Empowering Teachers
Upskilling Students

Read how Writer's Toolbox has increased student performance at Waitākere Primary.

Raising writing levels has long been a goal for West Auckland's Waitākere Primary, a school with 500 students from Year 0 to 8. When Associate Principal Denise Haven experienced Writer's Toolbox for herself in a two-day workshop, she was excited to put it into practice at her school. The results speak for themselves.

Waitākere Primary implemented Writer's Toolbox with their Year 7 and 8s. With marked success in those year groups, Writer's Toolbox rolled out to Years 4 to 6.

"Students—especially the boys—absolutely love it. Student achievement is there in every single curriculum area."

Student impact

The instant feedback feature of Writer's Toolbox is a clear winner. Haven explains, "The problem with most programmes is that they just become dumping grounds for resources, but Writer's Toolbox seems to have overcome that shortcoming. It provides students of all ages with instant writing feedback—right when they need it. And that's invaluable when you've got a class of 28 students; where it's not possible for teachers to mark each student's writing book every day."

There is obvious enthusiasm and engagement among Waitākere Primary students when using Writer's Toolbox. "You'll often have students making changes themselves—in their own time—to bring their writing scores up!" reflects Haven. "The buy-in is huge. Students—

especially the boys—absolutely love it. Student achievement is there in every single curriculum area."

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Teacher impact

Haven is clear: to increase student engagement, you've got to start with your teachers. And she credits Writer's Toolbox with upskilling Waitākere Primary teachers.

"Writer's Toolbox empowered our teachers. Our teachers now plan their lessons differently, engage with their students differently, and make clearer choices when teaching writing. Writer's Toolbox provides a common language for our teachers to talk about writing in their team meetings."

Data-driven decisions

Writer's Toolbox not only impacts in-class teaching but planning and reporting as well. Teachers and management set whole-school tasks in Writer's Toolbox and track a student over time—submissions, progress, gaps. This data informs planning at student and class level, updated to target particular skills if needed. Trends are easily identified by viewing data across a class or cohort.

Haven is thrilled with the lift in student achievement due to Writer's Toolbox. "We've already hit our targets—a percentage criteria we matched to achievement rates. Coming next is how far we can go above and beyond that, and how we can implement the common-language approach into our entrants to Year 2 classes."

The final word

We asked Denise Haven what having Writer's Toolbox means to her:

"It means we're sending students out to high school ready to fly. You know they're going to be okay."