



MT RICHMOND SPECIAL SCHOOL

Mt Richmond Special School is located in the South Auckland suburb of Otahuhu. This is a low socio-economic area with a wide range of ethnic groups. The population is very mobile due to the large numbers of rental properties in the area, and there is a high turnover of students in the surrounding regular schools.

Mt Richmond has a much wider catchment area, from Mt Wellington in the north to the northern border of Manurewa in the south. The eastern boundary encompasses Otara and East Tamaki, and the railway line through Mangere forms the western boundary. Students mainly live at home and come to school by taxi or public transport if they have the ability to travel independently. Some students live in supported accommodation managed by various Non-Government Organisations.

Students

Most of the 152 students are intellectually disabled, and most have been verified as High Needs or Very High Needs through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme under the Special Education 2000 policy. There are a few students in the mildly disabled range who have come on to the roll because of emotional or behavioural difficulties usually with Conduct Disorder, ADHD or Autistic Spectrum Disorders. A number of students have very severe physical disabilities as well. There are also a number of students with sensory deficits, which have developed as part of their particular disability. Our students are representative of the Manukau area in South Auckland and come from varied ethnic backgrounds, including Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island, Niuean, Asian and Indian students.



Facilities

The school is comprised of a base of currently 10 classes and 7 satellite classes which are located in other regular schools from Primary to Secondary over quite a wide radius. Mt Richmond offers a wide range of facilities for students. At the base there are ten classrooms, a Music Therapy Room, Woodwork Room, and Horticulture areas. There is a large covered playground (wharenui), and we have an outstanding sensory garden. Several years ago a new adventure playground was built, and this was followed up with swings for students and a large sand pit. The school owns four minibuses and two cars. The minibuses are used to enable the students to learn many of their skills in the community and to allow staff to use community facilities such as recreation centres and swimming pools. Classrooms are well equipped and have computers for the use of students. All classroom teaching staff have a MOE issued laptop and digital cameras, and all other non-classroom based staff have access to PCs and laptops. Each classroom has an Interactive Whiteboard or Smart TV. Our computers are networked across the base and the satellites for ease of communication and transfer of student information. We use a web-hosted software programme called ETAP used for: writing IEPs and Reports to parents, coaching notes for staff, student attendance, property management, staff and student information and other organizational functions. Student progress is recorded and monitored through a Cloud-based system called BSq, and we are currently developing our staff appraisal/self-review system in a Cloud-based software programme called BlueSky. We are also going to join the MOE assessment tool called PACT and will use this as part of the moderation of our accuracy of our Overall Teacher Judgements of student achievement.

Satellite classes are set up in regular host schools who are responsible for their maintenance. Staff and resources are the responsibility of Mt Richmond School. These classes are located at:

Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate - Otara
 Bairds Mainfreight Primary-Otara
 Papatoetoe Intermediate - Papatoetoe
 Flatbush Primary-East Tamaki

Two classes will be built at Rongomai Primary in East Tamaki. An additional class has been added at Flatbush, together with a total refurbishment of our existing class and new service facilities.



Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

All students have IEPs written in consultation with their parents and other professionals. There are a large number of support staff working in classes to assist the teacher in facilitating IEP goals. Student progress is monitored intensively using checklists based on developmental criteria, or specific learning objectives, observation and anecdotal data. There is a student support team which provides extra personnel resources for those students who are experiencing special difficulties, including the services of our Social Worker, and a Positive Behaviour Support team who respond to referrals from teachers with students presenting challenging behaviours and who provide programme support for those students. We also employ our own school psychologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapists, speech/language therapist, a music therapist, Intensive Interaction Assistant and a Drama Therapist working as part of the classroom team. Some students participate in the "Aerial Dance" programme, and some go to Riding for the Disabled. We also have a dance teacher. Over the years we have achieved a high standard in the performing arts, including a Highly Commended Award, in the 2008 Stage Challenge competition for secondary schools. Every second year we produce a production at the Vodaphone Centre at Manukau, which is usually attended by 650 people. There is a total teaching staff of 32 and 40 teacher aides.



New Zealand National Curriculum

All our students' learning goals fit under the umbrella of the National Curriculum. Teachers adapt the NZ Curriculum significantly to meet the needs of individual students who all perform well-below the NZ National Standards:

English	Speaking & Listening, Reading, Written Language, Drama and Viewing
Mathematics	Numbers, measuring, addition & subtraction, shopping, grouping, patterning
Science	Topics relating to Living things, the physical environment, materials, and The Planet & Space, Horticulture
Technology	Topics relating to knowledge & understanding of how things work, what and what we use them for, computer skills, cooking, cleaning, laundry, housework, woodwork equipment use, riding bikes and other daily living skills
Social Sciences	Topics relating to our society, our social environment, past, present and future, travel, community resources and work experience, life and social skills.
Health & Physical	Personal Health and Self-care including Sexuality Education, physical activity, coordination and sport, fine motor skills such as cutting with scissors, relationships

Education	with others including behaviour, play, respect for others , first aid, community recreation, recreation at home and school , sensory programmes and values and attitudes.
The Arts	Music including using instruments and singing, dance, drama, painting ,drawing and colouring in, dough, weaving, use of different media etc.

Specialised Programmes

In addition to providing an adapted national curriculum for our students we also deliver many programmes that have been developed in New Zealand and overseas for students with intellectual and physical disabilities. These include:

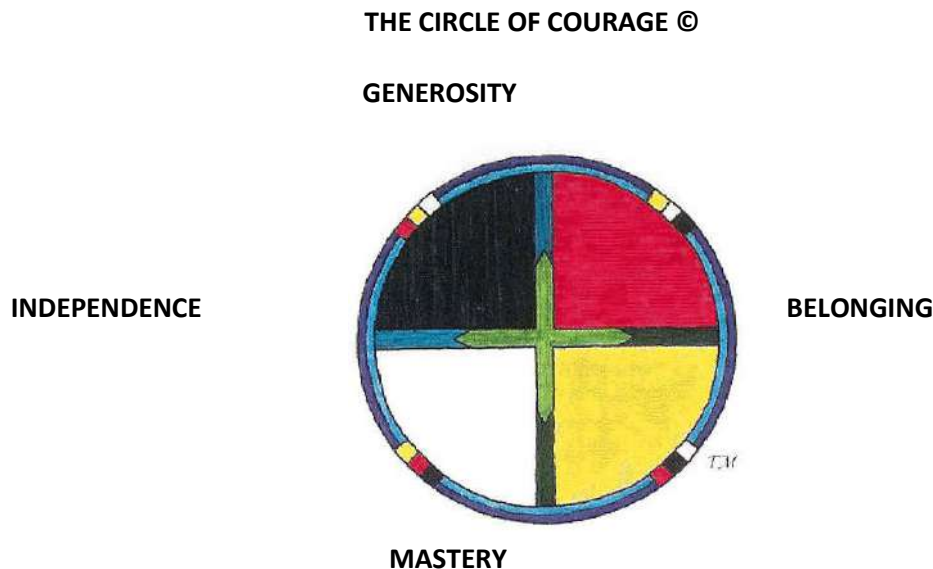
MOVE	Movement Opportunities via Education
ELIP	Environmental Language Intervention Programme
DERBYSHIRE	Structured language programme developed in the UK.
PECS	Picture Exchange System for students that are non-verbal or at the early language level
INTENSIVE INTERACTION	Strategies used with students with ASD to engage them in learning
RDA	Riding for the Disabled
SPECIAL OLYMPICS	Team and Individual sports for students with intellectual disabilities
PMP	Perceptual Motor Programme
TEACCH	Structured programme for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
ESOL	English as a second language
FLYING DANCE	Students move in the air harnessed on ropes which allows them to fly safely and move to music
MUSIC THERAPY	Using music as a therapy to engage students
PRO-SOCIAL SKILLS	Structured social skills training programme
TREES FOR SURVIVAL	Students learn horticulture skills and grow plants which they then plant in deforested areas and on stream banks on farms to assist in cleaning water in the water table

At present there are four administrative staff and a caretaker working at the base in addition to classroom staff. One Deputy Principal and three Assistant Principals are fully released to support staff and students across the whole school or in defined areas. The Assistant Principals work across the school supporting class programmes, coaching and mentoring teachers and ensuring that both the adapted New Zealand Curriculum and specialized programmes are implemented and monitored. There are a number of staff with special responsibilities released part-time to train their colleagues. Our Deputy Principal leads the Positive Behavior Support team, Student Support team (including the Home-School Liaison Person). The Deputy Principal is also responsible for all staff development and the management of an itinerant teaching service for students with ORRS in the mainstream, as well as supporting the Principal in the overall management of the school. The **Outreach Programme** now has 8 mainstreamed students participating from a number of schools in the South Auckland area. The schools are delighted with the support their teachers and teacher aides are receiving from the Mt Richmond staff. Each double unit satellite has at least one Senior Teacher and two support staff.

The Board of Trustees is extremely supportive of its staff and provides generous opportunities for staff development and training, due to the fact there are a high number of students with severe needs and usually new staff are inexperienced in this field of education. Staff sometimes have opportunities to travel overseas for specialised courses. Teaching and support staff have a variety of site-based and off-site training throughout the year. New teaching staff from overseas have many opportunities to familiarise themselves with the New Zealand Curriculum and be upskilled in the specialised teaching strategies needed for work in this school.

Staff are trained in Positive Behavior Support strategies and there is a programme of intervention to help teachers and teacher aides to provide positive learning environments in their classrooms for the small group of students with severely challenging behavior.

All staff have participated in intensive training in RAP, which are the strategies that support students to achieve within the "Circle of Courage©." This programme is a framework for individual development based on North American Indian philosophy, which sits very comfortably with our multi-ethnic nature and Maori and Pacifica values. Mt Richmond is the first school in New Zealand to follow this philosophy, which has achieved wide recognition as a framework for supporting disaffected children and young people in the United States.



Students are enrolled at Mt Richmond after being approved by the Ministry of Education Group Special Education. Some students come to us from mainstream while others are enrolled at 5 years and remain either in the satellite classes or the base classes until the end of their 21st year.

For further Information please contact:

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