



Birkdale Intermediate School

Newsletter of the Board of Trustees

Summer 2010

BULLETIN



**FILMING
OUR OWN
RESOURCES**

**ARTIST WORKS
WITH OUR
STUDENTS**

**ERO REVIEW
COMMENTS**

Education Review Office Comments

We have developed our science, social studies, technology and arts programmes using a teaching approach called problem-based learning. The units of work are called Quests, quests for new insights and understandings. During our last ERO review they commented on this development.

Support for Teachers

‘A professional mentoring role is undertaken by a Deputy Principal to promote high levels of teacher performance. Feedback to teachers about their implementation of problem-based learning is rigorous and records ongoing improvement in individual teacher practice. This support is highly valued by teachers, the majority of whom are high performing. They report being more confident and proficient in implementing the approach as a result of the professional support and resourcing they receive.’

Engagement in Learning

‘Classrooms reflect high levels of student engagement and interest in learning. Students are able to make personal associations with Quest contexts and report this as a positive impact on their attitude to learning. Robust and reliable assessment data is collected as a result. Teachers further evaluate the success of each Quest and recommendations are implemented in the next unit of work, further strengthening the planning of future topics or problems. Children are made aware of the criteria by use of rubrics that detail elements of their work that will be appraised. This enables them to take an active part in assessing their work.’

New Social Studies Resource with the Assistance of the Historic Places Trust

We are developing a social studies unit around an incident that took place at the Pukekohe East Church during the New Zealand Wars. When we surveyed our students we found that they had little understanding of the 19th Century. To assist with their understanding we joined with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust to create a video of life at Highwic House during the mid 19th Century. A group of our students spent the day at Highwic reenacting various parts of life of a wealthy Auckland family. They took the part of a maid



Stilts - a favourite of many generations.

doing all the household chores, like washing and ironing. Some played the part of children of the family and were filmed playing games like stilts and quoits. It was a fun day dressing in period costume and reenacting the life of this grand old house. The video will form part of a CD which will also include letters, articles and photographs of life in 19th

Century Auckland and the farms south of Auckland around the Bombay Hills.

During the New Zealand Wars the small church at Pukekohe East was fortified by settlers and attacked by a party of Ngati Maniapoto warriors.

The small group of settlers held out until the British Army arrived from Drury to rescue them. The church still has bullet holes visible in its walls from the attack.

When completed the unit will help our students understand why different groups may experience the same event differently.

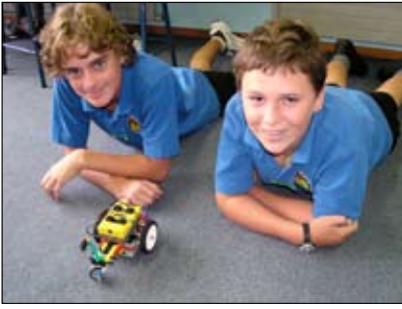
It will be a study full of interesting new insights and understandings.



Filming 19th Century household chores in Highwic's kitchen.



Filming 19th Century games on Highwic's front lawn.



Dancing Robots

A group of our students is working on developing dancing robots. They are using computers to programme robots they have made using Lego Mindstorms. If they get the programming correct their robots dance in time to music. The lego mindstorms software they are using is powered by NI LabVIEW, an intuitive graphical programming software used by scientists and engineers worldwide to design, control and test consumer products and systems such as MP3 and DVD players, cell phones, and vehicle air bag safety systems. Applications include helping to control the NASA Mars Pathfinder exploration and testing the Microsoft Xbox.



Students Create a Public Sculpture with Artist Peter Lange

A group of high ability art students worked with artist Peter Lange to construct a large brick sculpture which is now located on the path to our Technology Centre.



The sculpture is a large paper dart made of bricks. It makes us look at traditional materials in a new light, which is a goal of our technology programme where students are challenged to find innovative ways of solving real world problems. It



joins two other sculptures by Peter Lange, the bell his mother rang to bring the family in for dinner and the wooden plane his father used out in their backyard shed. These form a collection of objects from his childhood.

As well as the large sculpture they also created smaller sculptures of their own using miniature bricks fired in our kiln.

Sculptures like these expose our students daily to examples of art works by contemporary New Zealand



artists. It will make them aware of art as a significant aspect of New Zealand life. We hope it will strengthen their appreciation for how art in an outdoor public setting can inspire the human spirit.



Students Lay ANZAC Day Wreath

Each year two students represent our school community at the Birkenhead ANZAC Day ceremony. During a social studies Quest they research to answer the question, 'What should we remember about war?'



Year 8 Camp a Physical and Mental Challenge

Every year our Year 8 students take up the challenge offered to them by Camp Adair in the Hunua Ranges. They stay overnight and are engaged in a series of challenges, from a fun mud slide to archery and high rope work. Although safely belayed it is amazing how scary it is to be high up in the trees on a narrow beam. It's quite a challenge, not to be missed.



Archery develops hand eye coordination.

Worm Farm is Reducing Our Waste

As part of our environmental studies we have, with the help of Mercury Energy, set up a large industrial-sized worm farm to recycle our organic wastes. Student monitors from across the school bring the waste to a central collection point to be fed to thousands of hungry worms. We have had the help of a scientist, Dr John Walsby, who has assisted us in developing a science programme that looks at decomposition and the most effective way to recycle organic waste.



The mud from the mud slide washes off but the experience remains for a life time.

The Wizard of Oz

The school has a fine tradition of annual productions and this year was no exception. A talented cast entertained us with their interpretation of the old favourite, 'The Wizard of Oz.' This year's cast lived up to the high standard of performance we have come to expect from our students. Many past students remember the show they starred in during their time at Birkdale Intermediate School, as this was the 44th in the history of the school.



The Wizard of Oz lights up our stage.



Scientist Dr John Walsby and our worm monitors place the first worms in our farm.