



Matamata Christian School

Annual Report 2024

Contents

Principal's Report	3
Statement of Variance: Progress Against Targets	4
Evaluation and Analysis of the School's Students' Progress and Achievement	7
How We Have Given Effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.....	11
Statement of Compliance with Employment Policy	12
Kiwisport Funding.....	13

Principal's Report

The Matamata Christian School Board is pleased to present this report for 2024. As in 2023, this year has been a time of growth for the school with the school roll filling to its maximum of 120 for the first time in its history. This has been exciting for the school and a small waiting list has been assembled going into 2025. Families have even started reserving places for their future children as far as five years out. The school presently has an application in to the Ministry of Education requesting an extension of numbers to 150.

It is pleasing to see that the school has also achieved growth across the key learning areas of Writing and Mathematics. Mathematics had particularly good growth and Writing very small growth while Reading dropped fractionally but still stayed above 80% achievement. This was all achieved while also having much larger roll numbers than previously. The school 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 has achieved 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. We achieved significant improvements from 2023 and you can see how we did on page 5.

In 2025 there will be significant change as the new English and Mathematics Curriculums are implemented. Along with this is increased focus on structured literacy and Mathematics approaches. In this school BSLA will be extended in Reading from Years 1 – 3 all the way through to Year 8, Writer's Toolbox will be maintained, and Oxford Mathematics will be introduced schoolwide as we change our approach completely to a more structured teaching approach.

Along with our rapid growth over the past three years we have tried to maintain our strong community feel. Our community itself has worked hard on this too welcoming in new families and including them in the atmosphere at pick up times and events run. Our sporting involvement picked up across the codes offered and students and parents involved themselves in Sports Academy. The atmosphere at events such as Stations of the Cross, the annual AGM, and the end of year production was excellent and supportive. People across the board stepped up to assist wherever they could. The family feel is a key part of the culture of the school and I would thank everyone in the community for this.

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 remains 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 2024 the school had three strategic goals it was working on. They were in Writing, BSLA Reading and 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? 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?
Goal 1 To raise student achievement so 71% of all students are performing at or above curriculum expectations in Writing by the end of the 2024 school year (up from 62% in 2023).	64% (71 students) met the school target and 15% (17) made accelerated progress. 16 of these were behind and 13 of them are now achieving at expectations. 64% is a 2% increase from 2023 data and a 12% increase from 2022 and 2021 data. Boys achievement has risen from 34% in 2022 to 52% in 2023 and 57% in 2024. Girls improved 3% in 2024 to 70%. (See <i>Evaluation and Analysis of the School's Student Progress and Achievement</i> for more detailed information)	Student progress was monitored continually through the year using assessment of periodic samples of student writing through e-asTTle, 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.	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. Staff meetings were held each term to further develop teacher pedagogies in using <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> . Used the <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> online platform to help engage all students in Years 5 – 8 and to provide further writing instruction. All classes used the <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> sentence train as an instructional tool for understanding sentence development. 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. Each class adopted <i>The Code</i> approach to spelling to address issues around spelling performance in students. Began to review assessment processes and updated the English Implementation Plan looking at what and why we are assessing, and what	While we did not reach our goal for 71% of students to be achieving we acknowledge that the global picture is one of improvement over the last four years. This is amplified when given the number of additional students that are part of the school now through roll growth. Many of the students coming in were below expectations. The school has Writing as its major development area and has just completed year 3 of a 3-year development programme in this area. It had 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.	We are continuing to have the same target in 2025 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 to close the gap on the expectations. Our aim is to grow achievement in the next 12 months to 74% achieving. We have finished our facilitated development of <i>Writer's Toolbox</i> professional development and are now continuing development in-house. Writing development remains a key objective in 2025.

			<p>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>Staff continued to develop an understanding of the Writing expectations and rubrics used with students through staff meeting discussions.</p>		
<p>Goal 2</p> <p>To implement the <i>BSLA</i> Reading programme at Years 1 – 3 and have 85% or more of Year 1 – 3 students achieving at the curriculum expectations in Reading.</p>	<p>With ESOL excluded 75% (24 students) reached the goal. This included 86% of Māori and 100% of Pasifika students achieving. 19% of all students were achieving a year ahead.</p>	<p>Tight testing was performed at all the <i>BSLA</i> milestones to ensure good monitoring. Teach observations helped verify this and other progress.</p>	<p>Years 1 -3 teachers were enrolled and completed the <i>BSLA</i> training with the University of Canterbury.</p> <p>The Tier 1 programme of <i>BSLA</i> was setup and implemented.</p> <p>A teacher aide was used to support the programme in Years 2 – 3.</p> <p>A Resource Teacher of Literacy was used to help strengthen teacher knowledge and to act as a facilitator during the training process.</p> <p>Reading resources for <i>BSLA</i> were strengthened.</p> <p>Teacher inquiry was implemented to further strengthen understanding and implementation of the programme.</p>	<p>A total of 10 students (including ESOL) did not meet the target. These students will need Tier 2 if the programme and will continue to get support.</p>	<p>With the government's rollout of a structured literacy approach the school intends to train staff in <i>BSLA</i> as it is released to Years 4 – 8. We will also need to train a new teacher at Years 1 – 2 due to staffing changes. Our hope is then to be embedding <i>BSLA</i> across the school in 2026.</p>
<p>Goal 3</p> <p>To lift school wide attendance so that 80% or more of all students are attending school for 90% of the year (not more than 20 days absence in the school year).</p>	<p>Term 1 – 84%. Up from 79% in 2023.</p> <p>Term 2 – 73%. Up from 67%.</p> <p>Term 3 – 82%. Up from 61%.</p> <p>Term 4 – 83%. Up from 73%.</p> <p>All of these were significantly higher than the governments 70% target during 2024.</p>	<p>This data was collated using official Ministry of Education data.</p>	<p>A conversation was held with the community at the end of 2023 prize giving leading into 2024. 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>Attendance was followed up from the school office.</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.</p> <p>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>

			<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.</p> <p>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 'Rockstars' certificate at the end of each term in the end of term assembly. These are valued by students and families.</p>	
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Evaluation and Analysis of the School's Students' Progress and Achievement

Reading Achievement

Performance Against the Curriculum Expectations

17% (19) were above curriculum expectations

64% (71) were at expectations

15% (17) were below expectations

4% (4) were well below expectations

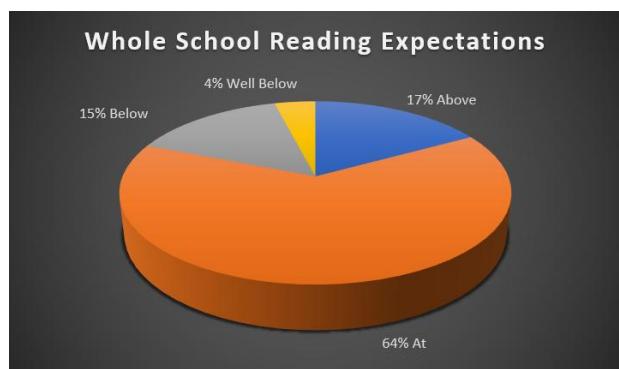


81% of the school is at, above or well above curriculum expectations

Gender

87% of girls were at or above expectations.

73% of boys were at or above.



Ethnicity Target Groups

Māori		Pasifika	
Well Above		87% at or above	Well Above
Above			Above 33%
At	87%		At 67%
Below	7%		Below
Well Below	7%		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.

76% (84 students) of the school met the school target outlined above. 11% (12) made accelerated progress. Nine of these students were below or well below improving to close the gap on the expectations by two years each.

The overall data is a drop of 3% to 81% from 2023, however there was a significant increase in student numbers being compared (nearly 20 extra, equivalent to a class). Māori achievement increased by 12% and Pasifika by 14% with both groups tracking well above the school average. Girls increased by 3% though boys as a cohort (and there are fewer of them than girls) dropped by 9%. There were six ESOL students with two being at school expectation while the rest were only one year behind.

Long term achieving trend: 2021 = 71%, 2022 = 74%, 2023 = 84%, 2024 = 81%.

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

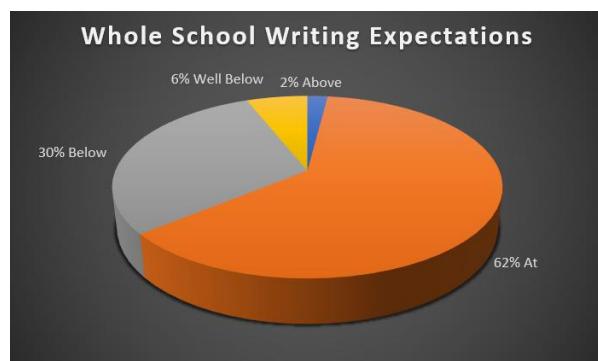
Curriculum Expectations

2% (2) were above curriculum expectations
 62% (69) were at expectations
 30% (33) were below expectations
 6% (7) were well below expectations

64% of the school is at or above the curriculum expectations

Gender

70% of girls were at or above expectations.
 57% of boys were at or above expectations.



Ethnicity Target Groups

		Māori		Pasifika	
Well Above		Well Above		Well Above	
Above		Above		Above	
At	54%	At	83%	At	83%
Below	40%	Below	17%	Below	17%
Well Below	6%	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.

73% (81 students) of the school met the school target outlined above. 15% (17) made accelerated progress. 16 of these students were behind and of these 13 are now working at expectations.

The school's target was also to have 71% achieving at or above. It did not achieve this but at 64% this is a slight increase of 2% from last year while also including nearly 20 more students, the equivalent of an extra classroom, in the count.

Māori achievement is down 2% while Pasifika is about the same. Both boys and girls improved statistically (boys are up 5% and girls 3%). Understandably ESOL students (6) were underperforming with just one achieving at general expectations.

Over a longer period of time the overall trend that are at or above is:

2021 = 52%, 2022 = 52%, 2023 = 62%, 2024 = 64%.

Boys have risen consistently from 34% achieving in 2022 to 57% in 2024. Though the school roll has increased substantially those well below have halved over these years.

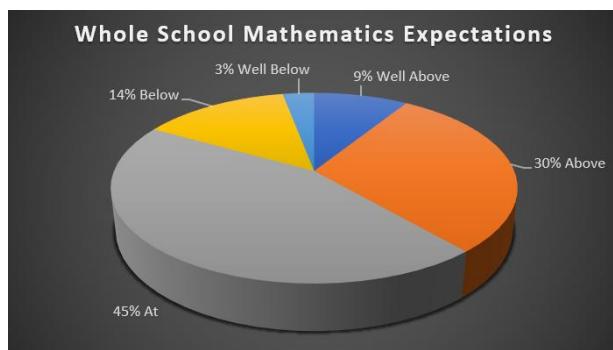
Note: Well above = 2 years or more above chronological age. Above = 1 year above. At = At chronological age. Below = Up to 1 year below. Well Below = 2 years or more below

Mathematics Achievement

Curriculum Expectations

9% (10) were well above curriculum expectations
 30% (33) were above expectations
 45% (50) were at expectations
 14% (15) were below expectations
 3% (3) were well below expectations

84% of the school is at or above the curriculum expectations



Gender

85% of girls were at or above expectations.
 84% of boys were at or above.

Ethnicity Target Groups

		Māori		Pasifika	
Well Above	13%	Well Above		At	
Above	40%	Above	50%	At	50%
At	33%	At		100% at or above	
Below	7%	Below			
Well Below	7%	Well Below			

86% at or above 100% at or above

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.

93% (103) of the school met the school target outlined above. 33% (37) made accelerated progress. Four of these were behind and are now operating at expectations.

Māori achievement increased to 86% from 69% last year, and Pasifika increased to 100% achieving from 86% last year. ESOL were at 67%.

From last year girls increased from 71% achieving to 85% and boys from 79% to 84%.

In spite of our large increase in roll numbers those well behind have dropped to a quarter of what they were in 2021.

The long term trend of at or above students is: 2021 = 66%, 2022 = 68%, 2023 = 74% and 2024 = 84%.

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 2024

We had fewer challenges against us again this year. For consideration was:

- 60% of our classes had new teachers joining our team. All needed to work hard to get up to speed with the significant professional development that the rest of the staff had experienced over the previous years in Writing and Māori. This was big for all as one was returning to the classroom after seven years out of it, one came from another country, and one was a beginning teacher. All did very well.
- We had a rapidly growing roll which increased by 30%+. Management and the Boards had to work hard to manage the impact on classroom sizes and resourcing needs.

God really provided as the school's culture was preserved, and achievement has consistently trended upwards. Two areas, Reading and Mathematics have achieved at over 80% which has always been the goal that we have wanted to achieve. Writing is nudging toward it.

Further Commentary

Traditionally, the hardest area to make progress in has been Writing. Writing is much more of an art form than either Reading or Mathematics and progress tends to take longer. It tends to be more subjective and girls have usually fared better than boys across the country while in Mathematics this is often the other way around.

In 2021 we started an intense development journey to improve Writing using *Writer's Toolbox*. While this concluded at the end of Term 1 2024, we have developed in-house skills to try and keep this development moving forward as new staff come on board.

Key professional development for staff in 2025 will be with:

- Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) for Years 4—8. The Junior school already has this new Reading programme implemented (Years 1—3) but during the year the intention is for the government to roll this out at higher levels. With one of the Junior team members of staff set to leave it is likely we will need to get their replacement trained in this too. Because we are employing a new Junior teacher at present it may be that we need to get our new teacher trained again in BSLA too. For us the BSLA journey began implementation in 2022 with very pleasing results and we look forward to having it across the school as it is developed. We believe BSLA is going to have an increased impact on Reading achievement over the next few years.
- Mathematics is a key development area in 2025. All schools are required to change from the start of 2025 to one of four structured programmes the government is rolling out. After much research we chose Oxford. Development and teacher only days to support this roll out over 2025 and 2026.
- Other professional development for staff will occur in-house. Much of this is ongoing in Writing, Māori and Bible.

We are hoping these approaches will impact student learning and engagement seeing 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 on in 2024, many of which started development prior to 2024.

- Prior to 2024 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 2024 each class had 30 minutes per week of instructional time.
- This year the school continued to develop and implement its approach toward Matariki that also encompassed our school's special Christian character perspective.
- Māori language is being given increasing prominence in school communications including the fortnightly newsletter, school website and communications sent out such as emails and letters.
- In 2024 for the second 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.
- Ngāti Hauā continued to provide tailored staff development during the school holidays for our school staff.
- 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 used 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 strategic 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 2025 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	
How we have met our obligations to provide good and safe working conditions?	The Board regularly reflects on how to provide good and safe working conditions for employees. In 2023 and 2024 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 and board meetings. All entitlements for staff are provided including expanding opportunities given for leadership and salary units.
What is our equal employment opportunities programme? How have we been fulfilling this programme?	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 very 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.
How we practice impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment?	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. Professional development is given prioritised to the school's strategic plan.
How we recognise: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– the aims and aspirations of Māori,– the employment requirements of Māori, and– greater involvement of Māori in the Education service?	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 including in 2024.
How we enhance the abilities of individual employees?	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 2024 this focussed on Writing, te reo and tikanga Māori, Bible, Incredible Years (IY) training for several new staff, and in the Junior class, BSLA. We are working toward all staff being first aid trained.
How we recognise the employment requirements of women?	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.
How we recognise the employment requirements of persons with disabilities?	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
Do you operate an EEO programme/policy?	✓	
Has this policy or programme been made available to staff?	✓	
Does your EEO programme/policy include training to raise awareness of issues which may impact EEO?		✓
Has your EEO programme/policy appointed someone to coordinate compliance with its requirements?		✓
Does your EEO programme/policy provide for regular reporting on compliance with the policy and/or achievements under the policy?		✓
Does your EEO programme/policy set priorities and objectives?		✓

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 2024 the school received \$1 820.40 in Kiwisport funding.

This was used to provide sport for students. In 2024 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. Up to 40% of 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 2024 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 the annual 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.