

## **EXTENDING HIGH STANDARDS ACROSS SCHOOLS North West (Raroa) Cluster**

**Initiating School:** Raroa Normal Intermediate  
**Annual Report 3**

**Period of Report:** 1 February – 31 December 2008

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Overview**

During 2008, the project continued its focus on developing Higher Order Thinking in students. A particular focus was working with the Key teachers in each school to increase their capacity to work with teachers in their own schools. Sustainability of the skills once the contract has finished will continue to be a focus. The Learning Focus for 2008 was for teachers to explicitly teach students to recognise the 'Type of Thinking' required and to choose an appropriate 'Thinking Tool'.

#### **Achievements and Trends**

In 2008, the cluster repeated the same baseline data assessments that were carried out in 2006. In this way we could track the cohorts before they left the system – the Year 6 cohort in 2006 was in Year 8 in 2008. Using asTTle as a measure of reading ability, the results were interesting. For both the year 4 group and the year 6 group, the mean percentage of correct answers decreased slightly over the two years however, on further analysis it was found, with both cohorts, students were able to answer more of the most difficult questions correctly than would be expected given their asTTle reading ability.

All cohorts made significant progress over the two years in Logical Problem Solving using the Ravens Matrices. Students were well above the average levels for students monitored in the Competent Children (NZCER) study and the percentage increase for all groups was also more than students monitored in the Competent Children study.

Both the results for asTTle Reading and the Ravens Matrices are indicators for the cluster that the focus on Higher Order Thinking is having a positive effect.

The student surveys have indicated that students can now articulate more Thinking Tools and articulate the Type of Thinking required. Students also report that the key indicators of Thinking classrooms are happening more often than two years earlier.

These assessments, together with the assessments from individual schools indicate that the explicit teaching of Thinking Skills is gaining momentum and having a positive effect on achievement.

#### **Challenges**

Two challenges become apparent at this stage of the contract:

1. New teachers coming into the cluster
2. Sustainability beyond the contract's end.

Both of these challenges will be addressed in the Action Plan for 2009. The structure of the facilitator working with Key Teachers in each school has the potential for meeting both challenges. The more schools become more confident, more competent and more empowered, the more able they will be to sustain the work started and induct and support new teachers.

The more Key Teachers become competent in this role, the more able they will be to sustain the intention of the contract beyond 2010.

#### **Risks**

A major risk still remains that some teachers do not see the relationship between Thinking and Questioning, Questioning and Inquiry and how they will integrate into the new curriculum. Observations indicate that many teachers are still seeing Thinking and Inquiry as separate from Reading and other aspects of Literacy; or they see it as a competency and not as a means to

enable students to understand and comprehend at a deeper level. This risk will become a challenge and is addressed in the Action Plan for 2009.