



Russell School – Bay of Islands

School Description

Respecting the Past, Challenging the Present, and Creating a Positive Future

An introduction of “who we are” and “what we want to be” is in pages 2 and 3 of our school charter, which are included in this description. We want our students to discover and develop their natural abilities. We strive to give them a sense of belonging by providing opportunities to participate academically, in sports, cultural and arts activities, and community events.

Our staff includes the principal and two other full time registered teachers. We have two registered teachers who team teach the year 1 and 2 class and Reading Recovery. We also have a relief teacher. There are two part time music teachers and a part time contemporary dance instructor that are paid through a donation of a local. In addition to the teaching staff, we have a caretaker and two part time office assistants.

Russell School strives to improve the reading capabilities of all their students. Since reading is the gateway to many other learning opportunities, we focus on reading success in our junior classes. Often we have more students requiring reading recovery than the MOE provides for, so we supplement our programme to provide every child reading success. We also continue a modified reading recovery programme for children who have aged out of funding. In addition, we pair up a senior student with a junior student to help with reading before school. Our goal is to have 85% of our students at or above their reading age. Currently we are at our goal for all students, and almost at target for Maori boys (82%). In 2012 12% of our Maori boys were well below, as of 2017 none of our students are well below their age levels for reading.

We have also focused on writing capabilities and maths. Page 5 of our school charter shows the percentages of students' abilities in reading, writing, and maths from 2012 to 2017. There is some variability in the trends for students at or above, the trend for students well below is clear. There are no students well below their expected levels of reading, writing, or numeracy.

Other academic focuses include music, cultural arts, and science. Currently, we have two part-time music teachers. One teacher focuses on the years 7 & 8 band, and the other teacher focuses on the other year classes. Both groups give at least an annual performance. Our contemporary dance teacher also organises an annual performance (see our school website for a video of one of the performances). There is a volunteer ballroom dance teacher for the seniors to prepare them for the senior dance at the end of the year. Our students also participate in kapa haka performances throughout the year, with the annual Whangaruru Festival in term 3. Students are asked to provide artwork for various community events and we have a biennial art exhibit and sale as a senior trip fundraiser. For science, we have a volunteer who comes to support senior students to prepare for the Far North Regional Science Fair. This volunteer also helps to organise our own science fair and helps the year 5&6 teacher with science projects and activities, and has agreed to continue after her child graduates. In addition to the science advisor, we have a volunteer who spearheaded and is in charge of our Fruit in School programme. She manages several volunteers to fundraise for and to cut the fruit for the children. Last but not least, we have two wonderful volunteers who maintain our school gardens and teach students about organic gardening.



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A definite bonus is the principal's house that is located in town. It has three bedrooms, one bathroom, and a two car garage. It sits at the top of the hill with stunning views of Waitangi, Paihia, and surrounding waters.

We are a well-resourced and maintained school with school Ipads for each classroom, interactive whiteboards, a new library, a renovated Whare Wananga with kitchen, 48 solar panels, newly painted school pools, and a dental clinic converted to a music room. Our large school grounds are located in the centre of town. We are a part of the community and the community is part of us.