



## FINAL REPORT

### OUR BEST GENERATION YET!

Engaging Pasifika whānau hearts and minds in their children's learning and education

December 2015

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In February 2014, Rise UP Trust opened a junior partnership school in Mangere East, South Auckland. In 2013, Lotteries funding was gained to:

1. Frame Rise UPs 'principles of practice' within literature on what supports Pasifika educational achievement
2. Compare Rise UP students' educational achievement with others nationally
3. See how Rise UP students and whānau are experiencing the Rise UP principles of practice.

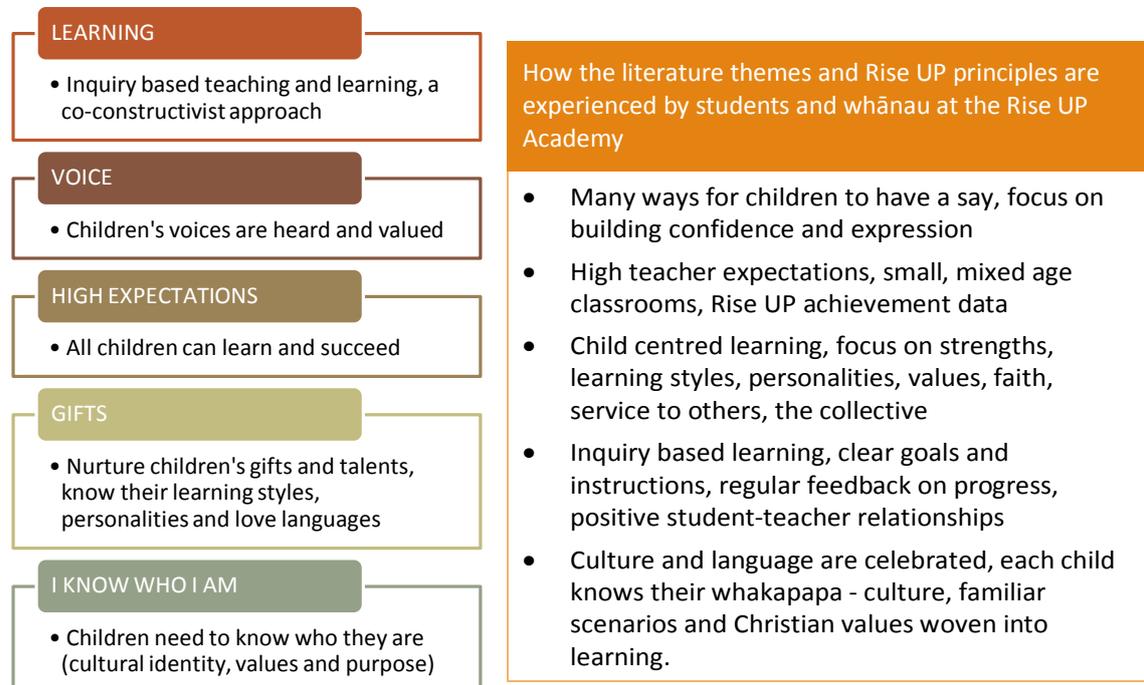
This summary synthesises the findings. It compares three central themes from the research literature on what supports Pasifika achievement, with the Rise UP principles of practice and how these are experienced by Rise UP students and whānau. These themes from the literature are:

1. Effective and adaptive teaching
2. Whānau and community engagement
3. School culture, quality and leadership.

Implications from the literature and the Rise UP experience to date for Pasifika education are presented later in the report.

## 1. EFFECTIVE AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE



## 2. WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

#### ENGAGEMENT

- Support whānau and community engagement in children's learning and development - it takes a village to raise a child



#### How the literature themes and Rise UP principles are experienced by students and whānau at the Rise UP Academy

- Welcoming, safe, family/village atmosphere at the school
- High trust relationships
- Whānau engaged at all levels
- Constant communication
- Parents as co-educators
- Pastoral, health and social support for families
- Regular communication of achievement
- Mutukaroa home-school partnership
- Use of PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) planning tool
- Rise UP child and family programmes
- Whānau Educator role.

## 3. SCHOOL CULTURE, QUALITY AND LEADERSHIP

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

#### RELATIONAL

- Relational approach grounded in faith based and cultural values

#### LEADERSHIP

- When we lead ourselves well, we set everyone up for success (role modelling and ongoing personal development)

#### EVALUATION

- Leadership is grounded in evidence based, reflective practice

#### SHARP MINDS, STRONG BODIES, GOOD HEARTS

- Learning and achievement come from healthy hearts, minds, bodies, souls and relationships

#### How the literature themes and Rise UP principles are experienced by students and whānau at the Rise UP Academy

- Whole child learning, compulsory after school programmes (sports, music/arts, culture), 'Sharp minds, strong bodies, good hearts' mission
- Strong relationships, reciprocity and good communication at the centre, infused by Pasifika cultural values and Christian faith
- Trust in school leadership, teachers and school leaders model school mission and values, education viewed as community development, focus on the collective
- School achievement data and evaluation drive teaching practice and professional development; professional learning communities and adaptive leadership inform school development.

## RESEARCH FOCUS

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In February 2014, the Rise UP Trust opened a junior partnership school called The Rise UP Academy (Te RUA) for Pasifika and Māori children in Mangere East, South Auckland. This school emerged out of eight years of providing programmes for families and children designed to engage Pasifika whānau in their children's learning<sup>1</sup> and raise Pasifika student achievement. The school roll has risen from 50 students on opening to 85 in December 2015.

In 2013, the Rise UP Trust gained Lotteries funding to explore culturally relevant and responsive ways to engage Pasifika whānau in their children's learning, and to support the development of transformative Pasifika research practice and theory. The research focus is on Pasifika people living in New Zealand and on compulsory education. 'Pasifika' encompasses the diverse spectrum of Pacific cultures, languages and communities in New Zealand.



### RESEARCH AIMS ARE TO:



- Unpack the Rise UP approach by seeing how its 'principles of practice'<sup>2</sup> relate to research evidence on what supports Pasifika educational outcomes, and strengthen the research base for community based educational programming for Pasifika whānau
- Explore how Rise UP principles of practice and approach are experienced by its students and whānau
- Increase recognition of Pasifika approaches to engaging whānau in education, in Auckland schools and more widely in the education system
- Enable more Pasifika whānau to access culturally responsive resources and support, to provide 'roots and wings' (Siataga 2011) for their children's learning, development and achievement.

### FOUR RESEARCH METHODS WERE EMPLOYED.



1. A literature review in 2014 on how the Rise UP principles of practice relate to research evidence on what supports Pasifika educational outcomes and children's educational achievement generally. This review focused on peer reviewed journals and books
2. Additional literature was reviewed in 2015, focusing on Ministry of Education commissioned research and university theses
3. Interviews with Rise UP students, whānau and staff on how the Rise Up approach and principles of practice are being experienced, as well as what they like about the Rise UP Academy, and what could be improved, changed or developed
4. Rise UP Academy's 2014 National Standards Data was compared across Reading, Writing and Mathematics with the 2014 data for local schools, the Auckland region, Pasifika students nationally and all students nationally.

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE FINDINGS, ALONG WITH SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR PASIFIKA EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.riseuptrust.org.nz/Newsletters/Rise%20Up%20Trust%20story.pdf> for the story of Rise Up's emergence and early years.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix One, which presents these principles of practice in the context of the Rise Up model and theory of change.



*“Pasifika education needs big strides forward in leaps and bounds...For a long time Pasifika learners have been shaped to fit the education system’s needs, processes and practices” (Tongati’o 2010).*

Rise UP grew from a determination to tackle the ‘long brown tail of underachievement’<sup>3</sup> in New Zealand and is part of a growing movement of Maori, Pasifika and mainstream education providers leading change<sup>4</sup>.

Fundamentally, Rise UP believes that by equipping whānau with keys for learning, engaging them in their children’s learning, nurturing strong relationships and fostering culture and identity, children will experience educational success.

## PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

By 2014, Rise UP had identified ten ‘principles of practice’ that guide everything it does, including its programming and school operation.

1. Children’s voices are heard and valued
2. All children can learn and succeed
3. Nurture children’s gifts and talents; know their learning styles, personalities and love languages
4. Children need to know who they are (cultural identity, values and purpose)
5. Learning/achievement come from healthy hearts, minds, bodies, souls and relationships
6. Inquiry based teaching and learning, co-constructivist approach
7. Whānau/community engagement in children’s learning and development – it takes a village to raise a child
8. Relational approach grounded in faith based and cultural values
9. When we lead ourselves well, we set everyone up for success (role modelling and ongoing personal development)
10. Leadership is grounded in evidence based, reflective practice.

## INFLUENCES

Rise UP influences include the Bible, Ruby Payne (A Framework for Understanding Poverty), Edward De Bono, Gary Chapman’s love languages, learning styles, Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop’s work on culture and identity, multiple intelligences (Howard Gardiner), Allison Mooney’s work on personalities, the Search Institute’s 40 developmental assets, inquiry learning and co-constructivism (Lev Vygotsky).

<sup>3</sup> See for example <http://www.spasifikmag.com/publiceducationpage/i57educationfeature/mindthegap/>.

<sup>4</sup> For some of these providers, see the Maori and Pacific Education Initiative funded by the ASB Community Trust (now called Foundation North) <http://www.foundationnorth.org.nz/education-initiative>, which funded innovative education providers to develop and evaluate new approaches.

# WHAT SUPPORTS PASIFIKA EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AND FOR CHILDREN OVERALL?



Literature reviews focusing on education for Pasifika have changed over time, with little research evidence until the mid-1990s, and a move from deficit theorising blaming low Pasifika engagement, participation and achievement on deficiencies in Pasifika students’ backgrounds, low levels of English language literacy and negative effects of culture, towards strengths based approaches that highlight the importance of collaboration between families and educators and understanding of Pasifika contexts (Tongati’o 2010).

Authors note the wide range of variables impacting on educational achievement, including student traits and drives; family and home practices, values and attitudes (especially with regard to literacy and reading); level of parents

education; resources available to children that matter to their progress; gender; school effectiveness and socio-economic factors such as income, housing and occupation (Harker 2006, Hattie 2008, Ostler-Malaulau 2009, Robinson et al 2009, Fairbairn-Dunlop 2013, Si’ilata 2014).

Many Pasifika students navigate very different home and school worlds, and levels of coherence between home and school values can affect student achievement. Teachers and schools understanding these values and differences can help them respond more effectively to the contexts, thinking and behaviour of Pasifika learners. The table below contrasts mainstream school and traditional Pasifika family/aiga value emphases.

## VALUE EMPHASES

THAMAN 1994, CITED IN TONGATI’O 2010

### SCHOOL EMPHASIS ON:

THE SECULAR  
UNIVERSALS  
ORIGINALITY  
EQUALITY  
INDEPENDENCE  
INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS  
NUCLEAR FAMILY  
INQUIRY / CRITICISM

### HOME EMPHASIS ON:

THE SPIRITUAL  
SPECIFICS  
CONFORMITY  
RANK / AUTHORITY  
INTERDEPENDENCE  
OTHERS’ FEELINGS  
ALL BLOOD TIES  
RESTRAINT

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## ALL LEARNERS AND PASIFIKA LEARNERS

The literature identifies well established factors that support educational achievement for all learners, plus factors considered helpful for Pasifika learners.



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## ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS



Additional elements that support Pasifika learners involve:

- Growing mutual understanding between **home and school cultures** and bringing these cultures closer together
- Having **dedicated staff roles to engage and support whānau** to address issues affecting children and family functioning (such as housing, health, income, abuse, addiction)
- Strong moral and faith based **values underpinning learning**
- Active and diverse strategies to **support children's learning at home**.

Several authors advocate **smaller classroom sizes** for Pasifika learners (Ostler-Malaulau 2009) – this is likely to be of benefit to all learners.

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## FOUNDATIONS

The foundations of Pasifika educational achievement identified in the literature are:



- Participation in quality **early childhood** education
- Strong **literacy and numeracy** skills
- Strong **cultures and identities**
- Pasifika knowledges and practices being **valued and woven** into curriculum
- Effective and **adaptive** teaching
- Good **transitions** across all levels of education
- Family and community **engagement** in education, governance and leadership
- School leadership actively using student data to **target and tailor** school responses to student needs
- Monitoring and **tracking** to see how well the system is working for Pasifika learners.

There is also evidence of enhanced literacy and numeracy for Pasifika children in the primary years through well-planned bilingual educational approaches that enable children to learn across the curriculum in their Pasifika language alongside English, rather than requiring them to learn solely in English (Si'ilata 2014, Chu et al 2013).

# THREE CORE ELEMENTS TO PASIFIKA EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

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Three elements emerge from the literature as central to Pasifika educational achievement at compulsory education level: 1) effective and adaptive teaching; 2) whānau and community engagement; and 3) school culture, quality and leadership. These are explored further below.

## 1. EFFECTIVE AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING



Effective and adaptive teaching is critical to Pasifika student achievement (Si'ilata 2014, McNaughton and Lai 2009). More effective teaching requires knowledge of children and their communities, and regular reflection and adapting of teacher practices in response. Undertaking in-depth analysis of student achievement data, plus joint problem solving around agreed evidence, are more likely to result in sustainable improvements in student achievement, especially reading comprehension (McNaughton and Lai 2009).

Pasifika students want teachers who are challenging and empathetic, enthusiastic, fair and respectful, who know their subject, can relate to their students and make learning fun and creative (Ostler-Malaulau 2009). There is consistent research evidence that positive teacher relationships impact on students' engagement (but to a lesser extent achievement), for both Māori and Pasifika (McNaughton 2011).

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## TEACHING TO ENABLE PASIFIKA CHILDREN TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Teaching that enables Pasifika children to be successful learners involves (Robinson et al 2006, Paley 2006, Ostler-Malaulau 2009, Hattie 2009, Amituanai-Tolosa et al 2009, Bishop et al 2012, Si'ilata 2014):

- **Believing** in students and their ability
- Cultivating positive **relationships**
- Providing **clear instructions** and **challenging** academic work
- Using **Pasifika educational resources and role models**
- Using **scenarios familiar** to the children
- Clearly **explaining ideas** and breaking them down
- **Respectful listening** to students
- **Inquiry processes** to support higher order thinking
- Understanding **cultural contexts** of students
- Using students own knowledge and strengths – **co-constructing knowledge**
- **Group based work** to share knowledge
- **Acknowledging** good work and effort
- Well-developed forms of **feedback** focused on raising achievement
- A **collective sense of being able to solve achievement issues**.



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## WHOLE CHILD APPROACH

Whole child approaches to learning support a range of positive outcomes such as self-esteem, confidence, participation and motivation, as well as academic skill (Cornelius-White 2007). Personal wellbeing and functioning of educators (Jennings and Greenberg 2009), including connectedness to culture, contributes to better school relationships and outcomes for children (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2013).

## 2. WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### CULTURAL CAPITAL

Ostler-Malaulau (2009) argues that many Pasifika families have not developed the specific forms of cultural capital required to engage with schools effectively and support their children's learning. Home literacy practices set early patterns for learning, and children experience cumulative supports or barriers to learning from birth through the education system.



### HIGH TRUST

Tongati'o (2010) notes that Pasifika parents tend to have high trust in the education system; trusting it to deliver successful outcomes for their children, alongside respect for teachers and deference to professional educators. Effective strategies for schools connecting with parents involve supporting parents to be co-educators. Realising student and community aspirations also requires more effective school and community partnerships, more inclusive pedagogies and bilingual competence.

### EXPECTATIONS

Parental and family involvement is strongly correlated with student achievement, though parents having high expectations or aspirations for education is a stronger predictor of success than parents' attendance at school events (Jeynes 2011). A welcoming school climate may be more important than particular activities that schools put on for parents (Reese et al 2010).

### UNDERSTANDING

While it is important for the home and community culture of students to be understood and supported by schools, it is also important for the culture of the school to be understood and supported by families and communities, for gains in student achievement to be made (Harker 2006).

## 3. SCHOOL CULTURE, QUALITY AND LEADERSHIP

Successful schools are collaborative and connected, changing the individual accountability frameworks of the 1990s to a sense of collective accountability, based on a common commitment to improvement across schools and systems, and to principles of equity and social justice (Tongati'o 2010). Effective educational leadership is essential to improving Pasifika achievement (Mauigoa 2014).



### WHAT WORKS IN SCHOOLS TO RAISE PASIFIKA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT INCLUDES:

- Principals and senior school leaders leading **alliances** for change
- **Involved** parents, families and communities
- Schools **supporting parents** to help their children at home
- **Reciprocal relationships** between schools and families
- Professional development and inquiry always leading to **changing practices**
- Targeting and **tailoring to fit** the Pasifika learner
- Good **relationships** and conversations
- Awareness of **cultural contexts**
- Effective **teaching** (as above).



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## PARENTS AS CO-EDUCATORS

Supporting Pasifika parents to be co-educators requires the forging of new approaches and skilful leadership: “Pasifika education requires strong connected leadership working together to find solutions...adaptive leaders who can draw together participants to discern new pathways” (Tongati’o 2010).

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## LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Five school leadership practices are associated with student success (ibid):



## FIT WITH RESEARCH EVIDENCE

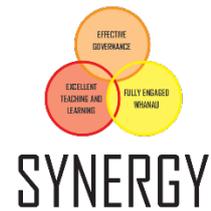
Overall, the research evidence on what supports Pasifika educational achievement strongly affirms the Rise UP principles of practice. Together, these principles form what Fairbairn-Dunlop (2013) calls a ‘culturally secure learning space’, in which Pasifika knowledge, values, understandings and practices drive student learning.

While no direct evidence was found that love languages and learning style approaches raise student achievement, they provide a way to understand learning needs and differences. Tongati’o (2010) notes that acknowledging multiple intelligences and covering them all is a way to support Pasifika learners (building on Gardiner’s work nine types of intelligence are identified - linguistic, logical, bodily, musical, spiritual, natural, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal).

Faith based schools and positive teacher-student relationships are both associated with better behaviour, positive social-emotional outcomes and to a lesser extent, higher achievement. This suggests that positive effects on achievement may operate through improved behaviour and engagement (Roorda et al 2011 and Jeynes 2012).



# THREE KEY THEMES



The Rise Up principles can be viewed within the three key themes identified in the research literature on what supports Pasifika achievement. Note that all of the Rise UP principles can also apply to parenting.

## 1. EFFECTIVE AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

- Inquiry based teaching and learning, a co-constructivist approach
- Children's voices are heard and valued
- All children can learn and succeed
- Nurture children's gifts and talents, know their learning styles, personalities and love languages
- Children need to know who they are (cultural identity, values and purpose)

## 2. WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

- Support whanau and community engagement in children's learning and development - it takes a village to raise a child

## 3. SCHOOL CULTURE, QUALITY AND LEADERSHIP

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

- Relational approach grounded in faith based and cultural values
- When we lead ourselves well, we set everyone up for success (role modelling and ongoing personal development)
- Leadership is grounded in evidence based, reflective practice
- Learning and achievement come from healthy hearts, minds, bodies, souls and relationships

# WHAT DO RISE UP WHĀNAU AND STUDENTS VALUE?

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## CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES

Two focus group discussions were held with a total of 16 children aged 7 to 11 (25% of the school's population at the time), in December 2014. The groups were evenly balanced in terms of gender and the children identified as Pasifika (predominantly Samoan) and/or Maori.

*"We have the teachers and the community helping us with everything."*



The children generally experience The Rise UP Academy (Te RUA) as a warm, friendly, safe, supportive environment in which to learn and develop. The smallness of the school<sup>5</sup> has great perceived benefits in terms of people knowing each other, having quality one on one time with teachers, making friends and feeling included. A common positive theme was the family atmosphere of the school.

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## WHAT ARE THE KEY DIFFERENCES AT TE RUA?

Children noted key differences at Te RUA from their old school/s as being:

- The after school programmes
- Inquiry learning and a fun, encouraging learning environment where children know how they are doing
- A focus on values and spiritual growth through daily prayers, song and scripture
- Stronger involvement of their families in the school and in their learning.

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## PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Most children felt they had made significant progress in their educational achievement at Te RUA as they were getting better marks and had moved up levels, while several felt they had stayed at the same level. A common theme was having more respect for and understanding of others, through a better understanding of learning styles and personalities and a strong focus on values at the school.

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## WHAT'S CHANGED FOR THE CHILDREN?

As well as many doing better educationally, key changes for themselves that children noted since coming to Te RUA were:

- Growing in confidence, self-esteem and feeling important, especially through the after school programmes, teacher encouragement, knowing more about their personality and learning style, taking part in Rise Up programmes such as Beautiful Daughters and in the way that children get to be involved and have a say in many aspects of the school
- Celebrating and learning more about their culture and those of others
- Identifying their talents and gifts
- Spending more time with their family, better family communication and feeling closer with their family, sleeping better, being more active and watching less TV
- Feeling safe and not being bullied.

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<sup>5</sup> The school roll was 65 in late 2014. The school has since grown to 85 students in December 2015.

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## WHAT WOULD MAKE IT BETTER?

When asked what would make it better for them at Te RUA, the main responses related to having more space, classrooms, more children, facilities, fencing, sports and outdoor equipment and access to ICT. Opinions differed on whether the school should grow much more, though most felt it should grow. Other suggestions were to expand the Monday breakfast programme, build more partnerships, go on more school trips and focus on the children who need help academically.



## ADULT PERSPECTIVES

In-depth interviews were held with five parents or carers of priority learners, and three focus groups were held with another 18 parents/carers. These 23 adults were predominantly of Pasifika background, two thirds were women and many types of family composition were represented – single parents, grandparents and extended family raising children, blended families and two parent families.

*“Everyone is friendly – there is a good feeling at the school. It’s a real mixed Pacific school, I like that cultural mix. We feel trust in the people here to do their best and educate the whole person.”*

*“The vision is really compelling<sup>6</sup>.”*



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## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE RISE UP?

Whānau reported being drawn to Te RUA for its small classroom sizes, its vision, small scale and village feel, its Pasifika cultural identity, faith based approach and trust in the school leadership.

Families appreciate the strong and regular communication from the school, swiftness in raising and addressing issues, the sense that their child is receiving quality teaching and close attention, the welcoming nature of the school, ease of access to staff and how parents and whānau are engaged as helpers and volunteers.

The school’s Christian values are clearly practiced in the school through daily prayers and song and this is highly valued by most families. The school is perceived to be very welcoming to whānau, and families are strongly encouraged to get involved in the school and in their child’s learning.

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## PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

The majority of whānau noted marked improvement in their child’s educational achievement at Te RUA, with children who learn kinaesthetically in particular progressing well. Whānau like the holistic and inquiry approach to learning, the leadership opportunities provided to children and student led projects such as designing the playground.



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<sup>6</sup> The Rise UP vision is ‘Our best generation yet!’, with a school mission of ‘Sharp minds, strong bodies, good hearts’.

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## WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU NOTICED IN YOUR CHILDREN?

As well as academic improvement, the greatest changes parents noticed in their children were increased confidence, emotional security and better behaviour. These were attributed to the after school programmes, daily Devotions (prayer and values teaching), a proactive approach to bullying, emphasis on safety and emotional wellbeing, and on teaching children about self-worth, how to treat others, and about their learning styles and personalities.

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## HOW ENGAGED ARE YOU IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

Whānau report being more engaged in their children's learning and staff observe strong positive links between how engaged a whānau is in their child's learning, and how well their child is achieving and developing. Te RUA is perceived to provide wraparound support for families through its Whānau Educators, the Rise Up programmes, connecting families with social support, providing a listening ear and a supportive community. The Path<sup>7</sup> tool (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) is seen as being very helpful for families, in terms of setting and progressing towards goals and opening lines of communication and understanding among family members.



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## WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU NOTICED AT HOME?

Whānau report changes at home including spending more time together as a family, being more active together, watching less TV, having more fun and reading and doing homework together. Families like the Pasifika cultural mix, the celebration of culture and focus on cultural identity. Te RUA is perceived to be a safe place where honesty, communication and openness are encouraged.

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## WHAT IMPROVEMENTS DO YOU SUGGEST?

The key perceived limitation of the school is its limited space, classrooms, facilities and resources. Clear communication with whānau on any potential site changes was desired, along with opportunities to have a say.

Whānau would like to see more teachers and more male staff, a focus on connecting and inducting new families in order to retain the family feel and supportive school community. Some parents wanted a more structured transition to school programme for new entrants, more sports activities and more computers and technology (ICT). More focus on te reo, Maori culture and Pasifika language teaching was sought by some parents. A range of specific needs were also expressed, such as security gates, fencing, a pedestrian crossing and more music and sports equipment.

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<sup>7</sup> The Path tool supports a family to set and visually map short and long term goals for children and the whole family and monitors progress towards them. See <http://www.pathplanningtool.co.nz/>.

# HOW DO WHĀNAU EXPERIENCE RISE UP PRINCIPLES?

## 1. EFFECTIVE AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

#### LEARNING

- Inquiry based teaching and learning, a co-constructivist approach

#### VOICE

- Children's voices are heard and valued

#### HIGH EXPECTATIONS

- All children can learn and succeed

#### GIFTS

- Nurture children's gifts and talents, know their learning styles, personalities and love languages

#### I KNOW WHO I AM

- Children need to know who they are (cultural identity, values and purpose)

### WHĀNAU / CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE IN ACTION

- Multiple ways for children to **have a say and exercise leadership**
- Children are encouraged to **question and use their voice**
- Inquiry learning and **student led projects**, children are more questioning and curious
- Quality teaching based on **learning styles and love languages**; making learning fun
- Children know their **gifts and talents**
- Pride in culture and **cultural celebration** through food, language weeks, performance, singing, events, learning cultural practices, basic terms/pepeha taught in key languages
- Use of the **'learning hats'** model
- Faith and values based learning, starting and ending each day with prayer and **integrating biblical principles** within the New Zealand Curriculum. Attention to spiritual growth and **linking personal, cultural, educational and spiritual development**
- **Small** school and class sizes mean **no child is left behind and issues are picked up quickly**
- A safe school environment, **proactive behaviour strategies**, no tolerance for bullying
- Whānau report **improved educational achievement and more confident, happier, better behaved children**
- Teachers and after school programmes **broaden children's education and actively build confidence**
- **Children reflect** through Devotions and the inquiry approach to learning
- Opportunities for **parent input and reflection**
- A **clear and compelling vision** for the school, the teachers and staff **model the school values.**



## 2. WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

#### ENGAGEMENT

- Support whānau and community engagement in children's learning and development - it takes a village to raise a child



#### WHĀNAU / CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE IN ACTION

- Whānau Educator, teachers and other staff share information and provide **wraparound family support**:  
*"The Whānau Educator empowers the parents"*
- Rise Up programmes and the **expectation** that all whānau will participate in them
- Strong regular **communication** regarding children in a range of formats (email, text, phone, Facebook, newsletter)
- Encouragement to **engage and volunteer** at the school
- Taking time to **know** each family and offer support and referral; a strong **pastoral** focus at the school
- Sense of family and community – a **village feel**
- Ease of **access and approachability** of staff
- Providing **tools** for families to support children's learning at home
- **Communicating children's achievement and progress regularly**, at individual, class and school levels.

## 3. SCHOOL CULTURE, QUALITY AND LEADERSHIP

### RELATED RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

#### RELATIONAL

- Relational approach grounded in faith based and cultural values

#### LEADERSHIP

- When we lead ourselves well, we set everyone up for success (role modelling and ongoing personal development)

#### EVALUATION

- Leadership is grounded in evidence based, reflective practice

#### SHARP MINDS, STRONG BODIES, GOOD HEARTS

- Learning and achievement come from healthy hearts, minds, bodies, souls and relationships

#### WHĀNAU / CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF RISE UP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE IN ACTION

- Sense of family and community – a **village feel**
- Ease of **access and approachability** of staff
- Providing **tools** for families to support children's learning at home
- **Communicating children's achievement and progress regularly**, at individual, class and school levels.

# WHAT WORKS IN ENGAGING PASIFIKA WHĀNAU IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING?

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## RESEARCH LITERATURE

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### HOME / SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

The research literature includes these suggestions to bring schools and Pasifika families and communities closer together:

- Schools viewing parents/community as essential for children's success
- The cultural capital of Pasifika families informs the curriculum and operation of schools
- Pasifika whānau involved at governance levels (board of trustees), as tutors and teacher aides
- Positive teacher/school/home relationships, with respect and care fundamental
- Pasifika students and families advocating to have their language and culture taught at school
- Strategies by schools to support learning at home.

### PROGRAMMES NEEDED

McNaughton (2011) cites a need for more programmes that:

- Increase family/whānau engagement in specific tutoring, and a lifespan approach to family involvement in children's education, from birth to adulthood
- Increase teaching effectiveness and positive relationships in cultural terms.



## RISE UP WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT

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Rise UP has an 'enrol a child, enrol their family' philosophy, which manifests in these core ways.

### RISE UP PROGRAMMES

The original Rise UP programmes for families and children which it has run since 2006 are a cornerstone of the school and it is expected that all Rise UP children and whānau will participate in these programmes. They are designed to engage whānau in their children's learning and support communication, understanding and family functioning.

### WHANAU EDUCATOR

A Whānau Educator plays a pastoral role at the school as well as running the Rise UP programmes. Teachers and school management also provide support to families in accessing health and social support as needed.

Rise UP uses the PATH tool with all of its families. This tool supports a whānau to plan and visually map its learning and personal goals as a family and for each of its children and adults.

Since Term Three in 2015, Rise UP began using Mutukaroa<sup>8</sup>, a home school partnership process that seeks to accelerate learning progress and achievement in years one to three.

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#### VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Rise UP invites all of its families to volunteer for 40 hours a year at the school, contributing in a range of ways. Parent strengths are also noted and enlisted regularly, from sports coaching, ICT support, vehicle servicing and carpentry, to cultural knowledge and the arts.

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#### COMMUNICATIONS

Rise UP stays in close contact with all families via text, phone, email, print and the Te RUA Facebook page.

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#### COMMITMENT

Rise UP commits to never giving up on a family and puts the family relationship at the centre. There is a strong community connection at Rise UP, a commitment to serving others and the collective and to a village and family way of operating. Humour and high trust also play key roles.

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#### BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building positive relationships underpins all of Rise UP programming. Parents and the school have a shared partnership in unlocking each child's potential and addressing the issues that get in the way. Building a community in which parents feel a sense of belonging and are supported, empowers parents to actively engage in their children's learning.

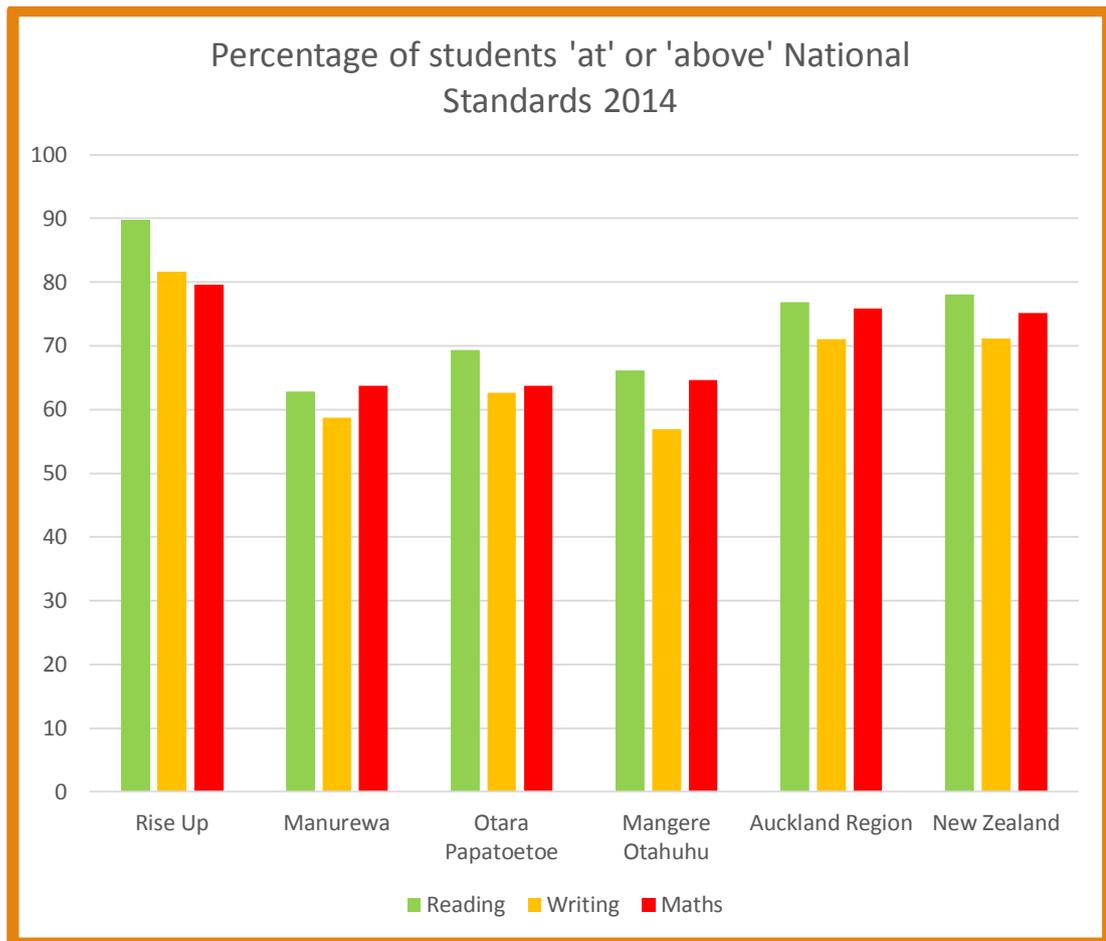
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<sup>8</sup> See <http://mutukaroa.org.nz/>.

## HOW ARE RISE UP STUDENTS DOING SO FAR?



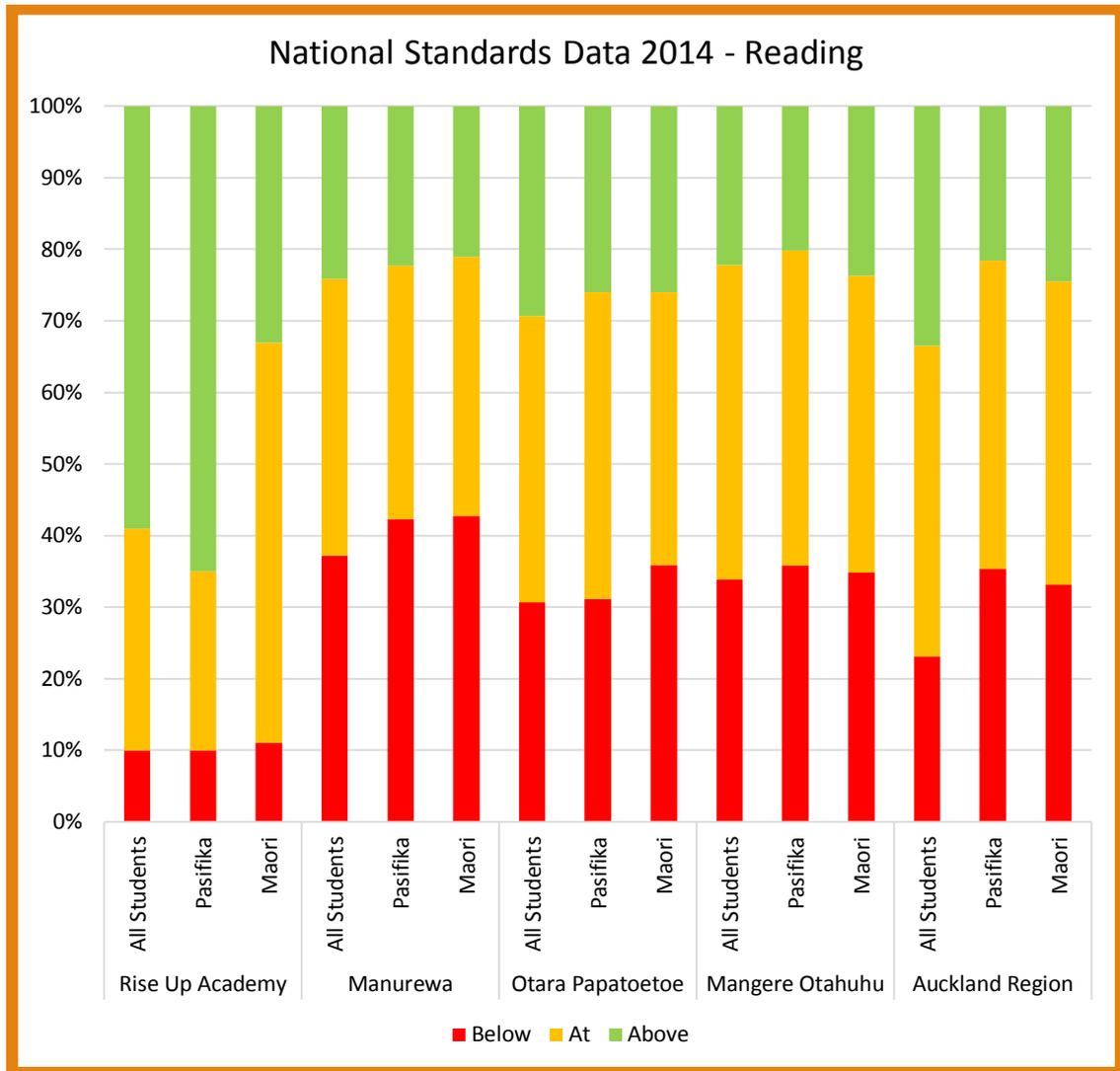
In order to provide a baseline for educational achievement and comparison, Rise Up Academy's National Standards data for 2014 was compared with the 2014 national standards data for Manurewa area primary schools, Otago-Papatoetoe primary schools, Mangere Otahuhu primary schools, Auckland region primary schools and New Zealand primary schools as a whole. This data shows that across the standards for Reading, Writing and Mathematics, greater numbers comparatively of Rise Up Academy learners are assessed as being at or above the national standards.<sup>9</sup> Shifts in 2015 PAT reading comprehension and reading vocabulary data for Rise Up students in years 5 to 8 were also analysed.



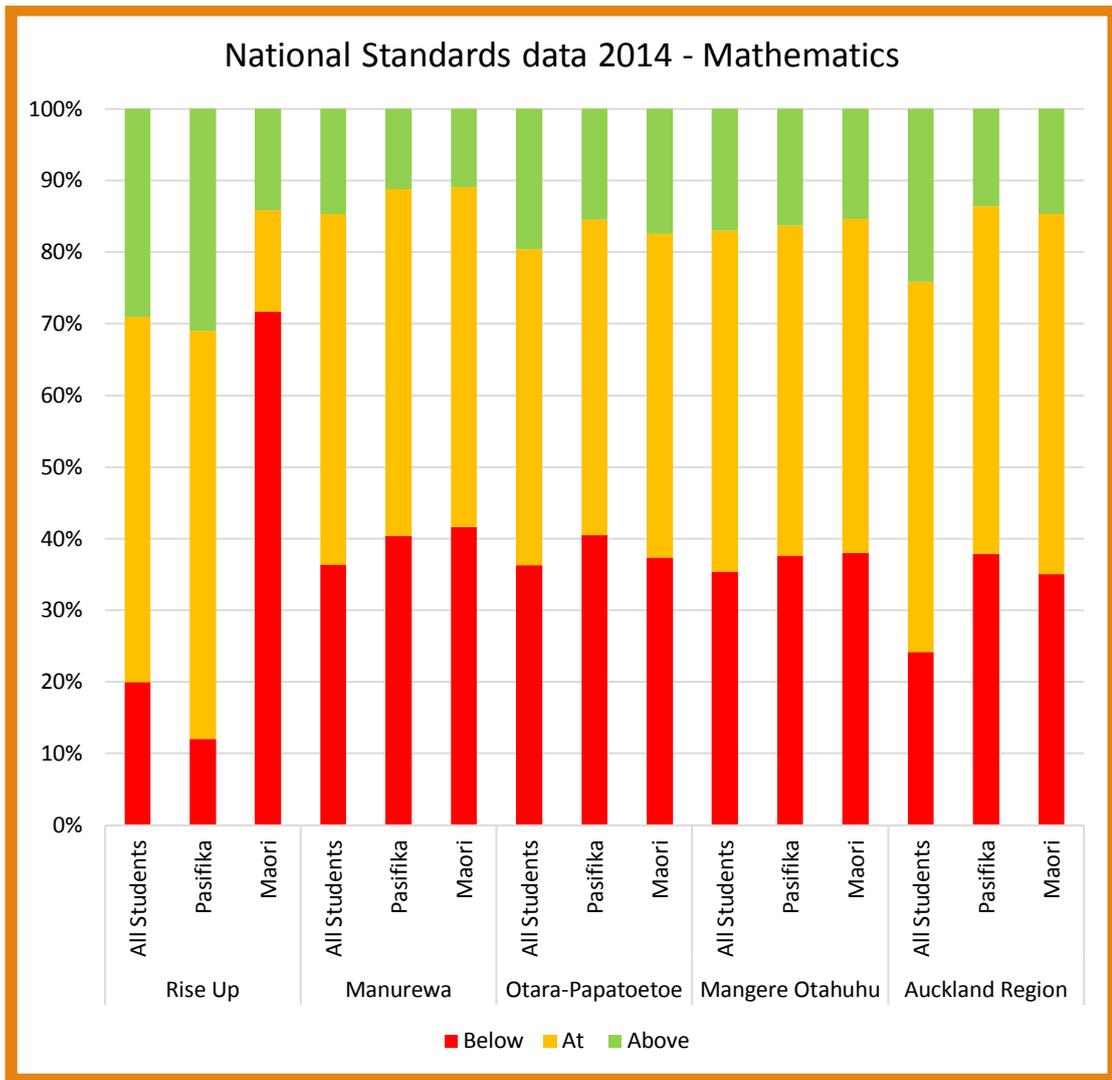
More detailed analysis shows that in all three domains of reading, writing and mathematics, compared with local schools and the Auckland region, fewer numbers of Rise UP Academy learners are sitting below the national standard and more Rise UP Academy learners are sitting above National Standards. For Pasifika Rise UP Academy learners this is also true.

<sup>9</sup> The Ministry of Education notes that National Standards are an aggregation of student achievement data at a point in time. The standards are relatively new and ongoing support is being provided to schools to develop confidence and capability in using them. The reliability of the data will improve with time.

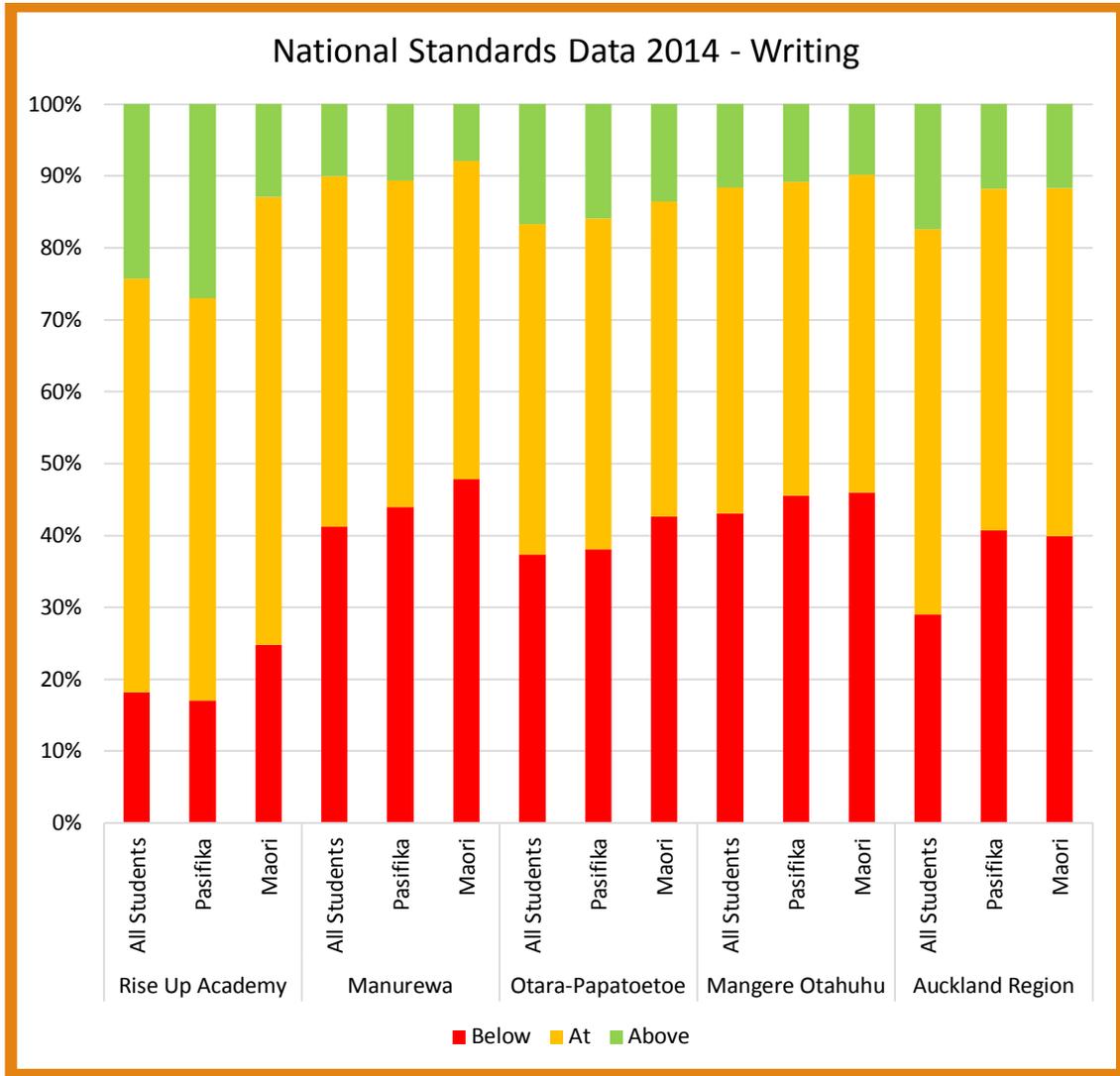
For example, for reading, 65% of Rise UP Academy’s Pasifika learners were assessed as achieving above the national standard. This compares with only 21.8% of Pasifika learners across the Auckland region.



For mathematics, 12% of Rise UP Academy’s Pasifika learners were assessed as being below national standards, compared with 37.9% of Pasifika learners across the Auckland region. However, 71% of Maori Rise UP students were assessed as being below national standards; a significantly greater number than other local schools and for the Auckland region as a whole.

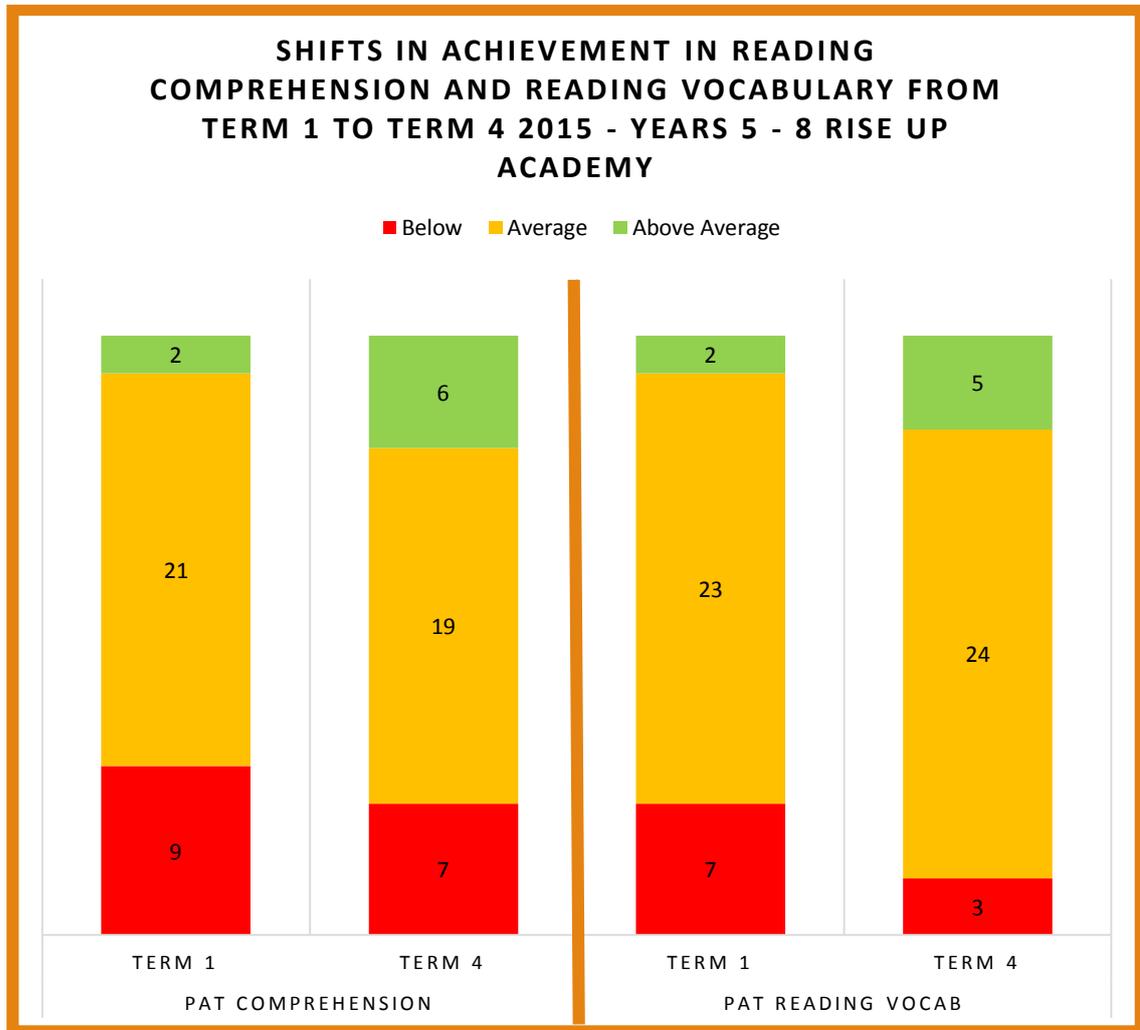


For writing, 18 % of Rise UP Academy’s Pasifika learners were assessed as being below national standards, compared with 40% of Pasifika learners across the Auckland region.



YEARS 5 - 8

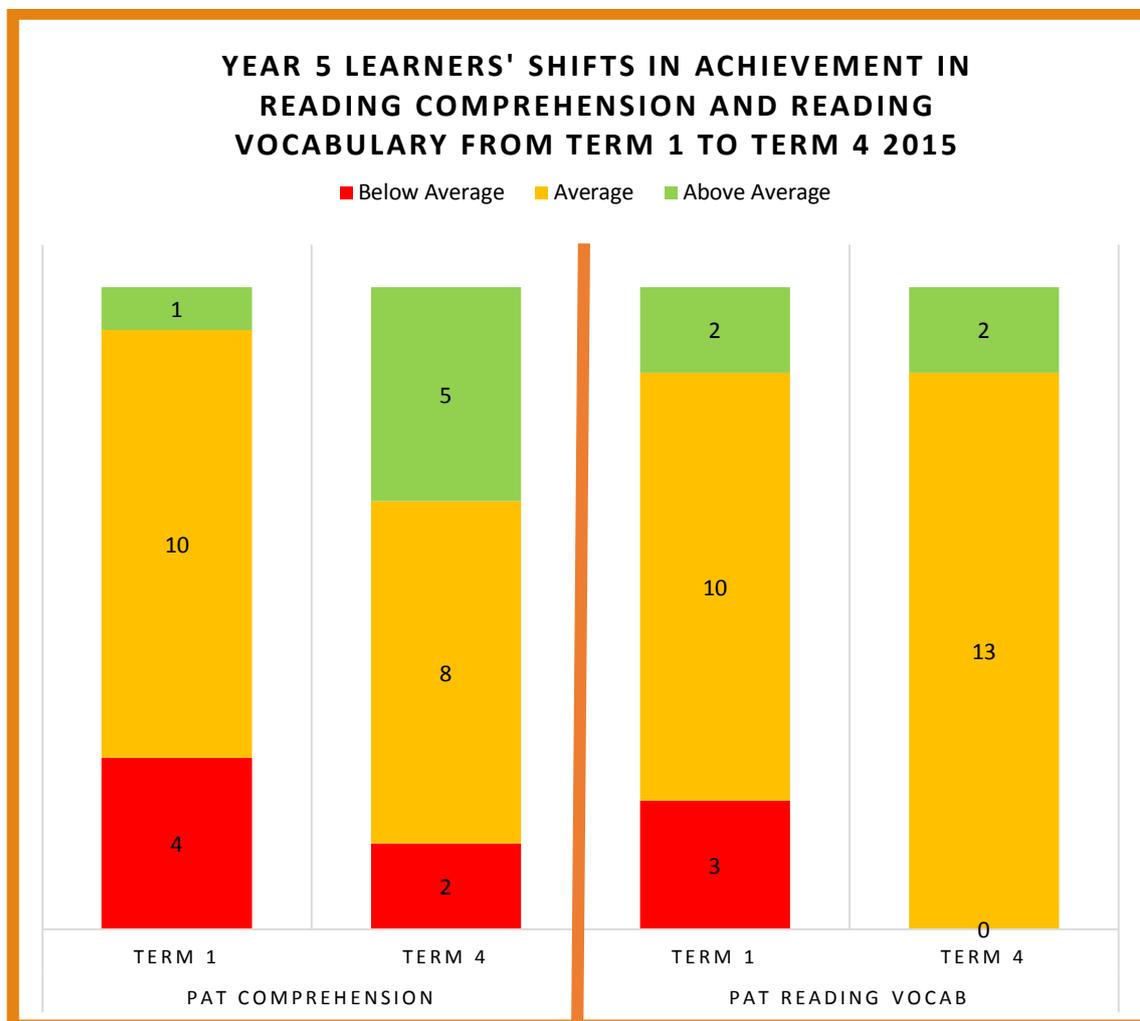
The charts below show shifts in reading comprehension and reading vocabulary scores for Year 5 to 8 learners at Rise Up Academy, between Term 1 and Term 4.<sup>10</sup> The norm referenced PAT assessment tool groups scores into stanine groups that indicate whether a child’s performance in that test is below average, average or above average. The data is shown for just Year 5s and for all learners who were tested at both times across years 5 to 8.



<sup>10</sup> This analysis was done for all learners who had test scores for both time points.

YEAR 5

For Year 5s comprehension, fewer learners were assessed as being below average in Term 4 and more learners tested as above average. For reading vocabulary for all learners, there was a small number who shifted into the above average category, and fewer tested below average in Term 4. The challenge for Rise Up Academy, these learners and their whānau is to maintain these achievement levels over the summer months when children are on holiday.



Throughout the literature on what supports student achievement, a central theme was the importance of developing good student data and for teachers and school leaders to use this as the basis for reflection, adapting teacher practices, guiding teacher professional development and targeting and tailoring efforts to changing learner needs (cf Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe 2008, Timperley and Parr 2007, Tongati'o 2010, Amituanai-Toloa et al 2009, Chu et al 2013).

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## DEVELOPING COLLECTIVES

McNaughton and Lai (2009) note that professional learning communities focused around raising student achievement are more effective if they involve other schools, researchers and policy personnel. A collective can generate a shared sense of needs, evidence and how to solve problems together to make a difference, rather than teachers feeling that they have no control over aspects affecting student achievement such as low parental interest, housing issues or lack of employment.

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## RISE UP ACADEMY APPROACH

In relation to these issues, Rise UP Academy staff provided the following comments and outline of their approach.

### TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY

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- Teacher knowledge and capacity are issues in using and administering data. Teachers need time to become familiar with the management system the school is using in capturing student achievement data. Rise UP has found that norm reference assessment tools can strengthen teacher judgements in conjunction with student data.

### OPEN LEARNING CONVERSATIONS

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- Open learning conversations to discuss achievement data need to be regular and are considered very valuable. The student achievement data is discussed during staff meetings and target children are identified and tracked throughout the year. There is an open discussion on how the children are progressing and how teachers are implementing professional development in their classroom learning.

### MUTUKAROA

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- As noted, Rise UP Academy began the Mutukaroa home school partnership for all children who are year 1 and year 2, in Term Three in 2015. The learning conversations with parents involve sharing assessment data on their children, discussing how their children learn and how to support their child's learning at home. The parents reportedly find this approach very valuable.

### WHANĀU FONON INFORMATION

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- Rise UP is transparent in sharing student achievement data during Whānau Fono (meetings). At Whānau Fono parents are informed of student achievement data throughout the year and how the children are tracking against National Standards for each year level.

### TARGETED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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- The Rise UP Board makes decisions on professional development for staff and resourcing for students, based on student data and teacher judgement.

*Pasifika families want their children to be successful at school whilst also maintaining strong identities that are grounded in the language and culture of home (Si'ilata 2014).*

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## SYSTEM LEVEL CHANGES

System level changes promoted in the literature to raise Pasifika achievement include limiting class sizes to 20 students; that school culture includes practices, policies and procedures familiar to Pasifika parents; and that the cultural capital of Pasifika families informs the curriculum and operation of schools (Ostler-Malaulau 2009). Rise UP provides a case study of these features, along with evidence of their efficacy for Pasifika students.

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## ADDRESSING ISSUES THAT AFFECT LEARNING AND FUNCTIONING

Dedicating staff resource to engaging whānau and supporting whānau to address issues getting in the way of children's learning and family functioning is emerging as a major vehicle for raising Pasifika achievement. For Rise UP this involves their Whānau Educator role, Rise UP programmes, PATH tool, use of Mutukaroa and a growing range of strategies to support families and help them to engage in their children's learning. In these ways, families and the school come closer together for the benefit of all, and especially the children.

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## EMPOWER PARENTS TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE

A key message from Rise UP is that the sooner parents actively engage in their child's learning, the better off their child tends to be at school. This requires leadership and direction from the board of trustees, tenacity, identified roles and resourcing to overcome barriers to families engaging, and creating an environment that feels familiar, inviting and safe enough for families to want to engage. A range of relevant and culturally responsive tools and skills are needed to connect with diverse families and engage them in a transformative way.

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## RESEARCH AND RESOURCING PRIORITIES

Identified research and resourcing priorities are:

- Improved student **data collection** and management
- Culturally appropriate ways of involving Pasifika communities in **governance and leadership**
- Pasifika **bilingual** programmes and settings
- Linking **family, home and Pasifika communities** to support Pasifika student learning
- Effective teaching for Pasifika students who are **gifted or disabled**
- **More evaluation** of home-school interventions and programmes
- Increasing whānau engagement in specific tutoring and **learning at home**, from ECE level
- A **lifespan approach** to family involvement in children's education, from birth to adulthood
- Increasing teaching effectiveness and positive relationships in **cultural terms**.

More evaluation, profiling and sharing of the fast emerging culturally responsive teaching and whānau engagement approaches underway would be beneficial, along with opportunities to connect Pasifika education providers who are well along this road, with those who wish to travel it.

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# APPENDIX ONE: RISE UP MODEL AND THEORY OF CHANGE

**Vision** - Our best generation yet! **Mission** - Connecting hearts and minds through whānau and communities learning together - growing sharp minds, strong bodies and good hearts

WHAT RISE UP PROVIDES	+	THE APPROACH	=	THE PURPOSE
<p><b>THE RISE UP ACADEMY – TE RUA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junior school for 100 Pasifika and Maori children aged 5 to 13 years</li> <li>Compulsory after school programmes three days a week Monday to Wednesday from 3.00 to 4.30pm</li> <li>Whānau educators and teachers engage with whānau</li> <li>Partnering with community, health and support services</li> </ul> <p><b>RISE UP 'BUILDING LEARNING COMMUNITIES' PROGRAMMES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hearts &amp; Minds (for parents/carers)</li> <li>Synergy (for whānau)</li> <li>The PATH Tool (for whānau)</li> <li>Mutukaroa (for Whānau Year 1-3 students). All Te RUA children / whānau are encouraged to experience the Building Learning Communities programmes.</li> </ul>		<p><b>PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's voices are heard and valued</li> <li>All children can learn and succeed</li> <li>Nurture children's gifts and talents; know their learning styles, personalities and love languages</li> <li>Children need to know who they are (cultural identity, values and purpose)</li> <li>Learning/achievement come from healthy hearts, minds, bodies, souls and relationships</li> <li>Inquiry based teaching and learning, co-constructivist approach</li> <li>Whānau/community engagement in children's learning and development – it takes a village to raise a child</li> <li>Relational approach grounded in faith based and cultural values</li> <li>When we lead ourselves well, we set everyone up for success (role modelling and ongoing personal development)</li> <li>Leadership is grounded in evidence based, reflective practice</li> </ul>		<p><b>APPLIED THROUGH 7 'E'S'</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with whānau/community in a culturally responsive way</li> <li>Empower whānau</li> <li>Establish healthy relationships</li> <li>Equity, fairness and respect</li> <li>Equip children and whānau with keys for learning and great relationships</li> <li>Effective governance and leadership</li> <li>Excellent teachers, whānau educators and delivery</li> </ol> <p><b>THREE STRATEGIC GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children excelling in learning and in life – growing leaders one child at a time</li> <li>Fully engaged, empowered and flourishing whānau</li> <li>An innovative, thriving Rise Up organisation</li> </ul>

