

Me and My School Survey Results 2017 Years 7-8

This survey is a nationally normed survey conducted by NZCER (New Zealand Council for Educational Research). It looks at several aspects of school engagement. We did the first one in 2016 and are able to do our first year-to-year comparison for our 2017 year 8 cohort. We intend to continue this survey over the next few years and use it to help us track our progress with purposeful, engaging learning.

Overall our students are close to the norms in all areas. Where there are differences these tend to be very slight and this report focuses on the areas where we differentiate from the norm.

General engagement outside of school

The year 7 group are above the norm for outside participation in sport, culture and hobbies where as the year 8 group continue to be below the norm. The year 8 group, particularly the boys, are above the norm for their age for playing video/computer games and watching TV/DVDs/You Tube and engaging in social media.

Both year 7 & 8 participate less in reading outside of school than the norm. Since reading is key to accessing the curriculum and broadening horizons, this is something we should address.

Attitude to School

Most of our students fall within norms for their general attitude to school. The year 8 group is above the norm for feeling proud to be at our school. Although the year 7 group averages out due to the girls' positive attitudes, we should take note that in all areas the boys' attitude to school is slightly below the norm.

Emotional Engagement at School

The students all feel respected for who they are and there is a high level of respect for teachers and feeling like they can talk to teachers about their problems. The year 7 group particularly feel like people care about each other at school, have 100% respect for teachers and feel their culture is valued above the norm although they are below the norm for caring about what their teachers think about them

(boys and girls) and feeling that their teachers like them (boys). The girls on the whole are above the norms and the boys are tending to fall below the norms and we need to take action to help them feel emotionally connected. The boys in this class in 2016 were displaying highly disrespectful behavior and some of what has needed to be done to draw the line on our expectations has probably temporarily meant they don't feel the same sense of emotional connection or freedom of expression.

Engagement in Learning

The year 7 group have variable engagement in learning. They are above the norm for taking schoolwork seriously and paying attention (both girls and boys) even though they record as below the norm for concentration. The boys are below the norm for feeling like their teachers help them to learn and for feeling like they are making progress even though in reality they have made very good progress.

Overall the year 8 group have a stronger engagement in learning than the norm. They are particularly positive about feeling their teacher helps them learn and that they are making progress. They do more than they need to do to get by and persevere more than the norm. This is a significant increase in learning engagement for this group from 2016.

Cognitive Engagement

This is the sort of engagement that results in deep challenge and thinking.

The year 7 group are below for finding it hard to concentrate. The girls are above the norm for perseverance whereas the boys are below. The group is slightly above the norm for feeling like they are doing their best work but below for taking teacher feedback. The girls show strong cognitive engagement whereas the boys are not experiencing the same levels of engagement. This is in line with other observations and identified areas for addressing both at a school, and community of learning level.

The year 8 group are slightly lower (compared with norms) in cognitive engagement than they are with learning engagement although they relate fairly closely to norms for their age group. They declare a higher interest in what they are learning than the norm but the

boys are less likely than the norm to look for ways to improve their work. In 2016 they were below the norm in the amount of notice they took about teachers comments about their work whereas in 2017 they are above the norm for this.

Relevance of School

Both groups are above the norm for feeling their schoolwork is relevant to what they do outside of school, except for the year 7 boys who fall below the norm. The year 7s are around the norm for overall relevance. They talk more about their learning but report feeling slightly more bored than the norm.

The year 8 group (who do less out of school) feel that their schoolwork has strong relevance to what they do outside of school. The boys are more bored than the norm but the whole group talks more about their learning and feel that their friends think it is important.

Differences in engagement for the year 8 group from 2016 to 2017

Increase: being proud to be at the school, respect for other students, space and property, feeling safe, making progress, participating in learning, interest in learning and feeling that schoolwork has relevance to things they do outside of school. These are overall increases in attitude to school and learning engagement.

Decrease: feeling that people care about each other in their class, being accepted for who they are, respect for teachers, and caring about doing their best work. Even though there has been a slight drop in these areas of mainly emotional engagement, these areas are still above the norms.

Previous to 2017 this class had a lot of freedom in learning which they had not managed well but probably led them to feel like more of a social group,, hence the slight drop in emotional engagement. Overall the indications are that our efforts to increase respect and focus on purposeful learning has improved engagement for these students.

In Summary

In 2017 it was necessary to tighten teacher control on both the year 7 and year 8 groups in order to help them engage more purposefully in learning. This has increased learning engagement and general attitude to school on the whole. The effects of this are reflected well throughout the survey for all of the year 8 group and for the year 7 girls. **These steps were necessary and other conversations and observations indicate that the students feel that they are kinder and learning more now but at the same time this has had to come about through teacher control which can only be one step in our journey. A consequence of tighter teacher control is less emotional and cognitive engagement. For true cognitive engagement the students have to be emotionally engaged and self-managing.**

Our stronger focus on learning engagement and progress in learning has had a good impact on the year 8 group and the year 7 girls. Its had a good actual impact on the year 7 boys in terms of achievement but not yet in emotional satisfaction.

Our next step is to foster and improve emotional engagement (without losing learning engagement) particularly in the year 8 boys for 2018. They need to become self-regulating, self-managers so that we can lift teacher control and allow them to feel more emotionally connected.

A purely student-led curriculum as we have done in the past has run its course as these students have run out of inspiration and need to be exposed to life, issues and problems to solve which they are not able to come up with themselves. We are taking this in hand in 2018 and moving away from the strictly student-led curriculum to an overall plan/journey which we hope will provide enough structure to engage students whilst still allowing freedom for personal inquiry and problem-solving. We are investigating project-based learning, more hands-on and EOTC experiences and aiming to merge the core subjects more seamlessly with an integrated curricula approach.

