delivery model used by Westland teachers (webinars?) |
| 8. Develop leadership capability to drive and sustain change (know and use the right skills to drive and sustain change) | Ongoing | Leadership team & lead teachers (from within schools) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective mentoring and coaching of teachers by teachers |
| 9. Explore digital opportunities to participate in online opportunities across Westland, led by teachers within our community | Established early in 2016 | Leadership team and individual teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers confident in accessing and participating in an online community • Teachers able to participate in regular PD via blended learning opportunities |

Review Dates: to be set

Progress to date: (what specific actions from above had an impact on accelerating achievement – How, why, when)

Next Steps: (identify specific actions from improvements achieved to continue impact on accelerating achievement – why, when and who)

Outcome 3 Improve community involvement and support to improve educational outcome for students

| Actions to meet the outcome | Time frame | Personnel | What we will see happening differently |
|--|----------------|-----------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Westland community on perceived challenges for learning in Westland and aspirations | During 2016 | Leadership team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative strategies used to engage wider community to support educational aspirations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With community consultation, develop a shared vision of what success is (more than just going to uni) | By end of 2016 | Leadership team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision shared with wider community and used to guide and celebrate innovations that are improving student outcomes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness of educational opportunities and opportunities to support education within Westland | ongoing | Leadership team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater understanding of education in business community • Greater education presence in local media |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating education in the community | | Leadership team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community informed of CoL formation, aspirations, and ongoing achievements • Community informed of ongoing efforts to meet the needs of their students, building confidence in local schools |

Review Dates: to be set

Progress to date: (what specific actions from above had an impact on accelerating achievement – How, why, when)

Next Steps: (identify specific actions from improvements achieved to continue impact on accelerating achievement – why, when and who)