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It is difficult to know what to put into print about Avalon School. The essence of Avalon School is strongly linked to the people who make up our learning community. I will attempt to paint a picture of the type of learning environment that Avalon School can offer you and your child.

I will try and give a balanced picture of the type of school that we have, I know that I am very biased as I love this school and these kids.

In a recent survey (August 2011) we asked parents what the main strengths of the school were. The responses just blew us away. The majority mentioned the staff and the quality of teaching.

I would like to add to that. The strengths of this school as I see it is the people. 'He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.'

We have great staff but we also have fantastic kids and some really amazing families. The relationships between the members of our learning community and the mutual support are critical to the success of our school.

If you choose to be a part of this learning community then you will be welcomed with open arms.

Kindest Regards

Dirk

The Facts and Figures

Avalon School is a Decile 2 school situated in the Hutt Valley. There are approximately 180 children on the roll. A number of the children are funded through the Ongoing Resource Scheme. These children have significant learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Many of these children are taught in a Special Needs Unit although some children spend time in the mainstream or are fully mainstreamed.

We also have a number of children who are on the roll of the Supplementary Learning Support Teacher. These children also have learning delays and they have a level of support that follows them for the rest of their formal education journey.

Avalon School is a very culturally diverse school with children coming from 14 different ethnic backgrounds. Currently our ethnic breakdown is as follows;

NZ Maori	29.2%
Samoaan	26.2%
NZ European	15.5%
Indian	5.4%
Chinese	4.8%
Tokelauan	4.2%
Tongan	3.6%
African	3.6%
Filipino	3.0%
Vietnamese	1.2%
Fijian	1.2%
Other P.I.	1.2%
Cook Island Maori	0.6%
Cambodian	0.6%

The Ministry staffing formula generates approximately 12 teaching staff. With support staff in the school we have approximately 25 staff in total. The Board of Trustees budgets for additional staffing to enable class sizes to be reduced and additional support programmes for learners.

Additional Programmes/ Support Agencies include;

Reading Recovery

Ells Programmes

Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour

Resource Teacher of Literacy

Supplementary Learning Support Teachers

GSE Specialists

Extra Curricular Activities include;

Choir

Dance Groups

Chess

Netball Team

Inter school sports competitions

Facilities

Hall

Library

Computer Suite

Technology Room

Art Room

Dance Room

School Garden

Landscaped Grounds

Large Playing Fields and hard court area

3 Playgrounds

The facts and figures do not give an accurate picture of Avalon School. We accept every child who walks in the door regardless of their background or history. We have developed a reputation as a caring school that gives all children a fair deal. This has led to us attracting children who often need additional support, love and care. All children deserve the opportunity to have access to the high quality learning experiences that we provide. As a school we have made a commitment to support our children and our families through the many issues that they face on a regular basis. We seek to strengthen this relationship as much as we can. At Avalon School we have our challenges but everyday we are greeted with smiles, hugs and so much love that it makes it all worthwhile.



Our Foundations

You Belong

There is a place for every person who walks in the door. You and your child will be welcomed and valued.

Be Yourself

The only way that we can form genuine sincere relationships is if we can be ourselves. Children are very open and honest and the expectation is that the staff will follow this lead. Relationships are two way and children will only form relationships with people they believe genuinely care about them and value them for who they are.

Be Compassionate

At Avalon School we are all expected to care for each other. If a child gets hurt or is feeling upset then usually a friend, an older child or a staff member will support them. This ensures that any incidents of bullying are identified quickly and dealt with immediately.

Be Courageous in your decision making

We trust all of our children to make good decisions but as you all know we learn from making mistakes. If a child at Avalon does make a poor choice then we will work with that child to assist them to make a better decision next time. It is important that the child is given the opportunity to remedy the situation and then move on.

Be in control of your learning.

We expect our kids to become independent learners and take responsibility for their actions. Our teaching is aimed at engaging the children and encouraging them to take their learning as far as they can. They will always be given support if required.

Commitment to you and your child through;

Staffing The most important asset that any school can have is dedicated staff. Every child at Avalon School is taught by a dedicated teacher. A teacher who is knowledgeable, caring and passionate about teaching and learning. Your child may also be interacting with a number of support staff though out the school, from the office to the classroom. These staff members are also keenly interested in the well being and education of your child.

Resources Avalon School is an exceptionally well resourced school. In addition to all the text based resources that you would expect to see in a school, we also have a large number of new technology resources available to all classrooms including; computers, digital cameras, video cameras and data projectors. All these resources are available for children to use independently.

Facilities To supplement the learning that occurs in the classroom we have a number of additional spaces, including a hall for physical activity on wet days, an information literacy area with approximately 20 Apple Macs and an extensive library. We have an Arts and Technology Centre that helps us deliver this area of the curriculum effectively.

Organisation We appreciate the need for children to get a good grounding in the core subjects of Numeracy and Literacy. At Avalon we have organised our school day to ensure that each child has 2 hours of Literacy and 1 hour of Mathematics each day. We also acknowledge the importance of physical activity. In addition to the exercise they get during their break times, we schedule an hour of physical exercise each week for all children.

Relationships

Your child will be with us for at least 6 hours a day. During that time I imagine that you would want to know that they are well cared for and loved. At Avalon School you will find staff that will spend the time getting to know your child, forming a genuine and sincere relationship. This relationship is crucial and becomes the basis upon which we can build the learning.



Behaviour Management

The cornerstone of our Behaviour Management System is that we are all accountable for our actions and behaviour. It begins from the time children start at Avalon School. We do not operate a reward or punishment system. Children are expected to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. We recognise that children will occasionally push the boundaries and possibly behave in a manner that is inappropriate. This behaviour cannot be undone so our emphasis is on ‘putting it right’ and discussing alternative solutions with the child should the situation should ever arise again. Having said that, all children have the right to a safe physical and emotional environment. There are a processes in place that deal with any circumstance that threatens this right.

Reporting

Above all you will get honesty. Early in the year we will meet with you to discuss with you what aspirations you have for your child and generally find out from you anything that will help us to build a relationship with your child to maximize their learning opportunities.

We will provide you with a written report on your child's progress and achievement twice a year, once in the middle of the year and once at the end of year. There will be an opportunity to follow up on the mid year report with a conference between you, your child and the teacher.

We also have evenings during the year when we celebrate and share the terms work from each class. Family and friends gather to hear the knowledge the children have learned and view a practical demonstration of the skills gained throughout the term. Generally this is followed by a supper where you will have the opportunity to meet your child's friends and other parents.

General

Like any school, from time to time we have issues that we need to address. We are a school that will front our issues directly and not run away from them. We will continue to be innovative and keep looking for ways to give your child the best deal possible.

Please accept an invitation to visit Avalon School and watch us in action. I love my job and the kids at Avalon School. I relish the opportunity to meet with you to discuss ways that we can contribute to the growth and development of your child.

If you would like me to elaborate on anything you have read or heard about Avalon School, I am happy to do so. Just ring and make an appointment so I can give you my undivided attention.

Dirk Winnie

Principal
Avalon School

THE AVALON ATTITUDE

Why not go out on a limb?
That's where the fruit is.

Will Rogers