



# **Matamata Christian School**

## **Annual Report 2023**

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# Principal's Report

The Matamata Christian School Board is pleased to present this report for 2023. This year has been a time of growth for the school with the school roll growing just under 30% from 2022. This is set to continue to increase in 2024. If it continues to grow at this rate we can expect to hit our roll cap of 120, something the school has never achieved in its 35 year history.

It is pleasing to see that the school has also achieved growth across the key learning areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics. The school has spent many years developing these areas and in 2023 continued to invest in teacher development in BSLA, a programme for Junior reading, Writer's Toolbox, schoolwide development in Writing, te reo and tikanga Māori, and Bible. We are seeing the rewards of such investment.

Attendance has been a nationwide issue since Covid. While Matamata Christian School does better than both the national average and the national goal, it continues to be a focus as we try to help people see that everyday at school makes a difference and builds into student achievement. You can see how we did on page 5.

In 2024 we will finish a three year period of Writing development with Writer's Toolbox. This has been exciting development and we look forward to continued growth in this area. BSLA will continue in our two Junior classes next year as both classes will have new teachers in them. Part of our ongoing development every year now will be in house professional development in te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, and Bible. Both these areas had more focussed professional development in past years and now maintain continual development to keep staff and students growing in these areas.

I would like to thank our community for their input this year. Late in the year we went to the entire school community with an in-depth Health survey that would shape the content and way we teach Health and Physical Education across the school. This is the most in-depth engagement we have possibly ever carried out with the community and we thank you for your input. There were some very meaty issues that we explored, especially given the cultural shift we see in society. It was good to affirm our Christian character around this and have a very clear direction about what our community did and did not want to be taught within our school. This will continue to be an area that we need to get right in the years to come. You can find a statement about how we will teach Health and Physical Education on our school website at [www.matamata.school.nz/information/](http://www.matamata.school.nz/information/)

Finally let me thank our great team of staff, school board and proprietors, as well as our parent body who give so much to this school, to build community and develop this as God's place. It is His place, it is a special place, and all of us are honoured to serve Him and our families here.

Yours in Christ



Alistair Paterson  
Principal

# Statement of Variance: Progress Against Targets

In 2023 the school had two strategic goals it was working on; one in writing and one in attendance. Below is an explanation of the goals and how we did against them.

Annual Targets / Goals:					
Goals	What did we achieve? <i>What were the outcomes of our actions?</i> <i>What impact did our actions have?</i>	Evidence	Strategies used	Reasons for any differences (variances) between the target and the outcomes	Planning for next year – where to next?
<b>Goal 1</b> To lift school wide achievement of all students in Writing so every child improves by 12 months progress or more, and those that are one year or more below curriculum expectations will improve by 24 months to either be at curriculum expectations or close the gap on them.	<p>90% (72 students) of the school met the school target, nearly double the number from the previous year. 30% (24) made accelerated progress. 21 of these were target students, 11 closing the gap on expectations with 10 now achieving at expectations.</p> <p>The school now has 62% of all students achieving at the curriculum expectations. This is a 10% increase from 2022 data. Notable movements were the halving of students well below expectations, the near doubling of students well above expectations, and boy's achievement rising from 34% in 2022 to 52% in 2023.</p> <p>(See <i>Evaluation and Analysis of the School's Student Progress and Achievement</i> for more detailed information)</p>	<p>Student progress was monitored continually through the year using assessment of periodic samples of student writing, the online feedback tool within <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> for Year 5 – 8 students, and teacher-student conversations and observations of students to form overall teacher judgements of student writing practice.</p>	<p>Engaged with <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> facilitators to provide in-depth PLD to teachers across the whole school to develop best practice teaching methods, and to deepen teacher's understanding of language and student achievement.</p> <p>Used the <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> online platform to help engage all students in Years 5 – 8 and to provide further writing instruction.</p> <p>Within their classroom each teacher used their teacher inquiry approach to investigate how to support a group of students at risk of not achieving at the expectations in order to help accelerate their learning in Writing.</p> <p>Each class adopted <i>The Code</i> approach to spelling to address issues around spelling performance in students.</p> <p>Began to review assessment processes and updated the English Implementation Plan looking at what and why we are assessing, and what the best process for doing so is in order to support learning, student understanding of their learning and goal setting.</p> <p>Staff implemented a range of initiatives developed through the Tātaiako document to help lift the achievement of Māori and others.</p>	<p>The school has Writing as its major development area and is in year 2 of a 3 year development programme in this area. It has contracted <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> to provide key facilitation in development. This has resulted in significant upskilling of all teachers, the use of new in class resources at all levels, and the provision of an online writing tool which is used as a significant supplementary tool for Year 5 – 8 students. We are seeing this work have a large positive impact on student engagement and overall levels of achievement.</p>	<p>We are continuing to have the same target in 2024 of every child making 12 months progress and then those that are one year or more below expectations making 24 months progress to be at or close the gap on the expectations. Our aim is to grow achievement in the next 12 months to 72% achieving.</p> <p>We are entering the third and final year of our <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> professional development thus Writing development will remain our primary objective in 2024.</p>

			<p>Staff continued to develop an understanding of the Writing expectations and rubrics used with students through staff meeting discussions with another school.</p> <p>Staff joined with another school to practise marking and compare the accuracy of how we are marking student work.</p>		
<p><b>Goal 2</b> To lift school wide attendance so that 70% or more of all students are attending school for 95% of the year (not more than 10 days absence in the school year), and 85% are attending 90% of the year or more (not more than 20 days absence in the school year (Ministry of Education expectations)).</p>	<p>The average rate of attendance in 2023 was 93%, or 12 days absence. Only 45% of the school (44 students) achieved 95%, while just 73.3% achieved 90% attendance. This was still, however, higher than the government's target of 70% achieving 90% attendance and higher than what was achieved nationally.</p>	<p>This data was obtained through a combination of MOE data, data from the school's Student Management System and independent analysis.</p>	<p>A conversation was held with the community at the end of 2022 prize giving leading into 2023. This was reiterated at class parent nights at the beginning of the year about the state of attendance in schools and what are considered acceptable absences.</p> <p>Through newsletters we expressed trust in families to decide when their children are sick as they know their children best.</p> <p>Through the newsletter we regularly reminded whānau to help understand the importance of being at school every day.</p> <p>Adapting the school's former <i>Rock On</i> programme for non-attendance follow up.</p> <p>We looked for any trending days of absence in a week with the intention of working as a school to make that a day that is attractive for students and whānau to be at school.</p> <p>We consulted with families at risk of not meeting attendance goals to ensure there were no barriers to their students attending whether physically, socially or emotionally. The principal pursued trending absences in students and families.</p> <p>We highlighted attendance in each of the three types of school reports that families got during the year.</p> <p>Attendance and punctuality continued to be promoted as two of four achievement areas for earning a <i>'Rockstars'</i> certificate at the end of each term in the end of term assembly. These are valued by students and families.</p>	<p>While attendance is on the whole fairly high normally, the main impact on it was a number of students who were away on mission trips and a number of families who went on overseas holidays during term time. Because Matamata is a quite rural town, in order to have holidays some families need to fit in with farm timetabling which allows release only at one particular time of the year.</p>	<p>In 2024 we will strive to have 80% of our students at school for 90% of the time or more. We have an increased number of families that are now missionary families for 2024 and we know they will go out for long term missions. We will provide work for these families but will otherwise work to have every child at school every day they possibly can be.</p>

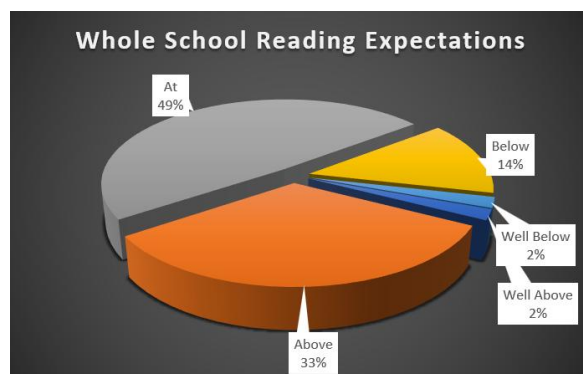
# Evaluation and Analysis of the School's Students' Progress and Achievement

## Reading Achievement

### Performance Against the Curriculum Expectations

2% (2) were well above expectations  
 33% (30) were above curriculum expectations  
 49% (44) were at expectations  
 14% (13) were below expectations  
 2% (2) were well below expectations

**84% of the school is at, above or well above curriculum expectations**



### Gender

84% of girls were at or above expectations.  
 82% of boys were at or above.

### Ethnicity Target Groups

	Māori			Pasifika	
Well Above			Well Above		
Above	31%	75% at or above	Above	57%	86% at or above
At	44%		At	29%	
Below	25%		Below	14%	
Well Below			Well Below		

The school's target was to lift school wide achievement of all students in Reading so every child improved by 12 months progress or more, and those that were one year or more below curriculum expectations would improve by 24 months to either be at the expectations or close the gap on them.

To note:

- 92% (73 students) of the school met the school target outlined above. (Note we had no previous data on students who started during the year).
- 36% (29) made accelerated progress. Nine of these students were below or well below improving to be at the expectations. Growth was between 2—3 years over 12 months.
- Six students across the school made less than the expected 12 months progress. One of these had been above expectations prior.
- The overall data is a lift of 10% to 84% being at or above expectations when compared with 2022 end of year data.
- There was a significant increase in students above or well above expectations from 11 to 32 students.
- Māori, with twice the number of students from last year, increased by 1% that were at, the well below category was eliminated and there was a significant increase in those well above.
- Pasifika, with one extra student from last year, increased from 83% to 86% at or above expectations. Those above expectations doubled from last year.
- Girls at or above expectations increased by 2% and boys increased by 18%.

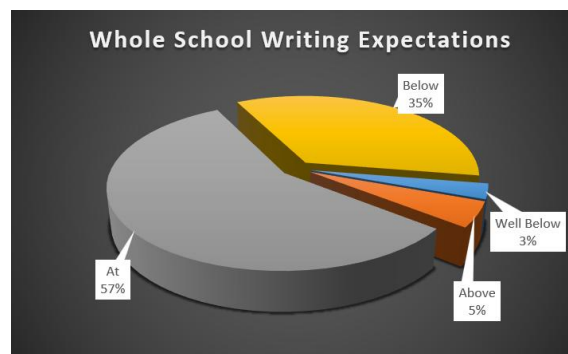
Note: Well above = 2 years or more above chronological age. Above = 1 year above. At = At chronological age. Below = Up to 1 year below. Well Below = 2 years or more below

## Writing Achievement

### Curriculum Expectations

5% (5) were above curriculum expectations  
 57% (52) were at expectations  
 35% (32) were below expectations  
 3% (3) were well below expectations

**62% of the school is at or above the curriculum expectations**



### Gender

67% of girls were at or above expectations.  
 52% of boys were at or above expectations.

### Ethnicity Target Groups

	Māori		Pasifika	
Well Above		56% at or above	Well Above	
Above	6%		Above	
At	50%		At	86%
Below	44%		Below	14%
Well Below			Well Below	

The school's target was to lift school wide achievement of all students in Writing so every child improved by 12 months progress or more, and those that were one year or more below expectations would improve by 24 months to either be at the curriculum expectations or close the gap on them.

To note:

- 90% (72 students) of the school met the school target outlined above, nearly double the number from the previous year. (Note we had no previous data on students who started during the year).
- 30% (24) made accelerated progress. 21 of these were target students, 11 closing the gap on expectations with 10 now achieving at expectations.
- 62% is a 10% increase from 2022 data. Notable movements were the halving of numbers of well below students, the near doubling of numbers of well above, and boy's achievement rising from 34% in 2022 to 52% in 2023.
- Māori achievement increased notably from 38% in 2022 to 56% in 2023.
- Pasifika achievement increased from 67% in 2022 to 86% in 2023.
- Year groups holding back the data were Year 3 students where 11 of 19 students are tracking a year behind, and in Year 5 seven of 13 students were a year behind. These two groups will be target cohorts in 2024.

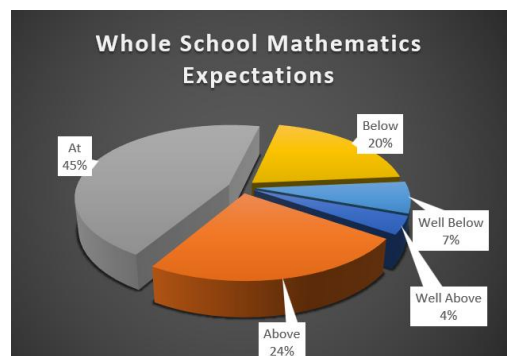
*Note: Well above = 2 years or more above chronological age. Above = 1 year above. At = At chronological age. Below = Up to 1 year below. Well Below = 2 years or more below*

## Mathematics Achievement

### Curriculum Expectations

4% (4) were well above curriculum expectations  
 24% (22) were above expectations  
 45% (41) were at expectations  
 20% (18) were below expectations  
 7% (6) were well below expectations

**73% of the school is at or above the curriculum expectations**



### Gender

71% of girls were at or above expectations.  
 79% of boys were at or above.

### Ethnicity Target Groups

	Māori			Pasifika	
Well Above	6%	69% at or above	Well Above		86% at or above
Above	25%		Above	43%	
At	38%		At	43%	
Below	25%		Below	14%	
Well Below	6%		Well Below		

### School Target

The school's target was to lift school wide achievement of all students in Mathematics so every child improved by 12 months progress or more, and those that were one year or more below the expectations would improve by 24 months to either be at the curriculum expectations or close the gap on them.

To note:

- 81% (65 students) met the school target outlined above. (Note we had no previous data on students who started during the year).
- 36% (29) made accelerated progress of an extra 6—36 months. 12 of these were behind and are now operating at or above expectations.
- 73% achievement is up 5% from 68% at or above in 2022. There was a significant rise in those above and well above. In 2022 just 9 students were above, now 26 are above or well above.
- Girls achieving rose from 67% to 71%
- Boys achieving rose significantly from 67% to 79%.
- Māori achievement increased 19% from 50% in 2022 to 69% in 2023.
- Pasifika had a minor increase going from 83% to 86%.
- A significant group of Year 3 and 7 students are operating a year behind expectations and will need to be target groups in 2024.

*Note: Well above = 2 years or more above chronological age. Above = 1 year above. At = At chronological age. Below = 1 year below. Well Below = 2 years or more below*



## Challenges in 2023

In 2023 we faced fewer challenges than we had in previous years. We did, however, still face some. These included:

- staffing changes from the beginning of the year. The Senior class had a number of changes which resulted in a number of students being unsettled for considerable periods of time.
- staff shortages. Advertising throughout the year did not generate any replacement staff. This was only able to be rectified at the end of the year
- a fast increasing cohort, particularly at Year 3, creating large class sizes
- many new students coming into the school were performing below expectations when they arrived

We have a number of students who face a learning deficit due to challenges within themselves or factors outside of school. Through our programming, mentoring, internal counselling and relationships with them we are trying to help make up for these needs and give the best opportunities to them that we can.

Moving into 2024 we are thrilled to have a full quota of promising staff. One is RTLB trained which we hope will help us provide some fresh perspective on how to help students that need help and build into general staff capabilities.

## Further Commentary

Traditionally, the hardest area to make progress in has been Writing. Writing is much more of an art form than other subjects such as Reading or Mathematics and progress tends to take longer. But like these other two subjects it impacts how students can do in other subjects, particularly Bible, Social Studies, Science and Technology. Writing is more subjective than Reading or Mathematics and across the country is an area girls have usually fared better in than boys while in Mathematics this is often the other way around.

In 2023 our key focus was in Writing. For the school this was the second year of a three year journey in Writing development. While gains in Writing in 2022 were only slight we were told by our facilitators that this is normal and that we could expect increasing traction in 2023 and 2024. So far this seems to be the case.

Moving now from 2023 to 2024 our key professional development for staff will be with:

- Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) for the two Junior classes. This began implementation in Matamata Christian School in 2022 with very pleasing results (this does not show in end of year data until a child has completed a full year at school). Development for this continued in 2023 and we included a teacher aide in the training. Now, however, the trained teachers have left so the training will begin again for our two Year 1/2 and Year 2/3 classes. These classes will have the support of one of our teacher aides that are now trained in BSLA. Based on our previous experiences since 2022, we believe BSLA, a structured literacy programme, will prove to be very successful for all our junior students.
- Writer's Toolbox. This is our most major PLD. It is a significant Writing development approach that includes both online and offline development and is expected to be completed at the end of 2024. It is done across all classes with the biggest development and online component taking place at Years 5—8.
- Other professional development for staff will occur in-house with some from the Kāhui Ako, in Māori, Science, Bible, and new curriculum development.

We are aiming for these approaches to have a very positive impact on student learning and engagement helping see a rise in overall long term achievement.

## How We Have Given Effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The school takes its responsibilities toward giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi seriously. Below are a series of strategies it has been working in 2023, many of which started development prior to 2023.

- Prior to 2023 staff have all been involved in three years of professional development to develop the teaching of te reo and tikanga Māori in the school. In 2023 each class had 30 minutes per week of instructional time.
- This year the school developed and implemented its approach toward Matariki that also encompassed our school's special Christian character perspective.
- As part of their unit in Aotearoa New Zealand Histories, senior class students visited Waitangi and studies Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its importance.
- Māori language is being given increasing prominence in school communications including the fortnightly newsletter and communications sent out such as emails and letters.
- In 2023 for the first time the school joined other local schools to enter Matamata's Kapa Haka performances with all students, and the Ki o rahi competition with all Year 5/6 students.
- We have continued informal consultation with Ngāti Hauā over continuing development for Māori in the school.
- Teachers have continued their engagement in the Tātaiako strategies released by the Ministry of Education. The school has developed this document into a series of strategies teachers use to help promote achievement of Māori students and others with the belief that what is good for Māori is good for everyone.
- The achievement of all Māori and Pasifika students are carefully monitored with staff looking for ways to promote accelerated learning for all underachieving students. Schoolwide reporting always specifically reports on the progress of these two groups too to highlight the importance of progress for these groups.
- Each year the school maintains a monitored mini plan to further the development of Māori and tikanga Māori in staff, students and across the school itself.

All of these progresses will continue into 2024 and be developed further.

# Statement of Compliance with Employment Policy

The School Board works hard to be a good employer and to appoint staff fairly and for the good of the school.

Below is what we have done as a good employer and areas under Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) that we intend to continue to improve upon.

Reporting on the principles of being a Good Employer	
<b>How we have met our obligations to provide good and safe working conditions?</b>	The Board regularly reflects on how to provide good and safe working conditions for employees. In 2023 we beefed up practices in preparing for offsite and outside events for both students and staff and integrated safe practices for when staff are driving students places. Staff have the opportunity to help improve workplace health and safety and this is discussed sometimes in staff meetings. All entitlements for staff are provided including opportunities given for leadership and salary units.
<b>What is our equal employment opportunities programme? How have we been fulfilling this programme?</b>	When employing staff we look at the capacity for all applicants to fit into our total team and add capacity in the school. While their ability to attest to and live out the school's special character is important, no weighting is placed against gender, ethnicity or physical impairment. The Board is also open on a range of personal preferences such as location of residence, political and denominational views.
<b>How we practice impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment?</b>	All emphasis is placed on choosing the best staff member to carry out a role, fit into the staff team and work effectively with parents. All qualified persons are considered with this criteria.
<b>How we recognise:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the aims and aspirations of Māori,</li> <li>– the employment requirements of Māori, and</li> <li>– greater involvement of Māori in the Education service?</li> </ul>	So far we have had no Māori applicants for any role. However, we have been working on a professional development plan with all teachers to develop knowledge and ability to teach both te reo and tikanga Māori. Our local iwi, Ngāti Hauā, have also been involved in some of our professional development of staff.
<b>How we enhance the abilities of individual employees?</b>	All teachers and teacher aides have a school professional development programme that is intended to better equip staff in their teaching pedagogy and ability to teach. In 2023 this focussed on Writing, te reo and tikanga Māori, Bible, and in the Junior class, BSLA. All staff are kept up to date with Incredible Years (IY) training and we are working toward all staff being first aid trained.
<b>How we recognise the employment requirements of women?</b>	Some of our staff have chosen to be appointed part-time in order to meet their personal and family needs. We have embraced this where they have been the best applicants for a job.
<b>How we recognise the employment requirements of persons with disabilities?</b>	We do not have any staff with disabilities but the school is equipped to cater for a range of disabilities anyway.

Reporting on Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Programme/Policy	YES	NO
<b>Do you operate an EEO programme/policy?</b>	✓	

<b>Has this policy or programme been made available to staff?</b>	✓	
<b>Does your EEO programme/policy include training to raise awareness of issues which may impact EEO?</b>		✓
<b>Has your EEO programme/policy appointed someone to coordinate compliance with its requirements?</b>		✓
<b>Does your EEO programme/policy provide for regular reporting on compliance with the policy and/or achievements under the policy?</b>		✓
<b>Does your EEO programme/policy set priorities and objectives?</b>		✓

We are a small school with a small staff. An EEO officer and programme has not been necessary to date as the principal has led employment matters and all staff have easy and regular access to the principal. Changes to contracts and consultation on salary units are made that staff can speak into. All appointments are made with both the School Board and Proprietor Boards involvement. The School Board then ratifies each appointment. No employment matters have been raised but the Board will review having a programme and appointed person if it becomes clear there is a need for this in the future.

## Kiwisport Funding

In 2023 the school received \$1 406.40 in Kiwisport funding.

This was used to provide sport for students. In 2023 the school set up an after school Sports Academy for Year 3 – 8 students to encourage sports involvement, generic sports skills development and fitness. From here students are encouraged to be involved in sports codes of their choice. Over half the school has chosen to be involved in this. From here the school is involved in a series of sports leagues with other local schools in Touch Rugby, Miniball, Futsal, Cricket, Netball and Hockey across the year. Each of these sports involves entry fees for students to participate. The school has used its Kiwisport funding to cover these fees to help more students be involved. In 2023 we had record numbers of students involve themselves in these codes.

Kiwisport funding has also been used to cover off the costs of student participation in one off sports events such as the Inter school events in Athletics and Cross Country, and in schoolwide swimming lessons taken at the local Matamata Pools.

Finally we have also used it to help students attend Sports Camp at Years 7 and 8 when they were unable to afford the camp fees.

The funding we have received has had to be topped up as it does not cover all these things. However, the idea of its use has been to reduce the barriers of students participating in sports.