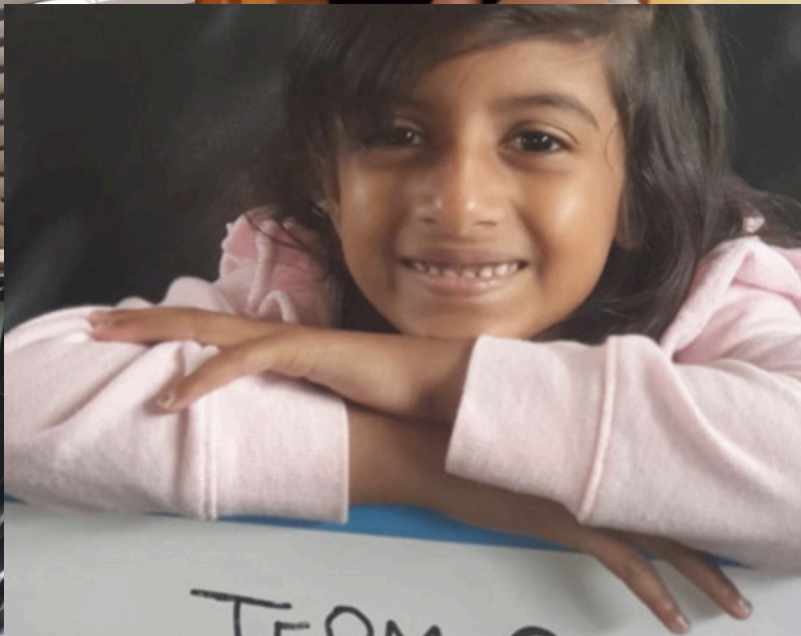
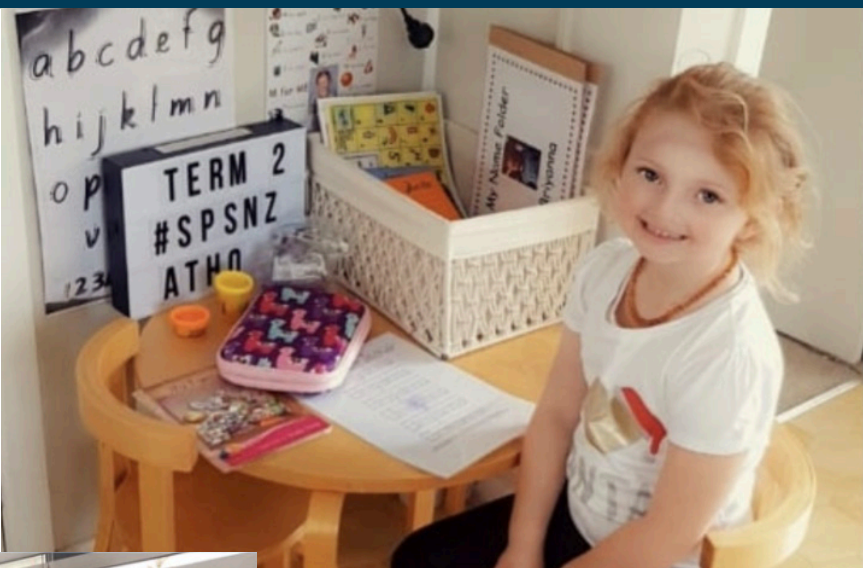


A Spotlight on Sylvia Park School

Part 1 of 3

SPS Connect Introduction and Foundations for learning



This is the first of three spotlights from Sylvia Park School in which they share what they did to ensure learning continued for ākonga during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, and what they learned from their experiences.

In March 2020, every school in Aotearoa had to lock its classrooms and set up for teaching and learning from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools were given notice of this on Monday the 23rd and by the end of Wednesday the 25th, everyone would have to stay at home. The school holidays were brought forward so after the initial few days, schools would have two weeks to consider what learning might look like in this environment.

We ended up teaching and learning from home for five weeks after the holidays, with the last two weeks having some onsite 'bubbles' of students following the home learning programme. We called our programme SPS Connect.

This collection of observations brings together conversations with staff, whānau and students during the lockdown and immediately afterwards. We also carried out regular surveys and have included the results of these. The intention is to capture what we did and what we can learn from this experience for our ongoing practice. It is divided into the six aspirations - ngā wawata - that our school has identified as most important to us.

In this first spotlight we cover Ngā Tuapapa o Te Ako, Foundations for Learning. In the second spotlight we will cover four ngā wawata - Hauora, Whanaungatanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Kaitiakitanga. The third spotlight will focus on Pakirehua, Inquiry, and finishes with some overall reflections by kaiako.

General observations

- » Although this was a challenging time in many ways, most people felt very positive about the way SPS Connect supported learning during this time.
- » Communication, routine and flexibility were identified as the main things whānau appreciated in SPS Connect.
- » Reliable technology was the enabling tool, and teachers who were confident using online platforms led the way in what could be achieved.
- » Agility in teaching, and listening to feedback, were also key success factors.
- » Having a shared vision and a school wide set of expectations made it easier for teachers and for whānau.

The SPS CONNECT Principles co-constructed at our first zoom staff meeting:

- » Relevance - Learning about things that matter to them right now!
- » As manuhiri in the homes of our whānau, we are respectful.
- » Trusting and empowering the whānau as a key player in the learning process.
- » Culturally responsive pedagogy remains at the heart of our connection with our students and whānau.
- » Students lead learning.
- » We prioritise the human condition - Maslow vs Bloom.

Useful reading: [Thinking about Pedagogy in an Unfolding Epidemic](#)

Ngā Tuapapa o Te Ako Foundations for Learning

At SPS, we aimed to provide every student with the potential to access learning opportunities in the core subjects of reading, writing, maths and inquiry. When we learned about going into lockdown, whānau were able to come into school to pick up chromebooks for learning, and packs of reading and writing materials were delivered to junior school students at home. We also promoted a range of quality online learning resources through our Facebook page and the school website from the very first day of school closing, right through the holidays.

Once we were in Level 3, more chromebooks and learning packs were able to be sent to students from school and others were connected to the Ministry of Education scheme for devices and packs. We estimate that at least 95% of SPS students had access to a device for learning during the lockdown.

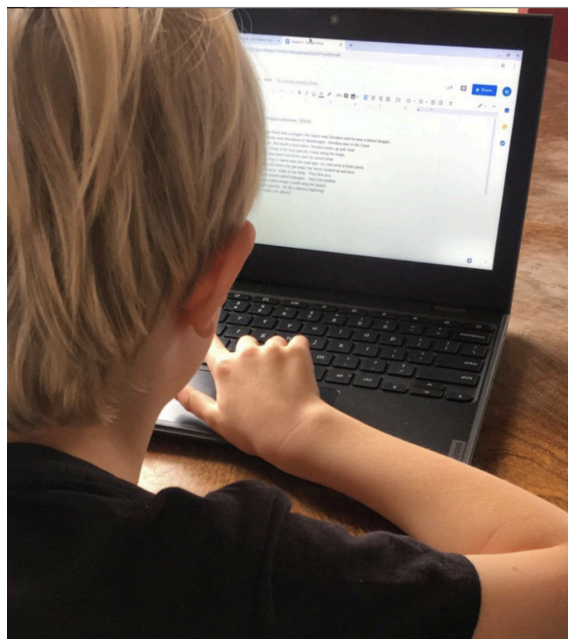
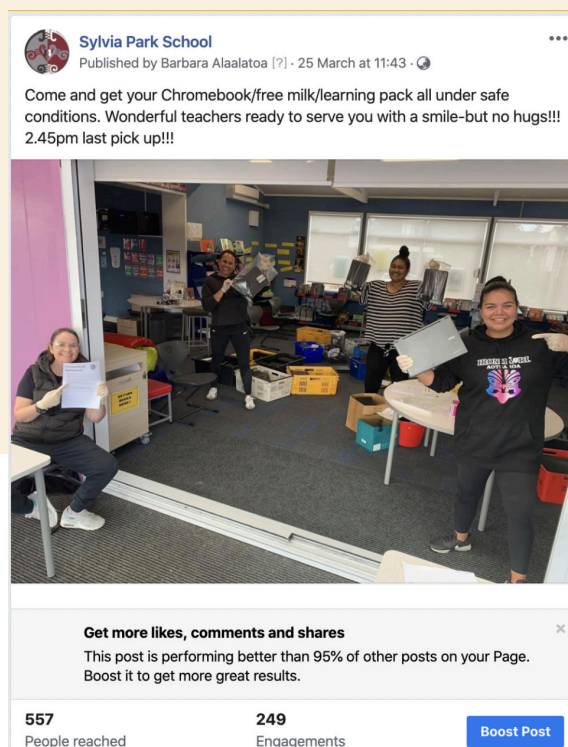
Term Two

When the second term started, 3 weeks into lockdown, more structured school learning began. Every class was provided with a variety of learning activities in reading, writing, maths and inquiry through Google Classroom or SeeSaw. Additional reading content and writing activities were made available through the school website and Te Puna Ngōi online (Google Sites).

Teachers met with their class at 9am every morning through Zoom (for junior classes) or Google Meet (for senior classes) to start the day, connect with each other and explain the activities. Students then also had the opportunity to meet with their teachers online at 11 and at 2. Between those times teachers gave feedback and provided one on one support. We estimate that 80% of students did all or some of the learning activities their teacher had designed for them.

“Lots of thanks to SPS for offering the daily online meetings which set the tone of the day in our house and for being so organised and supportive. To you, HUGE thanks for all the positivity you project in each interaction with the kids and for all the feedback on work you provide, and genuine interest you show.”

-Jody Gayton (parent) to Sarah



What we learned

- » The very quick response to get learning packs and chromebooks to as many families as possible was essential.
 - » Whānau expressed huge appreciation to staff for the effort that went into the provision of these resources at the beginning, and also when we went into Level 3.
 - » Despite our efforts, there were still instances where students did not have access to reliable, connected devices. This was in part due to chromebooks or chargers not working and in part where whānau did not know how to access them.
 - » The requirement to design learning activities in a way that students could, and would, access independently, and at home, has forced us to work in new ways and use new tools. We've had to be creative and needed to be open to new ways of teaching. Several teachers expressed that there were things they did that they would continue because they worked so well. Some of these were:
 - › Greater student agency in selecting the order of tasks, and space for learning
 - › More integration of technology in junior classes for writing. For example, for the reluctant writer who was much more engaged and able to write significantly more using their device
 - › Great online resources integrated more often
- » Online and more independent learning was excellent in consolidation of already introduced concepts. This also gave a high sense of success and achievement. It was less successful to introduce new learning.
 - » Many whānau said that they enjoyed being part of their child's learning and seeing the whole process. It gave them a sense of where they were at with their learning that they didn't have before.
 - » Whānau and staff expressed concern for students who did not engage in SPS Connect. Could this have led to another "summer slide" where students have lost progress? Has this widened the gap and is it more difficult for those students to come back and re-engage with learning at school?
 - » We need to be really clear and consistent about providing support for learning. Te Manawa classes had a Google Hangout called "Room 24 Helpline" where students could post questions about work and teachers - and often other students - would provide guidance.