PRIMARY TEACHER WORK STUDY

REPORT

VOLUME THREE

Listening to school communities

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INTRODUCTION

Volume Three contains the qualitative evidence gathered in the course of this study. As part of this study, researchers visited twenty-five schools across New Zealand. These included:

School A: A small Decile 10 school in a small township*

School B: A small Decile 6 school in a rural area

School C: A large Decile 1 school in a large city*

School D: A Decile 3 sole principal primary school in a rural area near a provincial town*

School E: A moderate sized Decile 9 school in a large regional town*

School F: A large Decile 5 school in a regional town*

School G: A small Decile 6 school in a remote rural area

School H: A moderate sized Decile 4 school in a rural area near a regional town*

School J: A large Decile 5 school in a large city*

School K: A large Decile 8 school in a large regional town*

School L: A large Decile 4 city school

School M: A large Decile 6 school in a regional town

School N: A small rural Decile 9 school

School O: A moderate sized Decile 6 school in a regional town

School P: A large Decile 10 city school
School Q: A large Decile 1 school in a rural area*

School R: A small Decile 4 rural school

School S: a moderate sized Decile 4 school in a large regional town*

School T: A large Decile 9 city school

School U: A small Decile 3 rural school

School V: a small Decile 7 rural school*

School W: A small Decile 1 city school

School X: A large Decile 8 intermediate school in a large regional town*

School Y: A moderate sized Decile 5 special setting school in a large city*

School Z: A large Decile 2 school in a large city

Teachers, teacher aides, support staff, principals and members of Board of Trustees were interviewed. Interviewees were asked a range of questions about various aspects of the professional work of teachers and their perceptions of factors that affect this work. Teachers at different schools also provided a weekly diary of their professional activities.

Section One (the short reports) includes data from all schools visited.

Section Two (the case studies) includes a broader and deeper study of thirteen of these schools. These schools are indicated with an asterisk.

Section Three (the diaries) includes a summary of the diary contents and excerpts from the diaries selected to give as broad as possible an indication of the range and nature of teacher work.
SECTION ONE: THE SHORT REPORTS

These short reports include a “snapshot” of the schools visited and particular issues that may have been affecting each school. Many of these issues had a direct impact on teachers’ working hours. Some of the short reports (Schools E, H, N, S, V) include an hourly breakdown of where and when teachers’ work was carried out on an average day. The hourly breakdown would be similar for many teachers.

These hours are as estimated by the teachers interviewed at each of the twenty-five schools visited. Hours for part-time teachers, or for teachers who may have some release during normal class hours for other duties, have been converted in most cases to equivalent full-time hours (indicated by EFT). Row one indicates the normal classroom teaching hours (usually 23.20). The remaining rows list time spent outside these hours. The total number of hours for each teacher interviewed is listed in the last row. The average number of working hours per week for teachers is listed in the right-hand column.

All short report and case study notes relate to the situation when researchers visited schools in June and July 2005. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms have been used for all schools and personnel throughout the report.

SCHOOL A

School profile

School A is a primary school of 80 students. It is situated in a very small township about 15 kilometres from a provincial town. It has three classes (Years 1/2, Years 3/4, and Years 5/6) and a staff entitlement of 4.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Tom’

Deputy Principal/Teacher of middle grades: ‘Patricia’

Teacher of senior grades: ‘Jennie’
**Teacher of junior grades:** ‘Penelope’

**Board of Trustees (BOT Chairperson):** ‘Peter’

**School Secretary:** ‘Hester’

**Teacher Aide:** ‘Sal’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

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**General organisation**

The school’s principal worked 0.8 and taught 7½ hours per week.

The principal’s leadership and management/administration duties were shared with two teachers, Jennie and Patricia (Deputy Principal), each of whom had a total 0.1 management/administrative time.

The two part time teachers covered the 0.2 time fraction created by the principal’s decision to work 0.8. These teachers were prepared to be flexible in their days and times. They also covered for teacher absences.
Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them

The principal and some teachers taught after hours classes for adults in the community. Most were involved in community environmental activities based at the school, e.g. a worm farm and stream monitoring and a health and fitness program. They were also involved in pastoral work with the 54 families with students enrolled at the school. This caused extra work, but the teachers said they hardly saw it as work, because of their commitment.

The other main drivers of the work outside of the classroom were curriculum planning and assessment. Much of this work was done at home, in the evenings and at weekends.

Regular meetings

‘Formal’ meetings included a weekly staff meeting and a weekly ‘staff development’ meeting. The average number of hours teachers spent in staff meetings per week was 3. The two teachers with management duties and the principal spent an additional 1 hour per week in management meetings. They also attended the monthly meetings of the School Board.

Lesson planning and preparation of work program

The three classroom teachers (i.e. not including the principal) were each spending an average of 8 hours per week in planning their lessons and programs. The principal spent 2 hours per week. Teachers planned units of learning individually and as a team. The plans showed the intended learning outcomes in relation to particular groups of children. Teachers said that this kind of planning could be very ‘time consuming,’ but that it was necessary in order to meet the individual needs of students.

Tom did not require or encourage teachers to write detailed individual lesson plans. He said that experienced teachers did not need to do this and should be given the flexibility to write down only what was needed for the children to learn.
Setting up the classroom, putting up displays, getting equipment ready

The three teachers (i.e. not including the principal) were spending an average of 8 hours per week preparing their classrooms for teaching. They agreed that some of this work could be done by a person (e.g. Teacher Aide) who did not have teaching qualifications, but said that they found this part of their work ‘satisfying’ and ‘not at all stressful’.

Another major reason why teachers wanted to continue spending time on things like displaying students’ work in the classroom was that they felt this encouraged the children to produce good work that they could all feel proud of. Parents and others were often invited to see the displays.

Assessing and marking pupils’ work and keeping records

Teachers (including the principal) were spending an average 5.45 hours per week outside the classroom assessing and keeping records of pupils’ work. This figure does not include time spent by the principal in compliance issues. A lot of assessment was also done in the classroom, and teachers had developed a wide range of strategies for doing this. They said that at reporting times (twice a year) time spent on assessment increased by 25%. Teachers used a variety of tests and other assessment tools. One teacher said that she found the ASSTLE test particularly helpful as a diagnostic assessment tool. Teachers kept meticulous records of all pupils’ progress.

Paperwork to comply with school’s or principal’s requirements

Teachers said that they found it difficult to separate out paperwork for compliance purposes from the paperwork they did as a necessary part of the work of teaching the children.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping

The teachers followed the Ministry curriculum and assessment guidelines in line with the national curriculum, which they supported, saying that the guidelines helped them to assess and teach more effectively. However, this meant that more time had to be
spent on planning, assessing, marking and record keeping. They said that some of the assessment and recording tools they had received in professional development sessions were helpful, but other tools made assessment and recording unnecessarily time consuming.

**Extra curricular activities and community involvement**

The school saw itself as a community facility. The principal actively encouraged the staff and parents to see the school as a centre of community life. Parents attended adult community learning activities, some of which were run on a volunteer basis by teachers and other parents. Tom had taught Mathematics in this program. Other activities included felting woodwork classes and computer training. The principal said that these adult activities encouraged children to see learning as ‘life long’.

Teachers were also spending an average one hour per week on other extra curricular community activities, such as tending a tree nursery and ‘stream monitoring’.

**Communicating with parents**

The school had an ‘Open Door’ policy which gave parents access to teachers, the principal and the school generally. Teachers spent an average three hours per week communicating with parents about individual students. Most of this was done informally, as parents were leaving their children at school, or picking them up after school. The teachers saw this time as very important and a necessary part of their duties. Teacher spent additional time on written communication with parents, e.g. children’s notebooks and newsletters.

Regular parent-teacher interviews were scheduled in Terms one and three. Again, the teachers saw this time as necessary and important.
SCHOOL B

School profile

This small rural Decile 5 school has an enrolment of one hundred students and has close links to its local community. The school has developed a strong ‘arts’ emphasis.

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

Principal: ‘Sam’

Deputy Principal: ‘Luca’

Teacher: ‘Peta’

Teacher aide: ‘Lachlan’

School Secretary: ‘Martha’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Luca</th>
<th>Peta</th>
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<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
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Teaching in the classroom

Classroom teachers had a full load, i.e. 23.20 hours per week. The principal taught
five hours per week, and also covered for teacher absences when required, averaging out at an extra five hours per week. The teacher’s aide worked part-time and spent twelve of her fifteen hours in the classroom. The remaining three hours were spent in the school library.

Cover for teacher absence

The principal was the only teacher who covered for absences. The other teachers stated that they sometimes combine classes if required, but generally they did not cover for teachers’ absences.

Duty sessions

The average time spent was eighty minutes per week. However, one teacher spent only thirty minutes on duty while another did two and a half hours. The variation in teacher duty hours was due to the rotation of duty types and sessions each week. The teacher aide did no duty session.

Lesson planning and preparation of work program

This averaged out at four hours per teacher, which is quite misleading. The principal stated that she spent one hour per week on this task, and another teacher spent ten hours per week. The teacher’s aide said she spent two hours per week on preparation, usually at school.

Setting up the classroom, putting up displays, getting equipment ready

Again this averaged out at four and a half hours per week. The deputy principal stated that she spent up to ten hours per week on this task, and she believed this was because she now had a purpose built classroom, with good storage, and she was also teaching new entrants, so the classroom was very visual. The principal said that she did not set up the classroom but she did spend at least one hour per week maintaining the entrance foyer and corridors in the school. They were well decorated, with lots of school publicity cuttings from the local newspaper.
Assessing and marking student’s work

The teachers at School B believed that *keeping records* and *assessing and marking* were similar tasks, and the time averaged out at four and a half hours per teacher. However the principal stated that this work tended to come in blocks, at specific times in the school year.

‘Paperwork’ to meet Ministry requirements

The principal stated that she spent fifteen hours per week on this task. One teacher stated that she spent one hour per week, the other staff spent no time on paperwork for the ministry. The principal felt that the amount of ‘paperwork’ required by the ministry was ‘huge’ and that she had a policy of doing as much as she could to save her teachers time.

‘Paperwork’ to meet school or Principal’s requirements

The two teachers spent an average of 1.5 hours each on this task. Teachers were required to produce year plans, daily plans and unit plans for the principal. However, the school had a conscious policy of focusing on tasks that were of benefit to the students, and not doing paperwork for paperwork’s sake.

Extra-curricular work

The principal seemed to be the most active in this area, stating that she attended every concert/performance put on by the students, and their sport each Saturday morning. The school also had a very pro-active attitude to fundraising, and last year built a $60,000 hall and library building in the school grounds. The students had also raised funds to provide ‘surround-sound’ systems in the classroom. The most recent project was a tennis court, which cost $40,000. The fundraising appeared to be led by the principal, who had just spent two days at a fundraising program. She also said that she had a good working relationship with the local paper, and the school was regularly featured in the paper for various achievements and events.
Other comments

The principal believed that the fundraising and publicity that she undertook also helped to keep the school viable. She believed that there was a safety margin of one hundred students, and that the school must be seen to be vibrant to maintain numbers. She also noted that more housing was being built around the school, so numbers were expected to grow.

She was concerned by the demands of the Ministry, and stated that the latest requirement for sport would have an impact of reducing the core curriculum, and that teachers were being asked to implement the policy themselves, which was yet another task for them. She stated that the school had received thirty minutes per day support for a student with special needs and she found this inadequate.

SCHOOL C

School profile

School C is a Decile 1 school. It is situated in a lower socio-economic suburb of a large city. It is a co-educational school that caters for new entrants up to Year 6. The school is part of an amalgamation of several schools on the same site. It aims to provide seamless education across the twelve years of schooling. Truancy had been an issue as well as student welfare, with a significant number of children coming to school without having breakfast and with no provision for lunch. The school is addressing these issues. The school vision is to empower its students to be players in a global community.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Robert’

Board of Trustees (BOT): ‘Mark’

School Secretary: ‘Theresa’

Teacher Aide: ‘Caitlin’

Junior syndicate lead teacher: ‘Brittany’
**Junior syndicate teacher:** ‘Kylie’

**Middle syndicate lead teacher:** ‘Rebecca’

**Special Needs coordinator:** ‘Frances’

**Senior syndicate teacher:** ‘Annette’

**Reading recovery/ethnic unit:** ‘Anita’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

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<th>Rebecca</th>
<th>Frances</th>
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</table>

**General organisation**

The principal was new to the school and had full release. The assistant principal had a management role and provided teacher release time for curriculum and syndicate leaders.

All teachers who were interviewed in this school believed that they were managing their work. However, several said that the volume of work was adversely affecting their health. All said that they had difficulty balancing work and life outside the
school.

Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 38:34. This represented more than sixty percent of total working time. Teachers felt they were attending too many meetings. In a given week they would have meetings before and after school on Monday and Tuesday, and a meeting on Wednesday morning. This left individual planning, preparation and correction/assessment to Wednesday afternoon, Thursday morning and afternoon and Friday morning. Most teachers said that they tried to leave work early on Friday afternoon. The teachers felt mornings should be left to preparing for the students, not attending meetings.

Most chose to come to school early – between 7.00 and 7.30 am - and to stay until about 6.00 pm. The majority of teachers worked at home at night and on weekends. Term holidays were seen as a time for a short break and preparation and planning for the coming term, either at home or in the school.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping:

The teachers said that their out of school hours work increased by at least fifty percent at assessment and reporting times. Some expressed feelings of guilt about their families at these times, as they had to spend more time on school work than they would wish, but felt they could not do the job properly if they did not. The need for one-to-one testing increased the need for teacher support or release at these times. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for special needs students added to their workload.

Paperwork to comply with school’s or principal’s requirements

Some teachers expressed their concerns with the quantity of paperwork (whether on computer or on paper). The line between Ministry requirements and school requirements was not clear for all teachers.
**Performance management/staff appraisal**

The teachers did not see paperwork that related to performance management as a problem, since, in addition to the classroom observations and discussions, the completion of a simple pro-forma was all that was required. Senior teachers, who were responsible for staff appraisal, found difficulty in finding the time necessary for classroom observations and subsequent discussions with teachers (which generally took place after school), but thought that the paperwork relating to appraisal was not excessive. There was a positive attitude amongst teachers to the functioning and outcomes of the appraisal system.

**Curriculum planning and assessment/record keeping/reporting/data analysis**

The teachers were very supportive of the curriculum directions taken by the Ministry since the introduction of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’, but said that planning, assessment, record keeping and data analysis now took much more time and entailed much more writing and record keeping. Teachers said that they saw a need for the increased paperwork, partly for the Principal, School Board and ERO, but mainly to support their teaching. Most paperwork could only be done by teachers, but they agreed that a trained clerical assistant could do about twenty percent of the work.

**Professional Development (PD)**

Weekly meetings were devoted to professional development and sharing across the schools. The professional development initiatives involved reading, study and discussion of complex content for which little or no extra time was provided. Some teachers found it particularly stressful to have to participate in professional development at the end of a day’s teaching. The new approaches entailed more emphasis on outcomes-based learning. The teachers found the processes time consuming, especially in the initial stages where they were still learning and changing their teaching. They found the pace of change difficult and were concerned that ‘new initiatives’ continued to overwhelm them before they had time to assimilate what had gone before.
SCHOOL D

School profile

School D is a small, modern, purpose-built full primary school 50 kilometres from a small provincial town. At the end of Term two there were eighteen students aged between five and twelve. Three new students were expected at the beginning of Term three.

At the latest review of deciles, the school was regraded - from a decile nine to a decile three, which slightly eased a very tight financial situation. The principal and board chair believed that the new decile-rating was a much closer reflection of the school's community.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

- **Principal and sole teacher:** ‘Belinda’
- **Board of Trustees chair:** ‘Warren’
- **Teacher aide:** ‘Carla’
- **Administrative assistant:** ‘Jean’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

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</table>
Workload drivers and workload management

For a sole charge teaching principal in a small country school, there are several areas which add to workload:

- Country schools tend to be a hub of the community. There is an (unstated) expectation that the teacher/principal will play a full and active part in community activities.

- Students cover four levels of the curriculum. Teaching students whose ages range from new entrants to thirteen across all curriculum areas requires a wide range of programs, all of which have to be planned in as much detail as any teaching program.

- Everything that comes into the school, including material relating to all curriculum areas, administrative requirements, extra-curricular activities etc. must be read. Even if not fully read, it must be 'screened' for its value to the students and the school. Belinda is the only person who can do this.

- To feel confident that she is delivering good quality programs to students in key curriculum areas, Belinda feels that she needs to attend some professional development in those areas in each year. This, in conjunction with the remoteness of the school, places huge demands on her time.

- All management tasks have to be completed as in any other school. Board reports, policies, community consultations, staff management and performance reviews have to be fitted into one day's release a week. The administrative assistant said that “the numbers we put in the boxes are smaller, but we still have to fill all the boxes.”

- The amount of time she spent dealing with a range of matters around school buses and bus routes was a major workload issue and stressor for this teacher.

The main strategy this teacher used to manage her workload was simple - “I do the classroom before I go into the office.” She also made use of task boards which she
could prepare in advance to make it clear to students what she was expecting them to do.

**Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping**

Planning requirements were heavy because of the need to plan across four levels of the curriculum. Belinda did a lot of her planning during weekends and holidays, so that day to day was more a matter of keeping on top of what was coming up.

Assessment, marking and record keeping did not cause particular issues.

**Paperwork and compliance requirements**

Compliance requirements were generally related to Belinda’s role as principal.

Belinda expressed frustration that each school was meant to develop so much paperwork for itself and said that more templates would ease her workload significantly.

All the tasks devolved to self-managing schools weigh heavily on small schools with only teaching principals and few Board members.

**Professional development**

Belinda stated that the Board were very supportive in this area. In the past couple of years Belinda has prioritised her principal activities when seeking professional development. In future, she hoped to prioritise her classroom activities.

However, distance and time were an issue. Belinda stated that she was unsure how she was going to schedule the professional development required to prepare the school for the inclusion of Physical Education in the program.

**Use of teacher aides**

One teacher aide was employed in the school for ten and a half hours over three mornings. She was given her own space and worked with individuals or small groups needing additional attention and support. When the roll was higher, she did more
work in the classroom providing support, but then moved to focus on individuals with identified needs. The teacher aide was fully funded by the Board.

SCHOOL E

School profile

This school is situated in a large regional town. It has a Year 0 to 6 enrolment of about 280 students. The principal had been at the school for three years and much time had been devoted to establishing sound school teaching and learning systems. The school has been classed as Decile 9.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Valerie’

Administrative Officer: ‘Mary’

Assistant Principal and Years 2 and 3: ‘Tara’

Years 2 and 3: ‘Cecily’

Senior Syndicate Leader and Years 5 and 6: ‘Lucy’

Teacher Aide: ‘Sarah’

Chairperson of Board of Trustees: ‘Diane’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tara</th>
<th>Cecil</th>
<th>Lucy</th>
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<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
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<td>17.45</td>
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<td><strong>120.15</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.05</strong></td>
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</table>

**Teaching in the Classroom**

Staff taught from 9.00 am until 3.00 pm five days a week, with a twenty minute interval and a one-hour lunchbreak. The assistant principal had a full teaching allotment. The principal acted as reliever, when necessary, and conducted extra programs, such as the Gifted and Talented Extension Program. The average amount of contact teaching time during the week was four hours and forty minutes.

**Cover for Teacher Absence**

Relieving teachers covered absences when available. However, it was often difficult to find relieving teachers in this town, so absences were often covered by the principal.

**Duty Sessions**

Staff had one forty-five minute lunchtime and one twenty minute interval non-teaching supervisory duty per week, together with one fifteen minute period of road patrol. The average amount of time spent in non-teaching supervisory duties was one...
hour and twenty minutes.

**Regular Meetings**

Staff attended either a full staff or a syndicate meeting from 3.00 pm until about 5.00 pm on Mondays. This meeting was both organisational and for professional development. There was a full staff “housekeeping” meeting from 8.15 am until 9.00 am on Fridays. Senior team leaders had an additional meeting from 3.00 pm until 5.30 pm, or later, on Wednesdays, and there was usually a professional development meeting on Thursdays from 3.00 pm until about 4.30 pm - this meeting was described by one staff member as “optional but expected.” The average amount of time teachers spend at meetings per week was about six hours.

**Lesson Planning and Preparation of Work Program, Setting up the classroom, assessing and recording, paperwork**

Cecily arrived at school at 7.30 am and left at about 5.00 pm each day. On four evenings a week (Monday to Thursday) she worked at home for three hours. On Saturday afternoon and evening she worked for about six hours. She estimated that she spent about 20% of her time planning and preparing her work program, 10% setting up her classroom and preparing equipment, 20% assessing and marking students’ work and about 50% completing paperwork. She commented that this “is not making me a better teacher, I’d rather be preparing for the children.”

Lucy arrived at school at 8.00 am and remained until 6.00 pm or later. She worked at home three evenings a week for three hours, for three hours on Saturday and from 5.00 pm to 9.00 pm on Sunday. Much of her work was to do with her position as syndicate leader. The biggest demand on her time was meetings, and planning and preparation for these meetings. She spent two to three hours daily on planning and preparing her class work program and about one hour daily on setting up her classroom and displays.

Tara arrived at school at 8.00 am and stayed until 6.00 pm, or later. She worked at home for about two hours on three evenings per week and spent at least one five to six
hour day at school during the weekend. At the time of interview there had only been two weekends when she had not been at school, with the result that she “was starting to feel panicky.” She was new to the school this year, and after working at her old school until January 15, had one week off before starting at School E.

The amount of these out-of-school hours was clearly affected by the number and length of meetings at the school, but even allowing for this, the number of non-contact work-related hours was, on average, about thirty-two hours. The principal’s hours appeared to be even longer, with one staff member stating that the principal had worked for ninety hours in the previous week.

In term breaks and in the long vacation, Cecily worked five hours a day for one week. As she had a young child, much of her work was done at home. Lucy spent one week of full days on school related tasks during term breaks and three weeks of full days in the second part of the long vacation. Tara worked for one full week during term breaks and usually for half of the long vacation.

Talking to Parents

Responses to questions about interaction with parents varied, with one teacher “making an occasional phone call” and others spending about half an hour each day. The average time spent talking to parents outside class hours was about one hour.

Extra-curricular work

Parental expectations of staff, in terms of extra-curricular activities, at this Decile 9 school were very high. Staff were involved in various areas such as aerobics, drama and sport. Parental participation in events such as camps was limited, and the school was considering curtailling some extra-curricular activities. One staff member devoted about six hours per week to school sporting activities in addition to about two hours of cultural activities at various times. The principal devoted a very large number of hours to the various extra-curricular activities of the school. On average, the amount of time spent by staff in extra curricular activities was about two hours per week.
Other comments

Teachers at this school were clearly trying to ensure that the school was placed on a secure and sustainable footing after recent merges and closures. This entailed many hours of work per week in planning and developing systems and documentation. The new reporting system in which teachers used a template and discussed indicated progress with parents and students at three way interviews, may reduce the amount of paperwork involved and staff were optimistic in this respect. The very long hours per week being worked by staff, and in particular by the principal and assistant principal were a cause for concern. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees felt that the school was severely disadvantaged because, as a Decile 9 school, it was not funded to a commensurate level with other, lower decile schools in terms of teacher aides and in other areas.

SCHOOL F

School profile

School F is a Decile 5 full primary school in a provincial town.

Teacher aides were used to support teachers in a range of ways, including taking small groups of children, supervising assessment, and, in one case, running an 'English Recovery' program similar to 'Reading Recovery'.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

- Principal: ‘Josephine’
- Assistant Principal, Syndicate Leader, Curriculum Leader: ‘Roy’
- Senior School Teacher, Curriculum Leader: ‘Betty’
- Middle School teacher: ‘Alison’
- Junior School Teacher: ‘Caroline’
- Teacher Aide: ‘Elizabeth’
- Admin Manager: ‘Joanne’
- **Board of Trustees chair: 'Freya'**

**Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Caroline</th>
<th>Maree</th>
<th>Roy</th>
<th>Betty</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1.10</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>91.40</td>
<td>22.55</td>
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**General organisation**

Teachers reported that they worked hard but found the job to be satisfying. They believed workload pressures were well understood by the school and that efforts were made to reduce workload.

All the teachers were very positive about the school's ethos and supported the efforts made to keep children busy and engaged throughout the day – including lunchtimes, when a lot of equipment was provided to students for play.

Teachers were each given one day's classroom release to write reports.

**Workload drivers and workload management**

The teachers felt that the extra-curricular and community involvement expectations were the things that threatened to push their workload over the edge. Although they all thought it was important for the school to be fully involved in the community,
when pressed, these were the things they identified that they could drop without detracting from the quality of their teaching.

Joint planning and, in some cases shared delivery of some aspects of the program were the things that they found most useful in keeping workload manageable.

Government emphasis on using more and better forms of assessment in establishing students' progress and achievement created work for teachers who had to learn new and different ways of assessment.

There was some frustration about the extent of meetings, although teachers interviewed recognised that it was an inevitable side effect of a consultative management style, which they all quite liked.

**Planning, assessing marking and record keeping**

Team planning was a strong feature of some syndicates in the school. Team teaching was also becoming more prominent in the senior school. This meant, for example, when studying New Zealand history, teachers developed different aspects of the unit (e.g. Treaty of Waitangi) and the students moved to each teacher in turn. This had also happened in the arts with each teacher specialising in either singing, dancing, drama or music, and the students moving between teachers.

Some teachers who had been in the profession for some time questioned the extent of testing now required. Whole school testing took place in March, June and November at this school and some were uncertain how much value was added to the student or to the teacher.

Teachers acknowledged a change in practice over recent years, with the inclusion of more formative assessment in the classroom program tending to replace the summative assessment (marking) done previously.

**Paperwork and compliance requirements**

Teachers were generally in favour of the new curriculum. However, one teacher said that it was disappointing that many of the supporting documents did not come out
until some time after each curriculum was introduced, which created a lot of extra work for teachers.

One teacher made the point that the inflow of paper had increased in the years she had been teaching:

In my cubby-hole today, for example, are several brochures about professional development opportunities, lists of sports teams that need to be contacted, reports to parents, reports to colleges to go with our Yr 8s, timetable changes and some curriculum stuff. You have to really make decisions about what you are going to read.

Professional development

The school was strongly committed to professional development. This was focussed largely on sending teachers on courses rather than on in-school professional development designed to develop a professional community. Management was very responsive to teacher identified professional development needs.

Use of teacher aides

The school employed quite a number of teacher aides and used them to assist identified individuals and to support classroom teachers in whatever ways teachers wanted. This included doing running records and school entry assessments. One experienced teacher aide now had Limited Authority to Teach (LAT), and ran the equivalent of a reading recovery program – called 'English Recovery', as she was not a trained teacher.

SCHOOL G

School profile

School G is a Decile 6 school of 90 students and four classes, which is situated in a small, remote, idyllic hamlet about 120 kilometres from a provincial town. The students come from a variety of socio economic backgrounds – parents are mainly
local tradesmen or labourers, with some professionals. The school had five teachers (full and part time).

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

**Principal:** ‘Martin’

**Member of School Board:** ‘Nellie’

**Teacher:** ‘Janet’

**Teacher:** ‘Jade’

**Teacher aide:** ‘Pat’

**School Secretary:** ‘Althea’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week (Total number of hours worked by the 2 (part-time) teachers interviewed is 44.5):

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<td>50.30</td>
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**Manageability of teachers’ work**

The members of staff interviewed were highly committed to their work and said that they enjoyed it. They found it manageable for most of the time, but said that there was
never enough time available to work as effectively as they wished.

**Strategies used by the Principal to manage workload**

The principal ‘filtered’ correspondence to ensure that teachers were protected from ‘unnecessary’ communications that could result in more work. He also kept formal meetings to a minimum, but encouraged informal professional interaction after school and at lunchtimes.

Janet had a whole day’s time allowance to ‘digest’ information, prepare curriculum and assessment documents and plan professional development for staff. This cut down on the amount of time teachers had to spend on curriculum and assessment and made their work more efficient and effective.

The school’s curriculum and assessment documents sighted were of superior quality. They were also economical in size and quantity. It seemed likely that Janet’s leadership and the resources she was able to develop had led to a reduction in the number of actual hours teachers spent on curriculum planning and assessment while improving effectiveness. Allowing Janet a full day’s release from teaching duties was thus a productive strategy in terms of her workload and that of other teachers.

Both teachers interviewed found it difficult to distinguish between Ministry requirements, principal’s requirements and the demands they made of themselves. The principal said that he and Janet encouraged teachers to keep paperwork manageable and not to prepare ‘pretty’ documents just for the sake of the ERO reviewers. They and the teachers supported the general direction of Ministry requirements and did not believe that the amount of paperwork actually required by ERO was excessive. Teachers said that they felt the need to plan, assess and keep accurate records, partly for the Principal and ERO, but mainly to support their own teaching.

The school had a friendly, family atmosphere and the few student behaviour management problems appeared to be managed in a firm, structured and supportive way. Student behaviour management did not appear to be a stress factor for teachers
in this school.

School G also made effective use of teacher aide time.

SCHOOL H

School profile

This school is situated in a small town near a larger regional town. It has a 0 to 8 enrolment of 131 students, with six classes and a non-teaching principal. While there are some permanent farming families in the area, there are no professional families. Most parents work either in the nearby freezing works or are share dairy farmers who do not remain permanently in one area. The school is classified as Decile 4.

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

Principal: ‘Kate’

Chairperson of Board of Trustees: ‘Victor’

Years 3 and 4 Teacher: ‘Danielle’

Years 1, 2 and 3 Teacher: ‘Stephanie’

Years 7 and 8 Teacher: ‘Kristina’

Years 6 and 7 Teacher: ‘Emma’

Teacher Aide: ‘Annie’

Administrative Officer: ‘Patricia’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Danielle</th>
<th>Stephanie</th>
<th>Kristina</th>
<th>Emma</th>
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<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<tr>
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**Teaching in the Classroom**

Teachers taught from 9.00 am until 3.00 pm with an interval of twenty minutes. One teacher had release for the ICT contract on one afternoon per week. The average amount of contact teaching time was four hours and forty minutes.

**Cover for Teacher Absence**

As in other rural areas, there were often difficulties in locating relieving teachers. If a relieving teacher was not available, teachers combined classes or distributed students among various classes.

**Duty Sessions**

Teachers performed non-teaching supervisory duties over one twenty-four hour period. These included one half hour period before school, one twenty minute interval and two half hour lunchtime duties. Thus the average amount of supervisory duties was one hour and fifty minutes.
Regular Meetings

All teachers attended a full staff meeting on Mondays from 3.00 until 5.00 pm and on Fridays from 8.00 till 8.30 am. The Monday meeting was mainly for professional development, particularly ICT, and the Friday meeting was for administrative and organisational matters. There were no formal syndicate or other meetings, with this small staff able to discuss curriculum and other matters at lunchtimes and intervals. The formal meetings that were conducted were tightly structured. There were other meetings, such as Board of Trustees meetings, attended by staff during the term on a monthly basis. The average amount of time per week spent at meetings was about two and three quarter hours. All staff also spent approximately one hour per week on designated professional readings to prepare for the Monday meeting.

Lesson Planning and Preparation of Work Program, Setting up Classroom, Paperwork

Danielle arrived at school at 7.15 am and left at 5.00 pm each day. At home she spent about two hours each week marking and about two hours planning and preparing. She spent an additional four to five hours each weekend on these tasks. Once every five or six weeks she worked at school for an additional weekend day. She found it difficult to separate out her various tasks into time components but said that she spent the most time on planning and preparation, with assessing and marking students’ work coming a close second.

Stephanie arrived at school at 7.10 am and left at 5.30 pm. She worked in the evenings for an additional hour and for three or four hours each Sunday morning. Most of this time was devoted to planning and preparation, and to setting up her classroom. She spent between two and four hours assessing and marking work and about three hours on Ministry and other paperwork. An additional two hours would be spent on professional readings.

Kristina arrived at school between 7.30 and 7.45 am each day and left at about 4.00 pm. On most weekday evenings she worked between one and a half and two hours at home and for five to six hours at home on either Saturday or Sunday. Kristina had a
computer and an office at home and preferred to do planning and preparation in “quiet time” at home. In the mornings before class she organised and sets up the room for the day. She also spent the first ten minutes of interval and half of lunchtime in her classroom attending to organisational matters. Across her various tasks, she devoted the least time to paperwork, including Ministry paperwork and was “always behind.” She described her priorities as “increasing my knowledge base” and coming up with “creative ideas, activities and resources.”

Emma arrived at school at about 7.30 am and left between 5.00 and 5.30 pm each day. In the evenings she worked at home on planning and goal setting for two and a half to three hours on four evenings per week. In the weekends she worked for five hours on either Saturday or Sunday. The major portion of her time was spent on planning, preparation and assessing and marking students’ work. An additional ten to eleven hours was spent on complying with school or Ministry paperwork, which was integrated into planning and preparation time.

In term breaks, Danielle spent two full days at school and “a lot of time at home thinking about school-related issues.” In the long vacation, she spent two days at the end of the year and one week at the end of the vacation at school. She also planned at home. “A lot of the stuff I do isn’t physically sitting down, it’s just thinking.” Stephanie worked for three days in her classroom and for ten to fifteen hours at home during term breaks; in the long vacation she worked for five mornings at school and for about twenty hours at home.

Kristina worked on school related tasks for two or three six hour days at the beginning of the term breaks and for one week to ten days towards the end of the long vacation. In addition to working directly on organisation and planning, she read a large amount of senior fiction during these breaks to ensure her students had interesting and appropriate material. “I daren’t read a book during the term.” Emma worked at school for one week of six hour days during term breaks and for two days at the beginning and three weeks in the second part of the long vacation.
Talking to Parents

Danielle, Stephanie and Kristina each spent about half an hour per week talking to parents outside class. Emma spent about forty-five minutes. The average length of time spent talking to teachers was about thirty-five minutes, although this varied widely from week to week.

Extra-curricular work

Danielle had previously organised a school production every two years, but was not doing so this year because of other time demands - Stephanie was engaged in PTA fundraising and is the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) representative - these activities took between one and two hours per week. Kristina was heavily involved in school sports and spent an average of two hours a week outside class hours in Terms 1 and 4, together with part of interval and lunchtime. Over the year she averaged about one hour per week during term time. She was also completing St John’s Ambulance First Aid course. Emma offered an after school gifted and talented program in art for one and a half hours once a week, and a choir at lunchtime for one hour twice a week. The average time spent by teachers at the school in extra-curricular activities was about one and three quarter hours.

Other comments

Several strategies appeared to be reducing workload and increasing teacher effectiveness. These included effective behavioural management strategies, with an established system of early parental contact, tightly organised and structured meetings and clear and consistently referenced documentation. At this school, staff felt that their small numbers enabled them to reach consensus quickly on many issues. A contributing factor also appeared to be the strong team spirit that had been established at the school. Several teacher aides were funded by the Board of Trustees, which placed a high priority on supporting classroom teachers in this way.

Issues that were increasing workload and impacting upon teacher effectiveness included the number of open classrooms being changed midyear because of enrolment
numbers. The Board of Trustees and the staff felt that a leeway of perhaps ten students was essential to avoid disruption and a frustrating duplication of teacher labour. Both this year and last year, some teachers had had three different class groupings. In one case, a teacher’s prior planning for six months had to be abandoned. The issue of changing rolls is particularly relevant at this school, with share farming dairy contracts finishing on June 1st each year.

Like many other school staff members interviewed, teachers at this school felt very strongly that lack of time to reflect on and consolidate change increased pressure on teachers and diminished their effectiveness. Senior class teacher Kristina suggested that an excellent professional development strategy might be for the Ministry to offer classroom and curriculum based two day professional development courses during term breaks.

SCHOOL J

School profile

School J is a Decile 5, previously Decile 3, school. It is situated in a lower socio-economic suburb that is now becoming fashionable in a large city. It is a co-educational school that caters for new entrants up to Year 6. The school includes five-hundred and forty students from forty-two national backgrounds.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Deputy Principal: ‘Michael’

Board of Trustees (BOT): ‘Frank’

School Secretary: ‘Abby’

Teacher Aide: ‘Maddie’

Junior team lead teacher: ‘Ben’

Junior team teacher: ‘Gwen’

Junior team teacher: ‘Greg’
Middle school team teacher: ‘Jackie’

Middle school team teacher: ‘Paul’

Middle school team teacher: ‘Lewis’

Senior team lead teacher: ‘Cameron’

Senior team teacher: ‘Holly’

Senior team teacher: ‘Gemma’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

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<tr>
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<th>Greg</th>
<th>Jackie</th>
<th>Paul</th>
<th>Lewis</th>
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* adjusted to 5 day week in totals and averaging

General organisation

The principal had full release, and this seemed appropriate in a school of this size. The deputy principal and the assistant principal had distinct management roles. The school made a decision to allow their team leaders to teach in the classroom on a nine-day fortnight and provides release time using operational funds budgeted for this purpose and also for timetabled curriculum leader release.

The school was organised as four mini-schools with good team management. Staff were offered opportunities to take on curriculum responsibilities when leadership
roles become available through staff movement to other positions.

All teachers who were interviewed in this school believed that, while they were managing their work, the time involved often impinged upon their personal lives, and sometimes even on their health.

**Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them**

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 24hrs 20mins. This represented just over fifty percent of total time on task. Teachers felt free to manage this work at times that suited them. Most chose to come early to school (8.00am or earlier) and stay until about 6.00 pm. The approach of winter became an issue, as teachers left school in the dark. The majority of teachers worked at home at night and on weekends. Many felt that the first week of term holidays was for them and that in the second week they would come to school to prepare for the coming term.

**Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping**

The teachers said that their out of school hours work increased by at least fifty percent at assessment and reporting times. The need for one to one testing increased the need for teacher support or release at these times. Efforts had been made to ‘streamline’ these and related assessment processes by decreasing the amount of written reporting to parents and replacing it with an extra parent/teacher interview. Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) for special needs students added to their workload. The junior school classroom teachers made the point that they spent more time planning and preparing in out of teaching time hours while those in the senior team said they spent time marking/correcting and recording.

**Paperwork to comply with school’s or principal’s requirements**

Some teachers said that ‘the Ministry’ required them to do a lot of paperwork, but when questioned more closely said that they did not necessarily distinguish between what was required by the Ministry and what was required by the school. It was
paperwork that needed to be done.

**Performance management/staff appraisal**

The teachers did not see paperwork that related to performance management as a problem, since, in addition to the classroom observations and discussion, it required only the completion of a simple pro-forma. Senior teachers, who were responsible for staff appraisal, said that they need to prioritize carefully to find the time for the required observations and discussions with teachers. They said that the paperwork related to appraisal was not excessive and that time put in to this area was reflected by the gains to staff and student outcomes.

**Curriculum planning and assessment/record keeping/reporting/data analysis**

The teachers were very supportive of the curriculum directions taken by the Ministry since the introduction of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’, but said that planning, assessment, record keeping and data analysis now took much more time and entailed much more writing and record keeping. Teachers said that they saw a need for the increased paperwork, partly for the principal, School Board and ERO, but mainly to support their teaching. They agreed that apart from some basic data entry most paperwork was professional work that only teachers could do.

**Professional Development (PD)**

Staff and team meetings were all based around professional development. Professional development initiatives were based upon literacy and numeracy strategies in the school’s strategic plan and included reading, study and discussion of complex content. Release time was provided for according to MOE contract allocations.

Teachers often found participation in professional development at the end of a day’s teaching added to their stress. The new approaches entailed more emphasis on outcomes based learning. The teachers found the related processes time consuming, especially in the initial stages where they were still learning and changing their teaching. They found the pace of change difficult and were concerned that ‘new
initiatives’ continued to overwhelm them before they had time to assimilate what had gone before. Teachers also found it stressful when required to attend meetings before school but could not see their way around morning meetings as there were several meetings timetabled after school already.

SCHOOL K

School profile

This Decile 7 school is situated in a large regional town and has an enrolment of over 600 students. The problem of truancy had been successfully addressed. Funding was a major issue.

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

Principal: ‘Dennis’
Deputy Principal: ‘Ellen’
Assistant Principal: ‘Jay’
Senior Teacher: ‘Rhonda’
Senior Teacher: ‘Olive’
Teacher: ‘Tesha’
Teacher: ‘Renee’
Board of Trustees: ‘Amber’
Teacher Aide: ‘Jade’
Executive Officer: ‘Alexandra’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

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<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Olive</th>
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*Teaching in the classroom*

The four classroom teachers spent 23.20 hours per week (full load) teaching in a classroom. The teacher’s aide supported teachers for twenty-five hours. The principal, deputy principal and assistant principal all taught at least eight hours per week. On top of this the principal, his deputy principal and assistant principal also covered absences when required. The principal ran a program for gifted and talented students at the school, which covered a range of subjects, including maths and music.

*Cover for teacher absence*

No classroom teachers covered for absences. The deputy principal spent six hours per week (on average) covering, the assistant principal was available when required, as was the principal. The assistant principal’s teaching load had been reduced this year so that she could relieve the classroom teachers who needed to work one on one to complete SEA (School Entry Assessment for five year olds) and the ‘six year NETT’. The results were then forwarded to the Ministry. The teacher aide advised that she was often called in to cover absences, and she had a regular 1 hour senior teacher

40
release.

**Duty sessions**

Teachers spent 1 – 2 hours per week doing playground duty. The assistant principal and deputy principal covered ‘detention’, which was thirty minutes – one hour per week.

The general attitude to meetings was very positive. Teachers stated that the meetings were worthwhile and relevant, and often targeted towards professional development. The principal advised that a conscious effort had been made to keep meetings to a minimum.

**Lesson planning and preparation of work program**

Two teachers spent ten hours per week on lesson plans, but generally four to five seemed to be the average, all of them saying that a lot of planning was done at home in the evenings, weekends and during holiday time.

**Setting up the classroom, putting up displays, getting equipment ready**

The principal advised that most teachers were at school by 7.30 am and few left before 5.00 pm. The teachers themselves spent up to five hours per week setting up displays and getting equipment ready. The time seemed to correlate with the amount of time spent on lesson planning, i.e. the more time spent on lesson planning, the more time spent setting up rooms etc.

**Assessing and marking student’s work**

All classroom teachers spent between two to three hours on this task, usually out of school hours. The principal, who has a very definite educational philosophy did all of his assessments ‘on the job with the student’.

**‘Paperwork’ to meet Ministry requirements**

Classroom teachers reported one hour per week on this task, however, the principal,
deputy principal and assistant principal reported up to eight hours per week.

‘Paperwork’ to meet school or Principal’s requirements

Classroom teachers reported up to two hours weekly. However, the assistant Principal and deputy principal spent eight and six hours per week respectively. It seemed that the senior management team had tried to introduce procedures to take the ‘load’ off classroom teachers, and a school intranet enabled the deputy principal and assistant principal to access and collate required data.

Extra-curricular work

The school had a strong focus on Whanau and Kapahaka (Maori culture), as well as a literacy contract for 2005. This involved extra meetings for participating staff. One classroom teacher also ran an extension dance program with 40 students, and was helping to organise the school production. The school had a GATE (gifted and talented students) program that required input from several teachers.

Other comments

Every member of the school committee had a clear notion of what the school vision statement was, and was fully supportive of its ideals and implementation. The class teachers felt that it had sifted down to the students.

The school community seemed genuinely cohesive and supportive. All teachers said the senior management team were supportive and professional development was encouraged. Two of the interviewed teachers were working on Master’s Degrees.

Fund raising was undertaken every year; a minimum of $6000 must be raised to maintain programs. This year the target was very high, as the school had a large deficit in 2004. The principal felt the decile rating of schools was inequitable.
SCHOOL L

School profile

School L, a contributing primary school, opened in 2005 following a network review. It was created from a merger of two schools, about a kilometre apart, each with a falling enrolment.

The staff of the new school is made up of three equal parts, one third of staff from each of the two merged schools and one third of staff new to the school.

The school has operated from two sites this year. The decision to determine from which site School L will operate has been made and reversed three times. A final decision was announced during the week of interviews.

The school operates a bilingual whanau unit.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

- Principal: ‘Maureen’
- Deputy Principal (curriculum leader): ‘Naomi’
- Assistant Principal and Junior School teacher: ‘Lynn’
- Senior School Syndicate Leader: ‘Susan’
- Middle School teacher: ‘Astrid’
- Junior School Syndicate Leader: ‘Larry’
- New Entrant teacher and Yr 1 teacher: ‘Jillian’
- Teacher aide: ‘Heidi’
- School Resource Manager (administration): ‘Claire’
- Board of Trustees member: ‘Melanie’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

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<th>Lynn</th>
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<tr>
<td>Extra curricular activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking to parents</td>
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<td>51.40</td>
<td>41.15</td>
<td>49.20</td>
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<td><strong>22.15</strong></td>
<td><strong>133.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General organisation**

Members of the School L staff were determined to work as a single entity, despite being divided between the two school sites. This had workload implications in all areas.

The principal of School L, who was the former principal of one of the merged schools, was committed to building a new school, rather than unquestioningly adopting the practices of either constituent school. “Take nothing for granted” was one of her mantras, and she encourages staff to examine all aspects of their practice with a view to retaining what was good and soundly based, and being prepared to discard the rest.

**Workload drivers and workload management**

The school had tried very hard to ensure that the focus on teaching and learning had not been diverted by all the extra requirements on time and energy imposed by the merger. Twelve staff were involved in the numeracy project.
The school had opted to have all syndicates operating jointly across both sites and this made essential syndicate interaction difficult. The solution they adopted was to alternate the site of the weekly syndicate meetings.

The school management was also keen for students to mix as much as possible, despite being on two sites. Transport between the two sites caused difficulty, but ready access to buses had been organised. All staff said, however, that the logistics required in almost every activity placed an extra demand on them and increased their workload.

**School culture and vision**

The school culture was strong and clearly defined by staff. It operated a behaviour management system based on 'Glasser's Choice Theory' which used a clear and transparent set of both positive and negative consequences to manage children's behaviour.

**Planning, assessing marking and record keeping**

Planning was the major 'out of class' task that occupied teachers' time. Teachers newer to the profession spent almost twice the amount of time planning as other teachers. At this stage there was less joint, or syndicate planning at School L than at some other schools visited.

As with other schools, junior teachers tended to do the majority of marking and record keeping as part of their classroom program, as they used far more formative than summative assessment.

**Paperwork and compliance requirements**

Teachers were not aware of any Ministry paperwork requirements, only those required by the school. Detailed lesson plans had to be available for inspection, and records of children's progress kept up to date.
Performance management

The performance management system required quite a bit of work, but not necessarily paperwork. Teachers all developed a performance agreement with their appraiser and this was likely to identify some areas that they needed to work on during the year. Observations and an appraisal meeting completed the process. Teachers particularly enjoyed the opportunity to visit other schools and watch teachers teach.

Use of para-professionals

One notable feature of School L was its approach to, and use of teacher aides. The school employed a number of teacher aides and worked hard to include them as full members of the staff team. Described as 'para-professionals', they were encouraged to attend staff meetings and have access to a range of professional development opportunities. At least one teacher aide had completed teacher training and had returned to the school as a teacher.

Para-professionals were used to assist particular children to access the curriculum, they also worked with small groups of children under teacher direction, and they played an active role in the playground, supervising and integrating children who had difficulty playing constructively with others.

SCHOOL M

School profile

School M, a Decile 6 school, with an enrolment of 450 students, is situated in a moderately sized regional town. It is an integrated school which caters for new entrants up to Year 6. This school is an essential and valued part of its community.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Barry’

Deputy Principal: ‘Simon’

Assistant Principal: ‘Marion’
Board of Trustees (BOT): ‘Adrian’

School Secretary: ‘Louise’

Teacher Aide: ‘Bernadette’

Junior syndicate teacher: ‘Beverley’

Junior syndicate teacher: ‘Tori’

Middle syndicate teacher: ‘Pippa’

Middle syndicate teacher: ‘Charlotte’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Tony’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Martin’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beverley</th>
<th>Tori</th>
<th>Pippa</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Tony</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>23.20</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.30</td>
<td>5.05</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Assessing/record keeping</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>38.10</td>
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</table>

General organisation

The principal had full release from classroom teaching. The deputy principal and the assistant principal had distinct management roles including SENCO (Special Needs Co-ordinator), syndicate levels, assessment and reporting and curriculum
development.

All teachers interviewed were committed to meeting the requirements of the school. Teachers felt that managing their work successfully had an impact on their work/life balance. Several said that volume of work, “which seems to be ever increasing”, was adversely affecting their health. Staff felt greatly supported by the leadership team, who were always available.

**Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them**

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 38:10. Teachers stated that they were in charge of their workload and that they took personal pride in maintaining the positive image of the school. Some chose to come early to school (7.30 am or earlier) and some chose to stay until about 6.00 pm. The majority of interviewed teachers worked at home at night and on weekends. They stated that the workload was heavy, but they were coping.

Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) for special needs students added to teachers’ workloads but, once again, staff members were philosophically, as well as professionally committed to catering for the needs of these students and supporting the links to their families.

**Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping:**

The leadership team encouraged all teachers to maintain student records weekly, rather than having too much to do near the assessment and reporting times of the year. The Portfolio Timeframe provided an example of how forward planning could be supported. Portfolios go home twice a year. The deputy principal proof reads every portfolio. Teachers were clearly aware of all stages involved in the process of preparing portfolios.

The school was structured so that planning took place in teams and the whole curriculum workload was shared by all the syndicate members.
Performance management/staff appraisal

The supportive nature of working in well-led teams made the appraisal system an integral part of individual improvement. The teachers did not see paperwork associated with performance management as a problem, with only a requirement to complete a simple pro-forma. Senior teachers, who were responsible for staff appraisal, said that they were committed to finding the necessary time for discussions with teachers. They did not find the paperwork related to appraisal to be excessive and the time put in to this area was reflected by the gains in staff development and student outcomes.

Curriculum planning and assessment/record keeping/reporting/data analysis

The already full curriculum in regular schools was further crowded in this school because of the inclusion of religious studies as an integral part of the daily routine. Teachers were concerned that the recently flagged Health and Physical Education initiative would diminish time for literacy and numeracy. The system for assessment/record keeping was streamlined and on computer. Teachers felt the pressure to use the new assessment tools provided by the Ministry (and announced to parents), but did not have release time to take it on board. They felt that they would need to give more non-teaching time to this task.

Professional Development (PD)

Staff valued professional development on a whole school basis and when it pertained to their personal needs. Time at weekly staff and syndicate meetings was devoted to professional development. At times it was “just overwhelming but if it is from the Ministry it must get done, it gets significant priority.”

SCHOOL N

School profile

This small rural school is situated in a farming community and enrolls students from entry to Year 8. The school is the subject of merger discussions with three other
schools in the area and while its future was undecided, it appeared that both the Board of Trustees and the staff were anticipating closure.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal, Special Needs and partial class sharing: ‘Isobel’

Years 0 to 2: ‘Emily’

Years 3 to 5: ‘Brigid’

Years 6 to 8: ‘Jane’

Administrative officer: ‘Rachel’

Board of Trustees member: ‘Shana’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Emily</th>
<th>Brigid</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teaching</td>
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<td>23.20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-classroom duty</td>
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<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
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<td>4.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13.30</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing/record keeping</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>4.05</td>
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<td>Extra curricular activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>72.30</td>
<td>24.10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Teaching in the Classroom

The school day ran from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, with a fifteen and a ten minute recess and a forty-five minute lunch break. Staff voted for this arrangement. Buses in this small community brought children at 8.45 am and arrived to collect them at about
2.45 pm. The principal had been sharing a class with one teacher, but at the time of interview undertook special needs education across the school. Excluding the principal’s teaching role, the average amount of daily contact teaching time was four hours and fifty minutes.

**Cover for Teacher Absence**

Relieving teachers were employed occasionally, as on the day of the visit. Otherwise staff covered each other’s classes by joining two classes together, thereby creating an extra load rather than an extra time requirement.

**Duty Sessions**

Non-teaching supervisory duties for classroom teachers included two recesses and one lunchtime per week, making a total of one hour ten minutes. Staff voted to have these three duty periods on one day. No one was specifically allocated to supervision duties before or after school.

**Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings at the school included a Monday staff meeting from 3.15 pm to about 5.00 pm. In addition to organisational matters, this meeting incorporated school based professional development, with previously distributed professional readings being discussed. Staff also attended a one and a half hour planning meeting on Thursdays. Brigid also attended a monthly Board of Trustees meeting of about three hours; Jane attended a monthly sports meeting (three hours including travel time), a network meeting each term with Isobel and Emily (two hours including travel time) and a health meeting (random date but once a term, two hours including travel time.) Thus the average weekly time that classroom teachers spent at meetings during the term was about four hours.

**Talking to Parents**

Informal time spent talking to parents was limited because most parents did not drop off or pick up their children from school. Brigid and Emily averaged about fifteen
minutes each. As the teacher in charge of various sporting activities, Jane spent more time talking to parents (about one and a half hours). The classroom teachers averaged about forty minutes per week in talking to parents.

Lesson Planning and Preparation of Work Program; Setting up the classroom, Assessing and marking students’ work; Paperwork

Teachers found it difficult to separate out the various amounts of time under these headings. Emily arrived at school at about 7.30 am and from then until the start of classes “organises the day and interacts with the kids as they arrive.” After school she worked in her classroom until about 4.45 pm and then for about an hour at home for four evenings each week. In the weekends she worked for two hours on either Saturday or Sunday. Most of this work was to do with planning and preparation. As a 0 to 2 teacher, she usually did assessment and record keeping in class with the children. When full formal reports were prepared (twice yearly), about fifteen extra hours work was required. Brigid set up and organised her classroom between 8 and 9 each day, worked from 3 to 5 at school five days a week and from 7 to 10 each evening five days a week. She spent a further two hours on these and other school related tasks, such as preparing excursions, each weekend. Planning and preparation were the major priority for her. Jane arrived at school at 7.30 am each day and remained for one hour after school. In the weekends she worked for about five hours each day, not necessarily in a complete block.

On days when after school meetings were held, the classroom teachers’ work was correspondingly extended. For example, Emily came to school earlier on the day after a meeting because she was too tired to work longer into the night.

With regard to Ministry paperwork, Jane spent about three hours per week meeting requirements (included in above times.) Emily and Brigid said that most of their Ministry paperwork was done by the principal.

During term time, then, the average amount of time spent weekly on these duties by classroom teachers was about 24 hours.
All the classroom teachers carried out school related duties in term breaks and during the long vacation. On average they spent one full week during each break, two to three days at the start of the long vacation and one week at the end.

**Extra-curricular work**

Neither Emily nor Brigid participated in extra-curricular activities this year. Jane was coaching and refereeing in two sports and was spending at least five hours per week on these activities, with up to twenty hours on occasion.

**Professional Development and Professional Reading.**

Classroom teachers discussed allocated professional readings at staff meetings each week. An average of one and a half hours per week was spent in reading and preparing for discussions. This time was not necessarily in a block, with one teacher commenting that she liked to spread the reading out over four evenings while watching television to relax.

**Other comments**

In this small rural school, there was a very limited number of people to perform various tasks that would take the same amount of time in a larger school. An example cited during interviews was the preparation of planning, maps and risk analysis for a class trip. Preparation of curriculum, especially when several levels were combined into one class, was also more time-consuming. Teachers lived quite close to the school, which may contribute to a blurring of home and school life. One teacher in fact lived next door to the school and recognised that this was probably adding to her workload because “it is just so easy to walk across.”

**SCHOOL O**

**School profile**

School O is a Decile 6 school situated in a large provincial town. The main local industries are farming and grape growing. The two hundred and thirty students are of
varied socio-economic backgrounds.

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

**Principal:** ‘George’

**Deputy Principal:** ‘Susan’

**Assistant Principal:** ‘Harry’

**Special needs teacher:** ‘Jackie’

**Senior syndicate teacher:** ‘Laura’

**Teacher (new to school):** ‘Nellie’

**Teacher aide:** ‘Denise’

**Board of Trustees Chairperson:** ‘Arthur’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jackie (special</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Harry</th>
<th>Nellie</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<tr>
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<td>23.20</td>
<td>23.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-classroom duty</td>
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<td><strong>116.40</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.20</strong></td>
<td><strong>107.10</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.34</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**General organisation**

All teachers interviewed taught in the classroom for a full 23.20 hours. The assistant principal and deputy principal, each of whom held two management units, also
taught 23.20 hours, although they said that a limited amount of relief time was available to them on an as needs basis. The principal had full time release.

Susan, the deputy principal was also the junior syndicate leader and the school librarian. She had set up the library on her own initiative and was the staff member responsible for its effective running. Children had been trained to lend out and collect books at lunchtimes.

All staff attended a staff meeting of one and a half hours every week. There were also staff briefings on Monday and Friday mornings and one syndicate meeting of about one and a half hours per week. The teachers interviewed and the principal saw these meetings as useful and necessary. Other meetings were held when needed, for example, to discuss the progress of individual students, especially students with disabilities.

Most teachers spent time on extra curricular activities, most of which were sports related.

**Possible main drivers of the work outside the classroom and efforts made to manage them**

Most of the work outside the classroom was related to planning, assessment and record keeping, although some of this work, especially in the junior classes, was done with the students in regular class time. Use of the electronic program, *Schoolmaster*, and the strategic deployment of teacher-aide time appeared to be alleviating some of the more mechanical demands of this work. The principal said that these strategies were part of a conscious effort on his part to ensure that teachers’ time outside of regular classroom duties was spent on professional rather than clerical activities.

Teachers said that participation in an ICT professional development cluster program was also impacting heavily on workload. This program appeared to be having excellent effects on teaching, but the teachers said it was making heavy, possibly excessive, demands on their time.

The Deputy Principal was carrying a particularly heavy workload. This was largely of
her own choosing. Her voluntary work, in setting up and maintaining the school library, is a good example of a ‘driver’ of a teacher’s work that springs from a personal interest and strong desire to provide for the interests of the children.

All teachers interviewed said that they were taking work home. Some preferred to work on weekends, some at night.

Several teachers were concerned about their health. They reported making conscious efforts to find a good work-life balance and to stay healthy through, for example, going to a gym. Two teachers said that they had suffered work related health problems (migraines, extreme fatigue) in the past two years.

**Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping**

Teachers said that this work increased greatly when reports for parents were being written (twice a year). They said that they enjoyed these aspects of the work, especially planning, and appreciated the fact that a lot of planning was done collaboratively at syndicate meetings. This helped them to share the planning load as well as improve delivery. They saw all of this work as necessary and helpful and were not anxious to let any of it go. They said that they just felt they were not given enough time to do it ‘properly’.

**Paperwork to comply with school or Ministry Requirements**

Teachers and the principal made the point that most paperwork was generated from curriculum and lesson planning, and from assessment and record keeping. While this was in line with Ministry guidelines, they saw its main purposes as being to report to parents and to inform their own work. Some teachers said that, were it not for ERO, they would spend less time on paperwork related to curriculum and assessment, especially the planning documents. Some questioned the level of detail that seemed to be required. They spoke of an “ERO paper trail”, saying that they felt pressure to have all the documentation ‘absolutely right’ for the ERO Reviewer, as they did not want to “let the school and the Principal down.” They were not sure that the level of detail recorded was improving their teaching, but thought that it probably was not.
Teachers were supportive of the curriculum directions that had been taken by the Ministry in recent years.

**Performance management/staff appraisal**

The other main source of paperwork was the documents that needed to be completed to fulfil performance management requirements. This had been deliberately kept to a minimum by the Principal, and neither he nor the teachers saw it as a work problem. Appraisal discussions were held with syndicate leaders and the Principal who also did classroom observations. The teachers said that they received good feedback and found the appraisal processes helpful.

**Professional Development**

The school was part of a local cluster that had gained funding for teacher professional development related to ICT. The majority of the teachers had elected to be part of an online professional development (PD) program, developed by a university, which focused on Inquiry Learning and ICT. The program required a large amount of reading, workshops and discussion. Teachers also had to write three papers a year over the two years of the program. While they said that the program was “very good for the most part”, some saw it as very onerous. One described it as “the straw that broke the camel’s back.” Teachers felt they had insufficient time to write the papers.

The principal and Board Chair were proud of this PD initiative and said that teachers’ work had improved as a result. The Board Chair said that he could see results in the work his children were doing at school. The principal reported on the quality of professional discussion it had generated, and the fact that teachers were now focusing much more strongly on Inquiry learning.

**SCHOOL P**

**School profile**

School P is a large, well-resourced Decile 10 school in an affluent suburb of a big city. It is a co-ed school. The parent community has high expectations of the school
and provides considerable support to individual students and to the school - a large sum of money was raised last year to reinforce this support.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

- **Principal**: ‘Jenny’
- **Deputy Principal (curriculum leader)**: ‘Jake’
- **Senior School**: ‘John’
- **Middle School**: ‘Danya’
- **Junior School**: ‘Tristan’
- **Teacher aide**: ‘Lorraine’
- **Administration**: ‘Freya’
- **Board of Trustees Chair**: ‘Jamie’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tristan</th>
<th>Danya</th>
<th>John</th>
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<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<td>3.15</td>
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<td>3.03</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting up classroom</strong></td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessing/record keeping</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td><strong>Extra curricular activities</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Talking to parents</strong></td>
<td>1.30</td>
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</table>

**General organisation**

This school had a large senior management team that allowed teachers to focus
closely on their classroom work. Meetings were deliberately kept to a minimum and teachers reported finding them of direct benefit to the quality of their teaching. There was also a low expectation relating to teachers’ involvement in playground duty and extra-curricular activities.

Teachers interviewed all articulated a slightly different vision for the school. Some visions centred around developing attributes in the students that will allow them to competently embrace the future, while others – particularly those in management – focused more tightly on high quality curriculum delivery. Both teachers and management wanted children to have the skills to manage their futures in the best possible way. They wanted to ensure that quality teaching made this possible.

Teachers had an expectation of working hard, found the work rewarding and generally did not regard it as a problem. The three classroom teachers interviewed were all young and without children. With the exception of one teacher, all felt they were managing some work/life balance, but would prefer not to have to work on the weekends.

The school employed a large administrative team that was available and willing to help teachers with any non-teaching tasks.

Teachers reported a high standard of student behaviour, with little energy or time expended on behaviour management. Teacher aides were attached to individual students and had little involvement in the wider classroom program.

Workload drivers and workload management

Almost all the school-related tasks reported by teachers were directly linked to teaching and learning. Teachers could think of almost nothing that could be ‘dropped’ without affecting the quality of their classroom program.

Meetings were kept to a minimum, with a weekly staff meeting and a syndicate meeting 'most weeks' being the only regular meeting commitments for teachers. Staff meetings were pared back to a minimum during report-writing time in recognition of
the extra time required to complete this task.

Time release was provided for areas of responsibility. Teachers also reported that management was very supportive if a teacher indicated that they were 'snowed under', providing a day's release to enable that teacher to get on top of his or her workload.

Teachers reported the benefits of team planning as a workload management tool, allowing for valuable time saving.

School management and leadership

The teachers interviewed had confidence in the school's leadership and management, and found management supportive in recognising and addressing workload issues for teachers. With a large senior management team, teachers were somewhat protected from Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements. All assessment data went through to the deputy principal, who fulfilled whatever reporting was required of the school.

Staff reported considerable changes in the school in recent years and regarded those changes positively.

Professional development and professional community

Teachers reported a strong emphasis on professional development. Each staff meeting had a professional development focus. The school had a literacy focus and most professional development was directed towards improving the teaching of literacy.

The syndicate was the group that provided inexperienced teachers with support and guidance. Some syndicates were very supportive and encouraged teachers to observe each other’s practices for new ideas and strategies.

Teachers were less sure whether the school was a 'professional community', but decided it was moving towards that concept. There were still a few teachers, however, who operated in isolation.
School Q

School profile

School Q, a Decile 1 school with an enrolment of 320 students, is situated in a rural area. The school is split into a junior syndicate and a senior syndicate, for management purposes. Parents are increasingly consulted about student learning and have the option for their children to be educated in a bilingual Māori educational context.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

**Principal:** ‘Reagan’

**Assistant Principal:** ‘Cordelia’

**School Administrator:** ‘Natasha’

**Teacher Aide:** ‘Coral’

**Junior syndicate teacher:** ‘Sandra’

**Junior syndicate teacher:** ‘Jill’

**Senior syndicate lead teacher:** ‘Beryl’

**Senior syndicate teacher:** ‘Hilary’

**Senior syndicate teacher:** ‘Debbie’

**Senior syndicate teacher:** ‘Geraldine’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sandra</th>
<th>Jill</th>
<th>Beryl</th>
<th>Hilary</th>
<th>Debbie</th>
<th>Geraldine</th>
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<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<td>12</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>63.20</td>
<td>67.20</td>
<td>149.10</td>
<td>24.52</td>
<td>207.10</td>
<td>34.31</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**General organisation**

The principal had no specific classroom duties. The deputy principal taught four days a week with Friday set aside for administration. The school did not have an assistant principal as such, but had two syndicate leaders. The school had made a conscious decision to maintain small numbers (15) in the entry classes and this was particularly necessary given that there were two special needs students in this section of the school.

All teachers who were interviewed believed that planning in teams was supporting them in coping with the workload. Several said that volume of work was adversely affecting their health. All said that they had difficulty balancing work and life outside the school.
Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 34:31 per week. This represented well over half of total time on task. Teachers felt free to manage their work at times that suited them. Planning and preparation for the next day was uppermost in their minds. One teacher stated that “I don’t go home until I am ready for tomorrow’s teaching but I take other work home”. Most chose to come early to school (8.00 am or earlier) and stay until between 5.00 and 6.00 pm. The majority of teachers worked at home at night and on weekends. Some teachers were involved in special sport sessions held on Saturday mornings. Teachers expressed the need to “keep up” with the changes being made to curriculum content and delivery and the only time for this was in “their time”. Changes in management systems meant more professional development (PD), reading and implementation, all taking up more time. “To do the best that they can for the children” - personal and professional pride were what drove these teachers to continue to work both inside and outside the classroom.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping

The school was on the verge of moving into an electronic record keeping system using the school server and individual teacher laptops. They were approaching this innovation slowly, hoping that by the time all was ready any ‘teething’ problems in the system chosen would have been sorted out elsewhere. Despite the support from the deputy principal with reading in the early years’ classes, finding time to test children, especially time for ‘one to one’ assessments was still proving difficult. The school provided some teacher release, which was considered essential in assessment and in team planning.

The deputy principal had recognised the extra work for teachers when reporting to the Ministry on student achievement. He had taken on the collating of data from teacher files rather than having the teachers double handle this aspect of their work. Most teachers interviewed stated that there was too much paperwork, some claiming that it used up time for teaching and learning.
Performance management/staff appraisal

The teachers did not see the amount of paperwork related to performance management as a problem, since, in addition to the classroom observations and discussions it required only the completion of a simple pro-forma. The principal and the deputy principal were responsible for staff appraisal, and they valued the time necessary for observations and discussions with teachers, as it was targeted at staff improvement. The paperwork related to appraisal was not excessive in their opinion.

Curriculum planning and assessment/record keeping/reporting/data analysis

The teachers were very supportive of the curriculum directions taken by the Ministry since the introduction of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’. The senior teachers in particular, who had experienced first hand the changes in curriculum directions, welcomed the innovation. Young teachers were not so aware of the difference but while committed to the direction felt the quantity of change was overwhelming. They said that planning, assessment, record keeping and data analysis took too much time in writing and record keeping. Teachers said that they saw the need for the increased paperwork, partly for the principal and the Ministry, but mainly to support their teaching. They stated that a clerical assistant could do a small section of reporting, possibly data entry. However, most paperwork was professional work that only teachers could do.

Professional Development (PD)

The whole school annual plan for PD was seen by teachers as effective and useful in advancement of teaching and learning across the school. They valued the individual PD system, linked to their appraisal and supporting professional improvement. The fact that PD involved reading, study and discussion of complex content for which little or no extra time was provided was an issue.

They found the pace of change difficult and were concerned that ‘new initiatives’ continued to overwhelm them before they had time to assimilate what had gone before. There was a body of opinion that sufficient and appropriate PD came too late and a “transition stage” should be seen by the school community as a legitimate part
of the process.

**SCHOOL R**

*School profile*

This small rural Decile 3 school has an enrolment of just over fifty students, half of whom are bussed in daily from a nearby town.

**The following persons were interviewed at this school:**

**Principal:** ‘Heather’

**Teacher:** ‘Monty’

**Teacher:** ‘Jeanette’

**Teacher:** ‘Elsie’

**Teacher aide:** ‘Juliette’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monty (0.5)</th>
<th>Jeanette</th>
<th>Elsie</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teaching</td>
<td>11.40</td>
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<td>16.20</td>
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<td>20.55*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-classroom duty</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.35*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.24*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35.50</td>
<td>51.20</td>
<td>20.55</td>
<td>117.50</td>
<td>26.32*</td>
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</table>

*The total has been divided by 2.5 to allow for 0.5 teacher adjustment.*
**Teaching in the classroom**

The principal at the school had a half teaching load and one teacher job shared, due to family commitments. The arrangement was working well, with the teachers spending one day per week together in the classroom.

**Cover for teacher absence**

Only the principal covered for teacher absences and this averaged out to one hour per week.

**Duty sessions**

All staff did between thirty minutes and two hours of duty sessions each week. At this school the teacher’s aide also did a duty session.

**Lesson planning and preparation of work program**

The average number of hours spent on this task was six and a half per week per teacher. This figure included the teacher aide, who stated that she spent six hours per week on lesson planning. The average number of hours, excluding the teacher aide, was seven per teacher.

**Setting up the classroom, putting up displays, getting equipment ready**

This figure averaged out to two and a half hours per week per teacher, still high given that only one of those teachers worked full-time.

**Assessing and marking student’s work**

All teachers, including the teacher aide averaged out at three hours per week. It should be noted that the time for ‘keeping records’ was also included in this figure at the request of the teachers, who saw that the assessing and marking they did related to keeping student records.
‘Paperwork’ to meet Ministry requirements

The teacher aide spent thirty minutes on this task, as she was involved in the Talk to Learn Program. The principal spent twelve hours per week. However, she felt that the ministry kept adding more and more to the curriculum, which resulted in less depth to the content. She also stated that the government set the curriculum and the school itself decided what to do. One member of the teaching staff, who had returned to live/teach in New Zealand from NSW, Australia, stated that the paperwork required for registration had cost him some $850 and taken more than seven months. He also noted that full New Zealand registration would take two years, even though he had twenty years teaching experience.

‘Paperwork’ to meet school or Principal’s requirements

Teachers did not state that they spent a lot of time on this task. However, they did state that the principal looked at lesson plans and unit plans each term. This was a three teacher school so there was a considerable amount of informal liaison between all staff.

Extra-curricular work

The principal lived in the school house adjacent to the school, several of the teachers lived locally, and one of the teachers was a past student. The teachers and principal said that it was a school where everyone knew everyone else. The principal stated that she tried to get away on the weekends, even for a day to have a break. One of the teachers was involved in tennis outside of school hours.

Other comments

The school ‘bussed in’ twenty-five students each day from the nearest township. This kept the student numbers up and maintained the school as a three teacher school. The Board of Trustees subsidised this service. The school also needed to fund raise at least $5000 per year. After ongoing costs the principal advised that there was $500 - $1000 left in ‘the kitty’. Several teachers stated that they purchased classroom resources
from their own money. They did not believe this should be happening.

There was one internet connection to the school, which was the telephone line, and access for the various classes was limited. The teachers stated that they needed to check that no one was on the phone or connected to the internet before logging on. There was no computer networking at the school, and teachers did not have laptops.

SCHOOL S

School profile

School S is a Decile 4 school in an older urban area of a large regional town. It has two hundred students. There are eight separate classes, with two classes sharing teachers, a special needs teacher, a reading recovery teacher, six teacher aides and a number of volunteer workers.

The following persons were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Bill’

Receptionist and administrative officer: ‘Wendy’

New Entrants: ‘Judith’

Junior Syndicate Leader, Years 2 and 3: ‘Angela’

Years 4 and 5: ‘Cameron’

Deputy Principal, Years 5 and 6: ‘Ross’

Teacher Aide: ‘Kayla’

Member of Board of Trustees, Teacher Aide, volunteer worker: ‘Ella’

The interviewer also attended a meeting with the principal and the newly appointed social worker, and met with the police officer running the “Dare to Make Change” program. There was also an informal meeting/discussion with a former classroom teacher at the school who had begun teaching reading recovery at this and one other school.
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Judith</th>
<th>Angela*</th>
<th>Cameron</th>
<th>Ross*</th>
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<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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* Angela and Ross are lead ICT teachers involved each afternoon in professional development at other schools.

**Teaching in the Classroom**

The school day ran from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, with a one hour lunch break and a twenty minute interval. Thus the average amount of daily contact teaching time was four hours and forty minutes.

**Cover for Teacher Absence**

Relieving teachers were generally used to cover teacher absences.

**Duty Sessions**

Teachers had one lunchtime duty or one interval duty each week, averaging half an hour per week. In addition, they supervised one “time-out” or detention each week over part of lunchtime or interval, averaging about half an hour weekly. Thus the average amount of time spent in non-teaching supervisory duties was about one hour.
**Regular Meetings**

On Mondays all teachers attended an 8.15 am meeting for fifteen minutes and a curriculum or syndicate meeting from 3.00 pm until approximately 5.00 pm. As professional development formed part of the afternoon meeting, it sometimes lasted until approximately 5.30 pm. A further full staff meeting was held on Fridays at 3.00 pm for up to an hour, when there was a review of the week. Classroom teachers also attended either a Junior or a Senior Syndicate meeting on either Tuesday or Thursday from 3.00 pm for up to two hours. Curriculum Teams met once a month for about one hour after school, with some teachers being in more than one team. The two teachers who shared classes were part of an ICT contract and were also involved in meetings related to that contract. Judith attended a two hour meeting each term for kindergarten transition; Ross and Angela also attended a management meeting for one hour on Thursday mornings.

The average amount of time per week that classroom teachers spent at school-related meetings was about five hours.

**Lesson Planning and Preparation of Work Program; Setting up the classroom; Assessing and Recording, Paperwork**

Teachers found it difficult to separate out these components, with one commenting that “they are all inter-related, all aligned.” (This alignment and organisation seemed to be one of the real strengths of this school). New Entrants teacher Judith arrived at school at 7.30 am and left at 5.00 pm. A large portion of time was spent on planning for daily outcomes and on planning for syndicate meetings. She spent one hour daily on preparing resources and about half an hour each day after school on putting up displays and preparing the classroom. She found the paperwork and keeping of records for her new entrants “huge”, both in maintaining running reports of educational testing and in the formative and summative sheets she prepares daily. At home she worked for about one and a half hours on four or five weekdays and for about four hours on one weekend day. (In first term she worked for about four hours on both weekend days).
Years 2 and 3 teacher Angela was part of the ICT contract. This brought accompanying organisational and time requirements in the evenings and weekends. For her two hour classroom teaching block each day, she spent one and a half hours preparing at home after school and spent one and a quarter hours before school setting up her classroom for the day; she also spent two hours on Saturdays on school related tasks.

Years 4 and 5 teacher Cameron spent one hour each morning before school, and from 3.00 to 5.30 pm each day after school in planning and the other tasks outlined above. He spent half of each lunchtime in his classroom and worked at home on school-related activities each Sunday from 1.00 pm until approximately 5.30 pm. The time spent on planning was productive: “A certain standard of planning is necessary to be able to teach effectively.”

Like Angela, Years 5 and 6 teacher and deputy principal, Ross was involved each afternoon in the ICT contract. He spent one hour each day at school and one hour at night four nights a week, together with two hours each Sunday on tasks related to the teaching component of his duties. Both Angela and Ross spent very large amounts of time on the ICT part of their duties, which also involved schools other than their own.

The adjusted average weekly time classroom teachers spent on the above tasks at this school was twenty-four and three quarter hours.

In term breaks, Judith spent five hours on four days and two weeks of the long vacation on school-related work; Angela spent two four hour days during term breaks and at least one full week in the long vacation. Cameron spent one week of eight hours a day on school related tasks, and during the long vacation two to three days at the beginning and two weeks at the end; Ross worked on syndicate planning for two or three days in each term break and on school related tasks for about two weeks in the long vacation. Three full time structured days of professional development and organisation were scheduled for all staff during the long vacation.
**Talking to Parents**

Judith spent between a quarter of an hour and half an hour per day talking to parents outside class hours. Angela spent about forty minutes per week talking to parents; Cameron and Ross spent about half an hour each per week. Adjusting for the fact that Angela and Ross shared their class, the average amount of time spent talking to parents per week was about forty five minutes. This time was in most cases part of the hours already outlined above.

**Extra-curricular work**

Judith coached the netball team for about one hour per week; Cameron coached two sports teams for half an hour each week and for one and a half hours each fortnight. Ross coached a sports team for half an hour each week and half an hour each fortnight; he also conducted a Primary Enterprise Program for three or four lunchtimes each term. The average amount of time spent per week on extra-curricular activities was about one hour and twenty minutes. This figure did not include the large amounts of time that most staff members appeared to spend in whole school extra-curricular activities such as a recent city concert.

**Professional Development and Professional Reading (excluding PD focussed meetings)**

Every member of staff at this school was responsible for presenting a reading at staff meetings and all members of staff were undertaking school-related university papers on a voluntary basis. Professional development was closely aligned with the school program. Staff members spent about two hours per week, on average, on professional development and reading outside meeting times.

**Other comments**

This school was highly organised on all levels. Teachers spent a considerable amount of time at meetings, but reported that they found them productive, helpful and a contributing factor in workload management. All systems at this school were carefully aligned and there was a strong level of professional collegiality. Another noticeable
feature of the school was the degree of its involvement with the community, which was evident from the reception area, to the volunteers in the classroom and the clear welcome being extended to all parents.

SCHOOL T

School profile

School T, a Decile 9 school, is situated in a relatively affluent suburb in a large city. It caters for new entrants up to Year 8. Almost one quarter of the school’s 530 students is from non-English speaking backgrounds. Their families are predominantly new settlers from Asian countries. Fourteen students are full fee paying students from overseas. Children come from a range of mid to high socio-economic backgrounds.

The following persons were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘George’

Member of Board of Trustees: ‘Geoff’

School secretary: ‘Kate’

Intermediate teacher, syndicate leader and Deputy Principal: ‘Marian’

Teacher Aide: ‘Fiona’

Junior syndicate lead teacher: ‘Trudi’

Junior syndicate teacher: ‘Rosemary’

Middle school syndicate teacher: ‘Jean’

Middle school syndicate teacher: ‘Ella’

Senior syndicate lead teacher: ‘Jackie’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Kathleen’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trudi</th>
<th>Rosemary</th>
<th>Jackie</th>
<th>Jean</th>
<th>Ella</th>
<th>Jackie</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<tr>
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<td>22.20</td>
<td>21.20</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>23.20</td>
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<td>22.00</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>48.20</td>
<td>53.20</td>
<td>48.20</td>
<td>47.20</td>
<td>132.00</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>27.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General organisation

The deputy principal at the school taught for the equivalent of three days. The school had made a decision not to have an assistant principal position, but to have a ‘flatter’ management structure, with three senior teachers who were syndicate leaders and curriculum leaders. The deputy principal worked long hours, but this was largely her own choice. She had particular interest in the school’s gifted and talented student program as well as in curriculum and assessment. She was also happy to do the work of organising relief teachers on a daily basis; this added considerably to her busy schedule.

All teachers who were interviewed in this school believed that they were successfully managing their work, but at a personal cost. Several said that volume of work was adversely affecting their health. All said that they had difficulty balancing work and life outside the school.
Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 27.20. This represented over fifty percent of total time on task. Teachers felt free to manage this work at times that suited them. Some referred to it as their ‘own’ time. Most chose to come early (8.00 am or earlier) to school and stay until about 6.00pm. (One teacher said: “By the time the children get here I feel I’ve been here all night!”). Nearly all teachers worked at home at night and/or on weekends.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping

The teachers said that assessment and reporting time increased by at least fifty percent at peak at reporting periods, but efforts had been made to ‘streamline’ these and related assessment processes. An electronic record keeping system using the ‘Classroom’ and ‘Student Manager’ Suite of computer programs had been successfully introduced by the principal with the support of the Board of Trustees. This initiative coincided with the delivery of laptop computers for teachers, so that comprehensive data and many applications were available to them. However, finding time to test children, especially time for ‘one on one’ assessments like Running Records for the younger children was still proving difficult.

Paperwork to comply with school’s or principal’s requirements

Some teachers said that ‘the Ministry’ required them to do a lot of paperwork, but when questioned more closely said that they did not necessarily distinguish between what was required by the Ministry and what was required by the school.

Performance management/staff appraisal

The teachers did not see paperwork that related to performance management as a problem, since, in addition to the classroom observations and discussions, it required only the completion of a simple pro-forma. Senior teachers, who were responsible for staff appraisal, said that they struggled to find the time for the necessary observations and discussions with teachers, but that the paperwork related to appraisal was not
excessive.

Curriculum planning and assessment/record keeping/reporting/data analysis

The teachers were very supportive of the curriculum directions taken by the Ministry since the introduction of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’, but said that planning, assessment, record keeping and data analysis now took much more time and entailed much more writing and record keeping. Teachers said that they saw a need for the increased paperwork, partly for the principal, school board and ERO, but mainly to support their teaching. They felt that apart from some basic data entry most paperwork was professional work which only teachers could do.

Professional Development (PD)

The weekly staff and syndicate meetings were mostly devoted to professional development (PD). The PD initiatives (contracts) in literacy and numeracy and the arts were seen by teachers as effective and useful, but they involved reading, study and discussion of complex content for which little or no extra time was provided. The new approaches entailed more emphasis on outcomes based learning. The teachers found the related processes time consuming, especially in the initial stages where they were still learning and changing their teaching. They found the pace of change difficult and were concerned that ‘new initiatives’ continued to overwhelm them before they had time to assimilate what had gone before.

SCHOOL U

School profile

This is a Decile 3 small rural school with an enrolment of just over eighty students. The school has four teachers and four teacher aides who are in classes working with teachers all day.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Paula’
Assistant Principal: ‘Joanne’

Teacher: ‘Kerry’

Board of Trustees: ‘Monica’

Teacher aide: ‘Angela’

Teacher aide: ‘Lily’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Joanne</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Classroom teaching</td>
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<td>23.20</td>
<td>46.40</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.30</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra curricular activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to parents</td>
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<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.30</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>54.05</td>
<td>46.40</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>68.15</td>
<td>34.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching in the classroom

The average number of hours spent in the classroom by teachers was twenty. This school was a low decile school that had been upgraded recently from Decile 2 to 3. The school provided a teacher aide in each of the four classrooms.

Cover for teacher absence

Only the principal covered for teacher absence and she stated that this would be no more than thirty minutes per week.
Duty sessions

The duty sessions averaged out at one hour per week per teacher.

Lesson planning and preparation of work program

This averaged out at 8 hours per teacher, with the assistant principal stating that she spent up to 15 hours per week on this task. However, she was also responsible for the PEN initiative in the school. This was instigated by the education department to offset literacy weakness in the region. There were some thirteen schools involved and the assistant principal said the improvements in students’ literacy had been obvious.

Setting up the classroom, putting up displays, getting equipment ready

Both teachers stated that they spent at least two hours per week setting up classrooms. The teacher aides also said that they assisted teachers for at least thirty minutes per week. This could be expected as there was a teacher aide in each classroom and the aides interviewed said that they work very closely with the teachers as a ‘team’.

Assessing and marking student’s work

The teachers’ time averaged out to six hours per week, and one of the teacher’s aides said that she spent two hours per week on this task, while the other teacher aide interviewed did no assessing. This could relate to the year level and Ministry requirements.

‘Paperwork’ to meet Ministry requirements

The beginning teacher stated that she spent about two hours per term completing Ministry requirements, which seemed to relate to her being a beginning teacher. The assistant principal stated that she rarely did ‘ministry’ paperwork, while the principal spent about five hours per week on this task.

‘Paperwork’ to meet school or Principal’s requirements

Both teachers spent two to three hours weekly on this task. They stated that they had
received school guidelines for assessment, and were required to have weekly plans etc available for the principal. They stated that the school had an informal, but supportive system. The principal stated that she was very aware of teacher workload and each term set a cyclical program so that running records were kept and “boxes are not ticked for the sake of it.”

Extra-curricular work

None of the teachers interviewed were involved in extra curricular activity for the school. However, the principal did note that their working day was, on average, 7.30 am until 5.30 pm.

Other comments

This school was interesting because it had what teachers in several other schools wanted – i.e. a teacher aide in each classroom. The current principal started four years ago. The Board of Trustees member stated that the school was moving from strength to strength. Teachers now had laptops, and a computer laboratory with sixteen computers had been installed. The teachers, teacher aides and the principal were very happy with the PEN program and the literacy level improvements that had resulted. The principal advised that numeracy was next year’s target. The principal also had some concerns about the ‘initiatives’ from the ministry, e.g. the latest ENERGISE, which will take time from core curriculum and creates more work for teachers.

The Board of Trustees member also advised that fundraising was a feature of the school, which involved the PTA. Currently they were raising funds for musical instruments.

SCHOOL V

School profile

School V is a Decile 7 rural school with an enrolment of about 100 students and a teaching principal. There is a wide socio-economic range among the school families.
The following persons were interviewed at this school:

**Principal**: ‘James’

**Year 1 and 2 teacher**: ‘Gina’

**Year 3 and 4 teacher**: ‘Kay’

**Year 5 and 6 teacher**: ‘Alice’

**Year 7 and 8 teacher**: ‘Molly’

*Administrative officer (part-time), teacher aide (part-time, funded separately), former member of Board of Trustees*: ‘Maree’.

Alice was involved in reading recovery training for three hours every two weeks and numeracy training for three hours every three weeks. This was an in-school time release arrangement. Alice’s teaching hours were adjusted in the table as Equivalent Full-Time in the classroom.

**Teachers’ estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gina</th>
<th>Kay</th>
<th>Molly</th>
<th>Alice</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>23.20</td>
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<td>23.20</td>
<td>93.20</td>
<td>23.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting up classroom</td>
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<td>1.30</td>
<td>7.30</td>
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<td>Assessing/record keeping</td>
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</table>
**Teaching in the Classroom**

Most staff taught from 9.00 am till 3.00 pm five days a week. One teacher was released part-time from teaching duties to undertake reading recovery training. A part-time teacher covered 0.3 of a teaching allotment on a block basis, with the remaining 0.7 being covered by the school’s teaching principal. There was a twenty minute morning interval and a one hour lunch break.

**Cover for Teacher Absence**

Relieving teachers generally covered teacher absences.

**Duty Sessions**

Teachers were assigned to these duties over one twenty-four hour period each week, from lunchtime one day until lunchtime the next day. These duties included bus and playground supervision duty from 7.30 am to 9.00 am and from 3.00 pm to 4.15 pm, two half hour lunchtime duties and one interval duty of twenty minutes. Thus the average amount of non-teaching supervisory duties each week was four hours and five minutes.

**Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings at the school included a Monday staff meeting from 8.00 to 9.00 am, a Friday staff meeting from 3.00 pm to 4.45 pm, and a Friday team meeting from 8.00 to 8.30 am. Other meetings, such as interschool sports, were held as needs arise but were not regularly scheduled meetings. Each teacher was also on one committee, such as the Fundraising Committee or the Board of Trustees, meeting on average for two hours every month. All teachers were part of the ‘Infolink’ initiative, which involved an additional one and a half hour weekly meeting.

The interviewer attended a staff meeting from 8.00 to 9.00 am on the day of the visit. The meeting considered professional development, outcomes data, the progress of individual students in relation to standards, parent/teacher interviews and various administrative matters.
Lesson Planning and Preparation of Work Program, Setting up Classroom, Paperwork

Teachers found it difficult to separate these tasks. The table above provides an approximate breakdown. One teacher liked to do “setting up” with the children, sometimes during class. Another commented that the Ministry paperwork was done in “fits and starts.” A further comment was that lack of computer skills had considerably lengthened the time it took to complete this task, but that with the help of other teachers it had become much less time-consuming. (This teacher was new to the school, but not to the profession.)

Each week Gina spent at least ten hours on planning, preparation and paperwork, and two hours setting up her classroom. She spent a further three and a half hours at home each week on these tasks. Kay spent ten hours on planning and other tasks at school and a further six hours at home. Molly spent about twenty hours at school on planning and other tasks, and a further four and a half hours over the week at home. Alice spent one and a half hours in the morning and a further one and a half hours after school on these tasks, and a further three hours per week at home.

Responses to the amount of time taken for Ministry paperwork varied, from one teacher who did it “in the course of the hours, but lower on the list of priorities”, to one who spent an extensive amount of time, partly because of acquiring the necessary computer skills.

Where did these teachers do their school-related work? Responses to this question varied. One teacher liked to arrive at school at 7.00 am and also to work at home on unfinished tasks, later that day. Another needed the “quiet time” at home to work. This teacher commented that because of the nature of the school and because children were in the building for one and a half hours before school and one and a quarter hours after school, it was difficult to work without interruption during these times.

Clearly, the hours before and after school could not often be used for planning and other tasks. In general, if meetings were held or other duties intervened during these
Talking to Parents

At this small rural school, children were either bussed (with the bus arriving at 7.30 am and leaving at 4.15 pm) or dropped off and picked up by parents. Because a teacher was always on duty during these out of school hours, many parents dropped off their children earlier or picked them up later than would normally be the case. As most teachers were still in the building, there were extensive opportunities for parent/teacher communication. The school was very much part of its local area and, as one teacher put it, “this is a social community.” Year 0 to 2 teacher Gina spent the most time, about five hours per week, talking to parents, Kay and Alice spent about two hours and Molly about one hour. Thus the average amount of time spent talking to teachers during the week was about two and a half hours.

Professional Development and Professional Reading

One teacher spent a very large amount of time on professional reading, which she did for about two hours every weeknight. Others spent time reading professional material relating to courses. The school had received a $1500 grant for book purchase, all of which Alice was reading prior to purchase.

Extra-curricular work

All teachers at this school were involved in extra-curricular activities. Gina ran a Chess Club and Tahamaori for one hour each every week. Kay was involved in District Netball, averaging a half hour per week. Molly ran a Speech Competition on the weeks she was on duty, averaging half an hour per week and Alice spent about three hours per week with the basketball team. Thus the average amount of time spent on extra-curricular activities was about one and a quarter hours per week.

Other comments

An additional workload was created for teachers at this school because of the early arrival and late departure of busses. The school had very strong links to its local
community and a strong sense of community ownership, which, while strengthening many aspects of the school’s culture, placed additional demands on teachers’ time and resources.

**SCHOOL W**

*School profile*

School W is a Decile 1 school, with classes from Year 1 to 6. This is a low socio-economic area, with associated difficulties for the community. The school buildings date from the early seventies and the grounds are attractive and well kept, with grassed areas, a native garden and a large barked adventure playground. The school has six teachers and seven teacher aides.

At the time of interview there were six classes, including one Level 2 (fifty to eighty percent) bilingual Maori class (Year 3-6) and a Samoan bilingual class (Year 3-6). ESOL funding allows for teacher aide time to support Tongan and junior Samoan children. Junior Maori children are included in the bilingual class for Te Reo and Kapa haka. Teachers described their students as “warm and loving”, and said that they like to be actively involved in their own learning. The principal (who was new to the school in 2005) and teachers want to build on the reputation of the school in the community.

Interviews were held with the principal, the school secretary and three teachers: Vicky, the deputy principal, Mike who taught a Year 3-6 Maori immersion class, and Danielle, who taught a junior class.

**The following persons were interviewed at this school:**

*Principal:* ‘Rex’

*Secretary:* ‘Marie’

*Teacher aide:* ‘Maata’

*Teacher and Deputy Principal:* ‘Vicky’

*Teacher:* ‘Mike’
Teacher: ‘Danielle’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
<th>Average Hours</th>
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<td>12.30</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking to parents</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.20</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<td>56.20</td>
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</table>

**General organisation**

The principal did not have a teaching allotment, but often did relief teaching. On the day of the researcher’s visit the principal covered the class of an absent teacher for part of the day, and assisted with sport. All other teachers had a full classroom teaching load.

Meeting time had been reduced by the current principal. There was one weekly preschool ‘briefing’ session, and weekly staff meetings and syndicate meetings, both of which were mainly spent in planning and professional development. Staff also met informally, on a regular basis, to discuss curriculum and the needs of individual students.
**Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them.**

A main source of pressure for teachers in this school appeared to be the difficult behaviour of some students. Teachers and the principal said that while only a minority of students exhibited such behaviour, it was very disruptive for the rest. The principal and teachers showed very high levels of concern for individual students, and understanding of individual problems that were related to difficult home circumstances beyond the school’s control. Good systems were in place to deal with problems, and many students had shown improvement, but, as one teacher said, it was “a hard battle”. Teachers showed great affection for the students. One teacher who had worked in a Decile 10 school said she preferred working at School W because she felt she could offer more to troubled students.

While difficult student behaviour was sometimes a source of stress for teachers, the teachers interviewed showed high concern for the children’s welfare and a high level of caring for them.

The number of hours worked by the Deputy Principal appeared to be excessive. This person was carrying a full teaching load, as well as responsibility for student behaviour management, curriculum and professional development at a whole school level. She also spent at least four hours per week on ‘van duty’ – picking up students and driving them home in the school van.

**Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping:**

The teachers interviewed said that curriculum planning and assessment and reporting took up most of their time outside the classroom, but they felt this was necessary to teach well.

**Paperwork to comply with MoE, school or principal requirements**

The principal said that he set ‘minimum’ compliance requirements, which the teachers easily exceeded. The teachers said that they were ‘aware’ of school and ERO expectations, but most of the paperwork they did was for themselves and the students.
On reflection, one teacher said that she “probably did more” with ERO in mind, because she did not want to “look silly’ if an ERO Reviewer asked for documentation.

**Performance management/staff appraisal**

Teachers did not have to complete any paperwork for performance review/appraisal. The paperwork was completed by the principal, on the basis of classroom observations and oral discussions.

**SCHOOL X**

**School profile**

This school is a Decile 8 Intermediate school with an enrolment of 550 students. It is situated in a large provincial town.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

**Principal:** ‘Oliver’

**Deputy Principal:** ‘Donna’

**Senior Teacher:** ‘Tina’

**Teacher:** ‘Patsy’

**Board of Trustees:** ‘Nina’

**Teacher aide:** ‘Sharon’

**School Secretary:** ‘Shirley’
Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tina</th>
<th>Patsy</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Setting up classroom</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing/ record keeping</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<tr>
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<td>67.40</td>
<td>46.40</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>88.40</td>
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</table>

**Teaching in the classroom**

The average number of hours per week per teacher spent in the classroom was thirteen. However, of the four teachers interviewed one was the principal, and one the deputy principal, who taught 0 and 2 hours per week respectively. The deputy principal classified her teaching as ‘extension classes’. The two classroom teachers taught from 9.00 am until 3.00 pm each day. The deputy principal took extension classes for two hours per week.

**Cover for teacher absence**

The principal and deputy principal stated that they rarely covered for teacher’s absences. One of the classroom teachers stated that she spent up to eight hours per month covering for absences.
**Duty sessions**

The classroom teachers and the deputy principal all did at least one hour of ‘duty’ per week.

**Lesson planning and preparation of work program**

Both classroom teachers stated that they spent 10 hours per week on this task.

**Setting up the classroom, putting up displays, getting equipment ready**

Both teachers advised that they spent 3 hours per week on this task.

**Assessing and marking student’s work**

Both teachers stated that they spent 16 hours per week on this task and another 2 hours on record keeping.

**‘Paperwork’ to meet Ministry requirements**

The classroom teachers stated that the time spent on this task would average out at 15 minutes per week, because it was a cyclical task. The deputy principal stated that she spent up to three hours per week and the principal said that it was cyclical, depending upon the time of year. The week of visiting the school had been particularly busy and the principal had been working fifteen hour days. Usually he worked an eleven hour day, 7.00 am – 6.00 pm.

**‘Paperwork’ to meet school or Principal’s requirements**

The teachers saw this time as part of their preparation and believed it was included in the ten hours each week. The deputy principal stated her time averaged out to about one hour per week.

**Extra-curricular work**

Both teachers spent up to four and a half hours per week on regular extra curricular activities, mainly sport. However, they were also involved in Dance Teams, which
took another two hours per week. The principal stated that he attended Saturday sport for two hours each week, which also gave parents an opportunity to speak to him informally.

Other comments

The current principal had been at School X for 18 months and had been working toward a new school vision – ‘Rights, Respect and Responsibility’. All school members, including the Board of Trustees representative spoke highly of him and the positive changes in the school.

All teachers had laptops, and the school had 100 computers for students to use in two computer labs.

The school also ran its own television studio, and the students themselves broadcast a morning show from 8.30 – 9.15. Every classroom had a television, and tuned into the morning show. The show was where the interschool communication seemed to take place. Each class ran the show for one month a year.

SCHOOL Y

School profile

School Y is a special setting school that provides educational programs and specialist services. This core Decile 5 school caters for one hundred and forty students ranging from Years 1 to 15. Core school classes are spread across seven school sites, and include five base school classes and a specialist language unit. Through service agreements with the Ministry of Education, this school provides specialist pre-school education, technical resources and services, an itinerant teacher service and residential accommodation for students.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Felix’

Deputy principal: ‘Leo’
Assistant principal: ‘Sonya’

Junior syndicate teacher: ‘Petra’

Junior syndicate senior teacher: ‘Ingrid’

Middle/senior syndicate teacher: ‘Carl’

Middle/senior syndicate teacher: ‘Anthony’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Kevin’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Don’

Tertiary coordinator: ‘Oscar’

Educational Associate: ‘Malcolm’

Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Petra</th>
<th>Ingrid</th>
<th>Carl</th>
<th>Anthony</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
<th>Don*</th>
<th>Oscar *</th>
<th>Total classroom hours</th>
<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teaching</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>24.40</td>
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</table>

*Adjusted to 5 day week in totals and averaging

General organisation

The principal or CEO of this facility had full release. His role encompassed a number of managerial responsibilities not covered in a regular school position. The deputy principal and the assistant principal had distinct management roles, one in general...
school administration, and the other in curriculum, teaching and learning.

The specialist nature of this establishment required a specific focus on communication between management and teaching staff, between teaching staff and support staff and between all adults and students. This communication complexity (as a result of the special needs of the students) placed additional pressure on all involved and created further stress.

The set up of the school into a base school and a number of satellite units created further complications for staff.

Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 27:45. This represented just over fifty percent of total time on task. Teachers felt free to manage this work at times that suited them. Most chose to come early to school (8.00 am or earlier) and stay until about 6.00 pm. The majority of teachers worked at home at night and on weekends. Not only did the teachers here take on board the regular curriculum, but they designed it specifically for each one of their students. Teachers at this school were involved in developing common symbols for elements of communication across the curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping

Planning took more time than for a regular class, as each student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to cater for their specific needs in communication and learning. At times, the pressures of work outside teaching and learning impacted on what was taught in the classroom. The gathering of resources could be difficult for those in the satellite units. The teachers stated that out of school hours work increased at assessment and reporting times, but with small class sizes, they could generally mark work in class with the student to provide instant feedback. There was a constant pressure on teachers to maintain the portfolios, files and assessment records, with some duplication.
Teachers sometimes provided paperwork without really understanding or remembering the reason and purpose for it.

Interviews indicated that there was a respect for and confidence in the leadership team amongst teaching staff and a belief that nothing would be asked of them if it were not considered important to the school and its students. When questioned, one teacher commented: “We just do it when we can and try to be on time”. Some teachers did not necessarily distinguish between what was required by the Ministry and what was required by the school.

**Performance management/staff appraisal**

The teachers did not see paperwork that related to performance management as a problem, since, in addition to the classroom observations and discussions, it required only the completion of a simple pro-forma. Senior teachers, who were responsible for staff appraisal, said that it required extra effort to find the time for the necessary observations and discussions with teachers. However, the paperwork related to appraisal was not considered to be excessive and time put in to this area was reflected by the gains to staff and student outcomes.

Teachers at the school were determined to manage their work, but felt that the hours involved were affecting their personal lives.

**Curriculum planning and assessment/reporting/data analysis**

There was an increase in degree of difficulty for the teachers in this special school compared with regular schools and despite the low numbers, their desire to provide appropriately targeted learning situations required individual curriculum planning and was thus very time consuming. Allied to this were the hours required to develop national curriculum.

**Professional Development**

Teachers in this school received regular professional development on both communication and curriculum. They believed that they received sufficient
professional development for the directions of the school and their personal
development. Many teachers found that the quantity of change often had an adverse
effect on their ability to satisfactorily incorporate professional development into their
teaching.

**SCHOOL Z**

**School profile**

School Z is a medium-sized Decile 2 contributing primary school serving a
multicultural community in an outer suburb of a major city. It has a student enrolment
of four-hundred students. Although the school has a significant transient population,
the size of the roll remains constant.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

*Principal:* ‘Brian’

*Deputy Principal:* ‘Angie’

*Board of Trustees (BOT):* ‘Ted’

*Admin Officer:* ‘Glenda’

*Teacher Aide:* ‘Henrietta’

*Junior syndicate teacher:* ‘Siobhan’

*Senior syndicate teacher:* ‘Marita’

*Four other teachers* (‘Doug’, ‘Daisy’, ‘Dave’ and ‘Dana’) *also provided an
estimate of hours spent.*
### Teachers' estimates of hours spent on different school-related activities each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Siobhan</th>
<th>Marita</th>
<th>Doug</th>
<th>Daisy</th>
<th>Dave</th>
<th>Dana</th>
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<th>Average classroom hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Average hours outside the classroom</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>140</td>
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</table>

### General organisation

The principal had no set classroom teaching responsibilities. The deputy principal 1 and the deputy principal 2 had distinct management roles and provided teacher release time for curriculum and syndicate leaders. One of the deputy principals was responsible for student welfare and provided specific support to all special needs students as well as providing leadership support in student behaviour management.

The teachers who were interviewed in this school believed that they were successfully managing their work, but at a personal cost. They said that the volume of work adversely affected their health, particularly in the intensive times of assessment and reporting, and that they had difficulty balancing work and life outside the school.

Teachers felt that student behaviour had previously been a major factor in making their job onerous. The staff interviewed, however, stated that behavioural problems in the school had been greatly reduced by the up-skilling of the staff over the past few years. Staff felt greatly supported by the leadership team in this area and in general.
Possible main drivers of the work outside of the classroom and efforts made to manage them

The average time teachers spent on work outside of the classroom was 23:17 hours. This represented just under fifty percent of total time on task. Teachers felt free to manage this work at times that suited them. Most chose to come early to school (8.00 am or earlier) and stay until about 6.00pm. The majority of teachers worked at home at night and on weekends. The classroom teachers interviewed stated that they enjoyed teaching as a profession and they wanted to be there for the children every day. They had high expectations of themselves and took pride in their efforts and results.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping:

The teachers said that their out of school hours work increased by at least fifty percent at assessment and reporting times. The need for one to one testing increased the need for teacher support or release at these times. The classroom teachers made the point that teachers in the Junior sections of the school spent more time planning and preparing in out of teaching time hours while those in the senior section spent more time marking/correcting and recording.

Paperwork to comply with school’s or principal’s requirements

Some teachers said ‘the Ministry’ required them to do a lot of paperwork, but when questioned more closely said that they did not necessarily distinguish between what was required by the Ministry and what was required by the school. Either way there was a considerable amount of “paperwork” that impacted on the time allocated to teaching face to face. As a fair proportion of the paperwork related to student results and this area of assessment and reporting was an indicator for future teaching, teachers wanted student outcome information but did not want to be involved in accountability for its own sake.

Performance management/staff appraisal

The teachers did not see paperwork that related to performance management as a
problem, since, in addition to the classroom observations and discussions, it required only completion of a simple pro-forma. Teachers saw this as a goal setting exercise in the first instance with supportive, targeted and positive professional development. This assisted in their maintenance as highly functioning teachers. Peer appraisal was particularly useful in that the comments were constructive and to the point.

**Curriculum planning and assessment/record keeping/reporting/data analysis**

The teachers were very supportive of the curriculum directions taken by the Ministry since the introduction of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’, but said that planning, assessment, record keeping and data analysis now took much more time and entailed much more writing and record keeping. Teachers said that they saw a need for the increased paperwork, partly for the principal, school board and ERO, but mainly to support their teaching. They agreed that apart from some basic data entry where clerical assistants could be utilised, a large proportion of paperwork was professional work which only teachers could do.

**Professional Development (PD)**

The weekly staff and syndicate meetings were generally devoted to professional development. The school’s professional development plan was linked directly to whole school directions, needs, and Government initiatives as well as catering for the individual needs of teachers. The professional development sessions involved reading, study and discussion of complex content for which little or no extra time was provided.
SECTION TWO: THE CASE STUDIES

SCHOOL A

School Profile

School A is a Decile 10 contributing primary school of 80 students. It is situated in a very small township about 15 kilometres from a provincial town. The children are taught in three classes (Years 1/2, Years 3/4, and Years 5/6). The school had a staff entitlement of 4.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Tom’

Deputy Principal/Teacher of middle grades: ‘Patricia’

Teacher of senior grades: ‘Jennie’

Teacher of junior grades: ‘Penelope’

Board of Trustees (BOT Chairperson): ‘Peter’

School Secretary: ‘Hester’

Teacher Aide: ‘Sal’

Vision

The teachers in this small school had a strong commitment to the local community. Creating a good environment for learning was a high priority. Teachers said that everyone was concerned about environment at a classroom and whole school level, and teachers wanted to raise the children’s awareness about local and global environmental issues ‘starting in the classroom where they spend most of their learning time.’ They believed it was important to create a positive and happy environment for learning in the classroom, and were prepared to invest time and energy to make this happen.
Student Behaviour Management

School A had comprehensive behaviour-management policies and strategies in place, including detailed processes for dealing with bullying. However, the principal and teachers agreed that poor student behaviour was not an issue that caused work strain in terms of time or stress. The principal said that School A was ‘a paradise’, in respect of student behaviour, as most students came from stable families where values like respect for others, common sense, courtesy, and co-operation were the norm.

Leadership and management

On a recent visit to Europe Tom, the principal, had studied work practices in several northern European countries. He was particularly interested in schemes that allowed older workers to work fewer days or hours per week yet still be fully paid. On his return to New Zealand he decided to address his own issues of work-life balance by asking the School Board for permission to work four days a week, taking the appropriate salary cut. This was granted, and Tom was now starting his working week on Tuesday.

This created .2 EFT that was shared by Jennie and Patricia (Deputy Principal), each of whom had a total .1 (half a day) management/administrative time.

Tom was firmly committed to the idea of shared leadership:

  Not everything that happens in the school has to be my idea

This arrangement meant that of the four teachers in the school (including the principal) three had a leadership/management role. All four teachers found this situation very satisfactory. Tom said that he still came in to work on Mondays, but now had Sundays to spend with his family. Like the other members of staff he lived locally. He taught a total of 7½ hours per week. Tom said that he enjoyed teaching, and believed it helped to keep him in touch with important classroom and curriculum issues. It also gave him better knowledge of individual students. Tom was pleased that the students knew him as a friend and teacher, as well as school principal.
Each staff member felt responsible for managing workload. When asked who managed her workload, Penelope’s response summed up the responses of all the staff:

I do. I set pretty high standards, so I only have to blame myself. You have 25 children. Every one of them is precious and every one of them deserves to be extended to their fullest ability. (Penelope)

They all agreed that sharing responsibility for leading and managing, and having a principal who was also a teacher, led to increased awareness of the need to ‘evenly spread’ tasks and responsibilities. This principle underpinned all major planning decisions. Teachers’ work was managed with one major goal in mind - to serve the children’s learning needs. As Tom said, this goal would not be achieved if teachers were stressed and overworked, especially if their time and ‘energy’ was being diverted from the daily interactions with ‘their’ children.

The teachers did not believe that the amount of time they spent in meetings was excessive. They said that they worked well as a team and felt a sense of shared enthusiasm and responsibility for the many activities that were part of the community life of the school.

The school staff worked together in preparing a Whole School Curriculum Plan in accordance with the national curriculum achievement objectives. These plans had an overall ‘life’ of 2-3 years, but were monitored regularly. Each year there was a major focus on a particular area. This year it was literacy and numeracy. The teachers were very supportive of the curriculum directions set by the Ministry.

**Government initiatives/requirements**

The teachers followed the Ministry assessment guidelines, in line with the national curriculum, which they supported, saying that the guidelines helped them to assess and teach more effectively.

Teaching to the objectives, etc. has created more work, but it has made us much more analytical and more focused on the task and it has uplifted the expectations. It’s challenging (for the Ministry) to get teachers to the
next level of understanding. When it first came out it was like a brick wall, but now it’s much better.

They said that some of the assessment and recording tools they had been given at professional development sessions were helpful, but the quality of these materials was uneven. Some instruments made assessment and recording unnecessarily time consuming. One teacher said that she found it hard to keep up with the ‘tracking sheets’, which used a check list approach to record each child’s progress against many detailed indicators. They all made a plea for more work, of better quality, to be done centrally to make assessment and record keeping more manageable at the school level.

The teachers felt that the general direction of the Ministry’s requirements with regard to pupil assessment and record keeping was sound, because it made for more effective teaching. They did not believe that the requirements were excessive. However the principal was concerned that there were ‘too many objectives’ in the curriculum:

There are too many objectives, and this means that we have to do too many things after teaching. We should not spend too much energy on the assessments. The energy of the teacher needs to be on the children.

The principal and teachers found the language of some of the curriculum documents to be unnecessarily dense and ‘jargonistic’. Translating the requirements of these documents into school curriculum was sometimes made unnecessarily complex because of the difficulties involved in attempting to reach common understandings of their meaning. This was ‘annoying’ ‘frustrating’ and sometimes ‘unnecessarily time consuming’. They said that the Ministry could help by simplifying the language and also by providing more and better exemplars and professional development. They mentioned that some professional development and documents such as the English exemplars were very useful in this regard.

On the whole the teachers were satisfied with the professional development in assessment in which they had participated over a number of years.
When it came to paperwork to comply with Ministry and Principal’s requirements, teachers said that they were sometimes unsure of what the Ministry requirements were. They knew, however, that they needed to have information about curriculum and assessment, including annual curriculum plans, term plans, daily work programs and assessment records up to date and accessible. Most of this work, they believed, had to be done by professional teachers, rather than by someone without teaching qualifications, although they agreed they would appreciate more ‘help’ with such tasks as photocopying and data entry.

Tom said that he tried to make sure that ERO’s requirements – what teachers referred to as ‘the paper trail’ - did not take teachers’ time away from the children, but he said that sometimes, especially when an ERO visit was imminent, this could become difficult:

When ERO is coming – six months before - I say to the teachers: ‘Do what you have to do to keep everybody happy, but your energy needs to be with the children.’ But sometimes I think in the six months before ERO the children do miss out.

If we were trusted as professionals this wouldn’t be necessary. We could self review. In a school with such dedicated teachers as here there should be no need to check paperwork.

Tom said that he tried to keep teachers’ paperwork to a minimum. He and the teachers all felt that the paperwork should be for the children, not the Ministry.

Kids come first. I don’t feel I have to produce paperwork just for ERO and (the principal) certainly doesn’t push us in that direction. I’m not there to give them a glowing report, I do nothing extra for ERO, but it’s all done. I pace myself. You want quality, you have to work at it every day and every week. (Penelope)

Tom appeared to be taking responsibility for a lot of the paperwork. ERO was a factor in this, as was preparation of necessary information for the School Board of Trustees.
He said that keeping the BOT informed through the various reports etc. took ‘quite a bit’ of his time, usually on Sundays. The principal said that he made every effort to keep the teachers’ ‘paperwork’ to a minimum. The teachers made little distinction between the paperwork that was part of their regular planning and assessment and paperwork required for ERO.

Teachers agreed that were it not for the Ministry’s requirements it was possible that they would not be so punctilious with regard to paperwork. They continually stressed their belief that their first line of accountability was to the children and their families. They saw ERO’s role as one of paper checking, and seemed slightly bemused by this. They appreciated feedback from (some) ERO officers but did not understand why the Ministry found it necessary to conduct ERO visits at all. However no teacher complained that the requirements of the Ministry or ERO were excessive.

**Performance Review**

Performance Review was another source of paperwork generated by Ministry requirements, but teachers did not find the processes or the paperwork (completion of a short pro forma) onerous, since the Principal had reduced these to a minimum. They said they found performance review only moderately useful, since, in such a small school the Principal was well aware of the quality of their work and the areas in which improvement was needed.

**Professional development (PD)**

Most professional development occurred in a weekly ‘staff development’ meeting. Teachers had also attended professional development activities outside the school, largely on assessment. They were very interested in learning about assessment strategies and new assessment tools that might save time without affecting quality. One teacher felt that some of the professional development had resulted in more, not less work.

**Administrative and other support**

In addition to fulfilling the many financial and administrative duties of her role,
Hester, the school secretary saw herself as being the ‘welcoming face’ of the school (the ACER researcher had first hand evidence of her effectiveness in this respect). She said she was glad that the school encouraged the parents and other community members to ‘drop in’ and she always tried to find time to ‘have a word’ with them. But it was often difficult to find the time, she said, as in addition to ‘everything else’ she was the First Aid person and had to keep daily track of the rolls and follow up student absences with phone calls.

It’s different here. I do what I can. This is a place where we always have a lot of people dropping in. This is a real community school. That’s what makes us different.

Hester said she was not able to give the teachers much individual help with, e.g. typing (in any case, she said they preferred to ‘do their own now’). Sometimes they emailed contributions for her to include in the school newsletter or other publications. The teachers did all of their own photocopying, but said that she was always prepared to help out if she had more time - at the time - than they did. The teachers said that they were reluctant to ask Hester for help because they knew how busy she was, and helping them was ‘not really part of her job.’

Sal, the part time Teacher Aide was only paid for five hours per week, but she said that she did a lot more ‘voluntary’ work with students – e.g. helping them with reading. She also helped the teachers to set up the classroom, prepare equipment and resources and help with things like collecting money for activities. She said that she liked to participate in meetings, because this made her work more meaningful and helped her to ‘learn’ what she felt she needed to know. She was not paid for this time:

I need to learn what I need to learn to do the job. I don’t get paid to go to meetings and I don’t have to go, but I really like working like that. I can have input. I don’t like to work in other ways.

The teachers said that Sal and the other two Aides, who worked with students with disabilities, liked to show initiative and had their own ideas about how to set up the classroom, collect and make resources and create an attractive learning environment.
This worked best when the Aides were involved in pre lesson planning.

The teachers also said that setting up the classroom well and ensuring that equipment was available and working made the teaching tasks easier and more productive. They saw this as an essential part of their own work, but were appreciative of any help that could be given by the teacher aide.

**ICT**

The teachers and principal agreed that they needed to make more and better use of ICT especially for curriculum planning, assessment and record keeping. Penelope, who taught the junior grades, said that she made good use of the computers in the classroom to support the children’s learning. She was in email contact with parents, and often sent them photos of the children. She said this was ‘time-consuming but rewarding’. She said she was still relying on pen and paper for a lot of her own planning.

The teachers said that they still used mostly ‘pen and paper’ for most planning tasks, but they were all moving towards increased use of computers. The school did not use a whole school computer program like *Schoolmaster* but the teachers and principal said that this would be helpful and were looking at the cost implications.

**Summary**

The principal’s decision to work .8 had brought about a situation where school leadership duties were shared by three of the four full time teaching staff. This had led to a non-hierarchical management situation in which all staff took responsibility for workload issues.

The teachers all felt that their work was heavy but manageable, and that they had considerable autonomy over the amount of work they did. All felt that they were ‘choosing’ to work well beyond the required limits, but they were happy to do this because of the satisfaction in helping the children to learn.

Teachers spent more hours working outside the classroom than in it. They all worked
at home, after school and on the weekends, but they saw this as a choice, not an imposition. The bulk of the work done outside the classroom was in curriculum and lesson planning and assessment/reporting/record keeping. Much of this work was a result of Ministry requirements, but the teachers tended not to see it as such, but as work they needed to do to support the children’s learning and to help the school day to run more smoothly and effectively.

There was comparatively little evidence that ICT was being used to support processes like assessment, record keeping and curriculum planning. Teachers received some help from Teacher Aides – who worked extra ‘voluntary’ hours - and were very appreciative of this help. The school secretary was fully committed to the tasks of her role and had little or no time to support individual teachers, but she played a major role in supporting the community activities of the school.

School A was a school in which the principal and all members of the teaching and non teaching staff were seen to be working to full capacity. The school’s strong community focus and the shared management/leadership roles meant that all staff were prepared to take on general as well as individual responsibility for successful student learning.

The main driver of the teachers’ work was their belief that the children deserved nothing less than 100% of their commitment. There was some concern that external demands – e.g. ERO visits – could be taking away time and energy that would be better spent on the children. But this was balanced by perceptions that the educational directions now being taken by the Ministry were sound.

**SCHOOL C**

**School profile**

School C is a Decile 1 school. It is situated in a lower socio-economic suburb of a large city. It is a co-educational school which caters for new entrants up to Year 6. The school is part of an amalgamation of several schools on the same site. The aim is to provide seamless education across the twelve years of schooling. Absenteeism has
been an issue as well as student welfare with a significant number of children coming to school without having breakfast and with no provision for lunch.

The Principal, new to the school, has set about addressing these two issues. As was pointed out to me, “it is all very well to have a vision but if the children don’t come or when they do they are hungry they cannot learn successfully”. The school vision is to empower its students to be players in a global community.

This primary school is part of a three school community that is creating a seamless pathway of learning from early childhood to university for its students. “There is a momentum here that attracts teachers to come and work” says the Board of Trustees (BOT) representative.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

**Principal:** ‘Robert’

**Board of Trustees (BOT):** ‘Mark’

**School Secretary:** ‘Theresa’

**Teacher Aide:** ‘Caitlin’

**Junior syndicate lead teacher:** ‘Brittany’

**Junior syndicate teacher:** ‘Kylie’

**Middle syndicate lead teacher:** ‘Rebecca’

**Special Needs coordinator:** ‘Frances’

**Senior syndicate teacher:** ‘Annette’

**Reading recovery/ethnic unit:** ‘Anita’

**Vision**

The school vision was to empower its students so they might become players in a global community. The concept of respect came up in many conversations. One
teacher added that it was important to nurture with respect and to strive for excellence. Another said to nurture by a culture of respect. Some stated that the vision did not just mean to become players but also meant to become leaders in a global community. All teachers had a stake in and owned the vision.

It was impressed upon the researcher that the image of the school within this community was of vital importance to student success. The physical surroundings had been recently upgraded and sections rebuilt as part of an amalgamation, and this had set a tone of care through the school community. There was a distinct feeling of value and being valued about the physical structures and what was taking place within them. The staff, with the Board of Trustees, had taken on the task of developing a culture of respect.

**Behaviour management and pastoral care**

The administration had identified the need to address disruptive behaviour in order to make a new start. Old procedures were refined, all staff were given appropriate professional development and procedures were put in place that all would abide by. Behaviour across the school had improved over the last four years. There was a greater sense of community and the children worked together better. Disruptive behaviour was not tolerated. The “chances” method was introduced: warning, time out, go to the team leader.

Staff felt supported by management in this area of their work. More experienced teachers felt less threatened by poor student behaviour but there were teachers who find bad behaviour stressful and debilitating.

If a teacher had a student in the class with a behaviour problem, then they were encouraged to go to management for support, but in the first instance it was the teacher’s responsibility to attempt to rectify the situation. Staff were supported by Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) personnel.

The low socio-economic position of the community meant that many families operated on the minimum wage with a significant proportion on benefits and living in
state housing. This school provided emotional and physical safety for its pupils. They were listened to and cared for by their teachers. Teachers interviewed said that they spent from 10 - 20% of teaching time on pastoral care, sometimes solving problems and at other times reinforcing positive behaviour.

**Perceptions of workload**

The teachers at this school were passionate about their work. However, as one teacher commented, “the workload is not reasonable compared with other jobs”. Many arrived around 7.30 am and did not leave much before 6.00 pm. They had meetings three mornings a week. Most teachers interviewed preferred to have fewer meetings. Before school they wished to focus on the students and their tasks for the day. Several stated that they wished to be in the classroom when the children arrive at school to forge links for the day. They described their workload as: too much, unreasonable, horrific, unfair, heavy, rigorous, overloading, stressful.

The principal described it as “a culture of dedication” within which there is too much at times to be done and yet teachers ask themselves: “have I done enough?”

Teachers at this school felt they needed more time release from the classroom to complete their allocated tasks. The pressure to assess each child personally, and to know first hand where they are at, was constant and increased when teachers were sick and could not come to work. Relief teachers could not completely replace the classroom teacher so on return there would be more work for the classroom teacher to do. It is at times like these that time release would greatly assist the teacher to get on top of their workload. One teacher made the comment that; “in this school there is a culture of don’t complain”. Another said that “the work just has to be done so no point wasting time worrying or complaining, get it done.”

**Managing work**

Each syndicate planned together and each teacher had an appraiser who kept in close contact with them. Most teachers had autonomy in their classroom and stated that they managed their classroom themselves. Several teachers made the statement that
“teachers are time poor” and that the only way they can manage their workload is to work longer. When they ran out of time at school they used up time at home after dinner and on weekends.

Although they prioritised, there were pressure times when teachers were forced to make the decision to not do certain tasks as well or not do them at all. These types of decisions made them feel guilty. One teacher stated that when the pressure got too great the only option was to stay home and do schoolwork and this forced the school to find a replacement. There was guilt associated with this action but it was seen as necessary for survival. One teacher stated that she went to the gym regularly to maintain her fitness but she chose not to go when she did not have enough time to complete her work. When questioned why they should continue to work so hard, the response was that they “believed in what they were doing for these children.” Some said they relished the challenge, they felt valued by their peers, senior management and the parents.

One teacher had set aside days for specific tasks: Monday weekly planning, Tuesday reading, Wednesday maths and always left at 6.00pm. Despite prioritising and sticking to a routine this teacher was tired and sick most of the time. One teacher claimed they were tired and run down and stated that “it is a challenge to look after yourself.” Despite all this, this teacher said she liked to challenge herself, she was keen to achieve, to do better in life and when she did this she felt better about herself.

“It’s (teaching) what I’m good at!” All teachers were pleased with the Ministry offer of two days time release per term; seeing it as recognition of the demands placed on teachers and doing something about it.

Resources and environment

The school environment was very good both inside and out. All teachers valued the computer system across the school for its labour saving aspect in planning, assessment and reporting and its communication linking. “I love being able to email other staff because it doesn’t interrupt them and they generally reply quickly, it’s
efficient time-wise”.

The school was well resourced physically but under resourced in other areas. According to most staff it needed more computers and books for the children. Teachers also needed more photocopying facilities and saw the need for more teacher aides in the school. The school could not rely on the community to meet the shortfall from their own pockets.

The open plan principal’s office was not conducive to privacy and given the often delicate nature of tasks he has to deal with on a daily basis it worked against him. His personal assistant, an efficient outgoing person, was in the same situation and at times wished for the quiet and privacy open planning does not allow.

**Government initiatives/requirements**

One teacher felt pressure from the ERO. It was observed that all teachers were judged on the few that were seen and if those teachers were not up to the mark then the image of all was lowered. All teachers were pleased with the level of professional development provided in the school. However some felt that they did not have enough time to practise what was being presented.

Setting targets for children was seen as a useful endeavour, although the reporting was time consuming and could be seen as taking time from developing the children. Targeting influences practice and was useful for assigning resources e.g. teacher aides. However, with limited resources within the school these resources must be taken from other areas, so some teachers who had started the year with them may have their workload increased. This made it more difficult to meet the targets they had set.

The appraisal system added to the workload. Senior teachers not only taught a grade but had duties each term aimed at developing the professional growth of their colleagues. Although time consuming, this process was seen as valuable in that it enhanced the performance of all staff.

Teachers appreciated the need for assessment to inform their teaching. They saw the
need for some record keeping and some reporting but felt that they were required to do extra recording and reporting to satisfy Ministry requirements. The deputy principal put together this student information, which was reported to the Board and then forwarded to the Ministry.

There may be too much paperwork, according to some teachers, but they felt that the Ministry was going in the right direction.

**Time**

All teachers said that they did not have enough time in the normal forty-hour working week to achieve what was expected in this school. Many saw regular time release as a possible solution. The number of students in the class was also a factor.

In a given term the pressure was off from week 1 to week 5 but from week 6 to week 10, as assessment and reporting came to the fore, teachers became more stressed and were committing more time to school work.

Several teachers mentioned the need for time release when they were testing students, one to one. It may not be appropriate for them to set the class to work and then do this testing. Management meetings were not seen as a priority by teachers. In answer to the question, “what comes last?” some teachers said that they put themselves last.

One teacher said, “I resent coming on the weekend but I do come.” Some teachers did not want to quantify how much work they did because the reality of the hours spent might shock them.

**Administration and other support**

The office staff were supportive and did administrative tasks for teachers on request. Although most teachers said they could use a clerical assistant in their classroom they also showed reluctance to give up certain tasks that a clerical assistant might do.

Teacher aides gave great support and were valued by all staff. Some teachers relied on them to ensure that the targets set in their classroom were met.
Leadership, support, and teaching and learning

When asked about leadership support, one teacher mentioned that the previous principal challenged staff by providing data that suggested improvement in student learning would come if certain practices were taken up. She then provided the professional development to support the change. The new principal was feeling his way into the school community and was in the process of establishing himself as the leader of this school.

Most teachers felt supported by the leadership team and valued the open door policy operating in the school.

Professional community

The school planned in teams and syndicates. Planning in teams could have its drawbacks: “not all staff contribute equally so some work harder than others”. However, it was one way of ensuring consistency across the syndicate. The sharing of the planning load was seen as positive.

All staff agreed that the professional development provided was of a high standard and suited to their needs. Some particularly praised the “expert” who was working closely with each teacher, watching them teach each term and advising them on where and how to improve. The statement was made that the attitude to learning in the school was on track and the upskilling of staff well underway.

ICT

“The computer is what saves me so much time, I can email it home and work on it there.” Some staff transported data on disc. All plans were done on the computer. Both students and teachers used the internet to find out information. “Some staff don’t know how to use the email system properly yet”. Last year was the first time the school did reports on computer and the template was not user friendly. This caused problems for most teachers. The teachers did not want to go back to handwritten reports. Not all teachers had computers in their classes because of the rearrangement of computers across the school. Some teachers had laptops. Staff made comment that
the school was under resourced with respect to ICT needs and did not know or remember if this was being addressed in future budgets.

Further teacher comments

The following comments from teachers at School C give an indication of the nature and range of their work. The final two comments sum up their general approach:

“Primary teachers are overloaded, they teach, supply the counselling, lunches, etc and sometimes drop students home.”

“We don’t get an hour lunch break because we are in the classroom for at least 10 minutes with children while they eat their lunch. In reality you get half an hour, and most spend it in their classroom.”

“I am so busy that I don’t have time to see my mum, I get one night off a week.”

“In the work/life balance it is more work but I choose to do school work outside of school time.”

“I wouldn’t leave school before midnight on Friday if I stayed until I was ready for Monday, that’s why I come in on the weekends.”

“I’m just scraping through, I don’t see my family, I have little social life except during the holidays.”

“It was hard early in the year, things weren’t balanced, I was struggling, I was given help, it’s better now”

“Despite the work load it’s what excites the kids that makes you do it.”

“Teachers are working harder today to do the best for the kids.”
SCHOOL D

School profile

School D is a small, modern, purpose-built full primary school fifty kilometres from a small provincial town. At the end of Term 2 there were eighteen students, with three new students expected at the beginning of Term 3. The school is now rated Decile 3, having been regraded from a Decile 9 at the last review. The principal and Board Chair believed that the new decile rating was a much more accurate reflection of the school's community.

The school has strong community support, although with so few students, it struggled at times to get enough parents for the Board of Trustees. The principal had been in the school for four years and was well supported by the board, in particular the current chair. The principal lived in a school house adjacent to the school.

As is common in country schools, School D's Internet access was slow and unreliable. While the principal incorporated the use of ICT in her teaching program she found the unreliability of the connection frustrating. This really hindered the use of ICT both in teaching programs and for administration.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal and sole teacher: ‘Belinda’

Board of Trustees chair: ‘Warren’

Teacher aide: ‘Carla’

Administrative assistant: ‘Jean’

Vision

School D's vision statement affirmed the importance of creating an opportunity for each child to be educated to their potential in a safe secure environment, and recognised the particular needs of a remote rural community. In talking about the
vision, the principal and the Board Chair emphasised the role the school played in the community, and a sense that there was always a question mark over the school's viability. Belinda stated:

If they do come looking, we want to be sure they can't find any reasons to close us down.

The principal and Chair also talked about the need for children from remote rural communities such as theirs to be encouraged to see possibilities beyond their immediate community. The school saw its role as encouraging students to expand their horizons, to set goals for themselves and to develop the confidence to tackle those goals.

A strong sense of community underpinned all the interviews at School D.

**School composition, behaviour management and pastoral care**

The school had eighteen pupils who came from rural properties some of which were quite a distance from the school. Many of the families in the area were related and all knew each other well; pastoral care was a strength of this small, tightly-knit community.

Belinda operated a system of 'assertive discipline' which established a clear set of consequences for unacceptable behaviour. She reported that learning programs were seldom interrupted by disruptive student behaviour. Children wanted to learn and were readily engaged.

The most challenging aspect of behaviour management was that each of the adults working in the school, or on the Board, was related to several of the children in the school, and if the principal needed independent support with managing a behavioural issue it could be hard to find someone who was not part of the child's extended family. The Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) was very helpful, but because of the school's isolation, could not visit frequently.
Perceptions of workload

Belinda loved her job, and had no problems with the workload, ‘as long as it's focused on the kids.’ The aspects of her workload that caused her the most stress were the tasks that were neither directly related to her classroom duties, nor directly related to her role as principal. Examples she gave included having to order the toilet paper and dealing with perpetual problems with school buses and school bus routes.

Early in the tenure of the current principal, the Board identified a need for her to have more administrative support, and had by raising money been able to employ an administrative assistant for nine hours a week. This assistant was fully funded by the Board. Everyone agreed that this has been a huge bonus and had taken some of the load off Belinda, although problems with school buses continued to absorb time and energy.

Belinda was entitled to one and half days release from the classroom each week. Although she appreciated the time to do some of the work of the principal, classroom release time was a mixed blessing for two reasons. Firstly, as a committed classroom teacher Belinda found that too much time out of the classroom disrupted her classroom program:

I just can't be out of the classroom too often – it adds to my workload and it disrupts the children's learning.

Secondly, the school was so remote that it was uneconomical for relieving teachers to travel to the school for anything less than a full day's work:

You live in the middle of nowhere so no-one will come out for half a day.

So, although the principal was entitled to .3 classroom release time, in reality she took one day a week, or .2 release time, and saved up the rest to use if she had to attend a meeting or a course in a local provincial town.

What the principal would welcome was extra classroom assistance as there were such varied needs across the levels. This would allow the juniors to get more specialised
attention. Currently a second teacher was funded to come in and teach juniors in a small classroom type setting, allowing for more individualised tasks and junior based hands on activities. This teacher was funded partly by the Board of Trustees, and partly out of 0.1 principal release. Belinda saw this as essential: “I need to know I am on top of it in the classroom – and this helps to keep junior readers moving along, as well as supporting me with high reading needs.”

Belinda and Warren, the Board Chair, both believed the workload to be unreasonable. Warren recounted the difficulties for two previous incumbents, one of whom had a young child and a partner working away from the area, the other of whom was a sole parent. The Board considered itself very lucky that Belinda had no children. She agreed that having children would make the job even more difficult:

> It's reasonable for someone with no children. I can put the hours in, but I don't know how easy it would be for someone with a family.

Belinda had a range of strategies to manage her work, and said that the most important one was very simple: “I do the classroom before I go into the office.”

**Leadership, teaching and learning and curriculum**

The biggest professional challenge of being in sole charge of a small school was that Belinda had to plan all work over four levels of the curriculum. Teaching students who might range in age from five to thirteen, across all curriculum areas required a wide range of programs all of which had to be planned in as much detail as any teaching program.

Belinda managed this challenge through the use of 'task boards' which she could prepare in advance and which set out her expectations of the tasks the students were to be working on.

The demands of teaching all curriculum areas across four levels went beyond the classroom. Everything that came into the school, which included but was not limited to material relating to all curriculum areas, had to be read and its value to the school and the students assessed. Belinda was the only person who could do this, and indeed
she wanted to, so that her students had as many opportunities as those in other
schools. She made a plea for more guidance and more use of templates for small
schools:

    I know schools are supposed to create their own curriculum but
    sometimes it would just be so much easier to be given a list of
    suggestions rather than having to develop them ourselves.

A sole-charge teaching principal was essentially the curriculum leader in all
curriculum areas. To feel confident that she was delivering good quality programs to
students across the curriculum, Belinda felt she needed to keep abreast of
developments and to attend to curriculum based professional development when she
could. This, in conjunction with the remoteness of the school, placed huge demands
on her time.

Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping

Planning requirements were heavy because of the need to plan across four levels of
the curriculum. Belinda did a lot of her planning in weekends and holidays so that
day-to-day it was more a matter of keeping on top of what is coming up.

Assessment, marking and record keeping did not cause problems; Belinda was a very
organised teacher.

Support staff

The Board in this tiny school of only eighteen pupils raises about $10,000 a year and
used the money to purchase nine hours administrative support for the principal each
week. This had taken a huge load off Belinda, with someone else to type the
newsletter, pay the phone bill and order the toilet paper. It was also a very tangible
sign of the Board's support for the principal in prioritising her classroom role.

Despite the administrative support, much of what came into the school still needed to
be reviewed by Belinda, even though it may not have been related to curriculum. For
example, the school was on the brink of improved internet access following years of
frustration with the lack of a reliable high speed Internet connection. However, Belinda said that there was a mass of material flooding into the school outlining various broadband options and she had to find the time to read the material, weigh up the relative merits and make a decision.

All management tasks had to be completed as in a smaller school. Board reports, policies, community consultations, staff management and performance reviews had to be fitted into one day's release a week. Jean, the administration assistant, said:

We're a small school so the numbers we put in the boxes are smaller, but we still have to fill all the boxes.

The school had a teacher aide in school from 9.00-12.30 for three mornings a week, a total of ten and a half hours. The teacher aide was previously RTLB funded for 1.5 hours of the ten and a half hours, but was now fully funded by the Board. She had her own space and works with individuals or small groups withdrawn for additional attention and support. When the school's roll was higher she worked more in the classroom providing support there, but now she supported individuals with identified needs.

In theory, the school had the same access to specialised support as other schools but Belinda said that the reality was somewhat different because the time spent travelling out to School D had such implications for the rest of their workload. She was quite realistic about what was possible, and said that specialist services provided all the support they could:

It's there but it's not . . . . If they were to come here as much as we need it they would never get anywhere else.

Even providing reading recovery to students who needed it was difficult because of the challenge of getting teachers to come to the school for just a few hours a day.

**The community**

Belinda found being part of a small supportive community hugely rewarding, but it brought with it expectations that added to her workload. Country schools tend to be
the hub of the community. There is an understanding that the teacher/principal will play a full part in the community beyond school hours. This involves active participation in school fundraising activities, watching students play sport on Saturday, and taking part in community events.

With only eighteen pupils drawn from about a dozen families, this small school struggled for board members. This created a real dilemma when the board was committed to shouldering as much of the management of the school as possible in order that the principal could prioritise classroom teaching.

**Professional development**

The board was very supportive of professional development for the principal, and considered it has an obligation to foster the development of this first time principal.

As a new teaching principal who did not want to be away from her class too frequently and with her pre-service training still relatively recent, Belinda had opted for professional development designed to increase her management skills in the past few years. She felt it timely for her to focus once again on her classroom and curriculum skills.

The need to travel for all professional development was a bit of a challenge for the School D principal. Accessing the nearest provincial centre involved a round trip travel time of about two and half hours. The distance and travel time involved, along with her commitment to maintaining the continuity of her classroom program, made Belinda selective about the professional development opportunities she took up. She said that the need to be selective was a particular issue when faced with new requirements such as the current strengthening of Physical Education in the school program, and the upcoming requirement for schools to teach a second language to senior students. Distance and time were a huge issue for professional development.

**Summary**

The role of a teaching principal is extensive and demanding. However, Belinda enjoyed the role and managed it well with the assistance of a supportive Board and
community.

The biggest challenge for her was teaching all curriculum areas across four levels and keeping up with good practice and professional development from the school's remote location.

Despite huge efforts on the part of the Board and the community to raise money with which to provide administrative assistance, so much of what came into the school still needed the principal's attention, particularly if it was in any way related to curriculum.

More classroom release time was not what Belinda wanted. Her teaching workload would be eased by more assistance, templates and suggestions to assist with curriculum implementation. In her management role she would welcome compliance requirements that were adapted to the limited management capacity of small sole charge schools.

**SCHOOL E**

*School profile*

School E is a Decile 9 school of about 280 students situated in a large regional town. Although the school is Decile 9, there are zoning issues, with many children coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds and some parents renting in the area so that their children can attend the school.

The Principal described the recent vision of the school as “survival.” There have been a number of school closures in this town, including some primary schools, all intermediate schools and one large high school. “Who stays open?” has been a major issue for schools. As the Educational Review Office had indicated that the school was not performing at a satisfactory level, the last few years have been “a traumatic time” for the school. The current Principal has been at the school for three years. “For the first time this year we had a normal start. Our key learning focuses are literacy, numeracy and co-operative skills.”

While the Principal feel there is “a good community spirit”, she also observed that the
issue of funding for the school has divided the community. To help ensure continuity of programs, parents have been asked to make a school donation.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

**Principal**: ‘Valerie’

**Administrative Officer**: ‘Mary’

**Assistant Principal and Years 2 and 3**: ‘Tara’

**Years 2 and 3**: ‘Cecily’

**Senior Syndicate Leader and Years 5 and 6**: ‘Lucy’

**Teacher Aide**: ‘Sarah’

**Chairperson of Board of Trustees**: ‘Diane’

**Vision**

The vision of the school was to improve educational outcomes for its students. The principal noted that this is being achieved through “sheer hard work”, with the last few years having not been easy on staff, Board of Trustees or administration. Staff described vision in terms of “being the best we can and preparing our students, especially in literacy and numeracy, so that all of them have the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

**Behaviour management and pastoral care**

In general, behaviour management was not an issue in the school, although students needed “a lot of guidance and support.” They “do not like to take risks” and an aim of the staff was to encourage independence. “Naughtiness is not a big issue.” Parents tended to have very high expectations. The school had adequate and effective referral systems for children with particular needs.

A teacher who was relatively new to the school commented that behaviour management on a scale of 1:10 was about one or two here, compared to about nine at
her previous school - “This helps with your perception of workload, you’re here to teach the kids, you can get through things…there are good systems in place.” All teachers interviewed shared this view.

**Perceptions of workload**

Valerie described the workload of teachers as increasing and involving “huge demands.” Educational initiatives from the Ministry required that the school provide, for instance, fitness education and Gifted and Talented education. “So much is put on schools, but there is no resourcing or professional development – schools do it themselves.” Tara commented: “It’s not very satisfying, you’re running all the time, there’s no time to consolidate because of Ministry demands and community expectations. There is a perception that the community is quite critical. You don’t often get the ‘warm and fuzzies.’”

Valerie was encouraging teachers to use strategies whereby some assessment tasks were completed in class. “We’re trying to assess less but better.” One strategy was a report strategy whereby teachers highlighted rather than wrote benchmarks.

Another strategy to reduce workload at the school was to have one week a term without meetings. “After school, teachers are tired, and you don’t spend quality time looking at issues…The time constraints are huge…staff want fewer meetings but then get frustrated if there’s not planning and feedback.” Parent/teacher meetings will now be three way conferences, with teachers not required to write comments. The portfolio will show parents the child’s progress and highlights against benchmarks. Previously, teachers had “been spending hours and hours on comments.” While the conferences are proceeding, Valerie will have all children in the school hall with a video. All these measures are designed to reduce teacher stress and workload. “Teachers are always here in the weekend. They are caring, dedicated teachers, but burnout is a concern.”

Valerie commented that “the frustrating thing is that every school is inventing the wheel…The Ministry stated that we had to make it related to our school. Yes, but there are national expectations, schools spend so much time developing [benchmarks, standards and frameworks] and so does the school down the road. When you look at
them they are similar but slightly different…The first exemplar framework that came out really helped – before that everyone was floundering in the dark.” In Valerie’s view, streamlining this aspect of change would assist principals and teachers.

The principal of this school estimated that she worked at least eighty hours per week - “I don’t really have a life.” She was involved with school activities, including activities like aerobics and drama, four out of five evenings per week and was at the school on Saturdays and Sundays. She also worked at home. Enormous work had been put into developing a team approach and encouraging group planning, but this was coming at the cost of work/life balance in many cases. In a situation where there was competition between schools to stay open, survival was clearly a major additional stress factor and had a real impact on workload and perceptions of workload.

“There is not a lot of time for family life. The profession is becoming one where you can’t have a family…Teachers are coming to school when they’re sick.” Tara, the assistant principal, was concerned about the effect of the workload on the personal lives and health of staff. “There is definitely a long term health impact if teachers lose the ability to find their own individual space. The workload is not manageable in the long term. They may look for other work.”

Tara also commented that the Union stipulation of hours – forty hours per week or the hours necessary to complete the job - had just made it “difficult for people to stop…They need to be told it’s eight to five.” She thinks the workload is “starting to dull the feeling you have for your profession. There is less and less time for good teaching and more and more paperwork.” Other teacher comments included: “Paperwork is not making me a better teacher, it’s making me a more stressed teacher…I would like to drop some of the paperwork and spend more time preparing things and making the environment a bit nicer.”

The teacher who spoke so positively about behaviour management described her workload, however, as “horrendous, frustrating, tiring, depressing when I look at my vision and the reality.” She does not feel that she is able to have a good work/life balance. “There have been a few weekends when I haven’t gone to school, but then I
feel guilty.” The necessity for the school to put so much time into becoming “current” was contributing to workload. One teacher commented that she was “really fearful” for one of the beginning teachers. “There have only been two weekends when she didn’t come to work. She’s a very talented teacher and nothing will burn her out faster.” She noted, too, that the principal had worked over ninety hours in the previous week and although the principal had clearly stated she did not expect staff to work as hard, staff were all anxious to improve the school for its students and were in fact working very long hours.

Cecily described her workload as “frustrating, stressful, too much at times, not accomplishing things, never goes away.” She would like to improve her work/life balance.

Teacher aide Sarah, who worked across the school, thought that the frequent changes had really added to teachers’ workload, particularly in the initial phases. She wanted to see them have some stress relief and social time, and to see less work and more administrative support for principals. Office assistant Mary was also concerned by teachers’ “very high workload, the amount of paperwork they need to do - they’re here at weekends, planning.”

Staff at the school were involved in many extra-curricular activities, but there were fewer and fewer parent volunteers, as most parents were working. This meant that some activities had had to be cancelled. Nevertheless parents had high expectations in this area. “A pocket of parents can be very demanding, they expect you’ll be at games in weekends.”

The Board of Trustees chairperson, Diane, saw teacher workload as very high:

I wouldn’t do it. Our staff are here early, after school and always on weekends…Our staff are finding it very difficult to keep abreast of the latest curriculum initiatives. Anyone coming back after a couple of years is at a huge disadvantage….There is a lot of pressure from assessing and reporting. As a parent I like to know but I don’t know how they’re expected to assess, re-assess, teach, plus whole school enrichment...One
staff member left because she couldn’t meet what she saw as the expectations, she was a good teacher and we were sorry to lose her.

Diane commented that the staff at the school also took up many extra-curricular activities, but these needed to be restricted because parents were not so available to help. She was also concerned that “if teachers feel they are not appreciated, resentment develops.”

With regard to teacher stress, Diane made the following observation: “For some years, teachers perhaps didn’t realise others have stressful jobs as well, but in the past five years, workload has increased enormously.” She was “astonished when she first say the data and overlays for assessment “There is a huge amount of assessment. I don’t know when they have the time to teach, frankly. I’m amazed at what they manage to achieve.” Diane also commented that “for years teachers have shied away from accountability and comparative data, but if the data is used to show progress and outcomes, then that’s not necessarily a bad thing – but the balance?”

**Resources and environment**

The funding of resources for this Decile 9 school was “a real issue.” There was not enough money for relievers, so the principal acted as a reliever in order for staff to undertake professional development. “This helps staff feel valued.” There was also not enough classroom space or office space, and the staffroom was waiting for an upgrade. The Board of Trustees had funded an extra classroom and was planning to fund a twelfth teacher, but “people are sick to the back teeth of fundraising.” Valerie also observed that teachers were paying for various things themselves, “regularly dipping into their own pockets.”

Insufficient resources and space were raised as an issue by several staff: “The Ministry need to put more money into resources. I’ve got a small classroom, there’s stuff everywhere. It adds to workload.”

A teacher who had previously been at a low decile school commented: “In the low decile school it was productive because you could see changes, there was the funding
to do things, it’s hard to make changes without funding. We have all the add-ons [extra requirements] but no funding. There’s no money for relievers and this puts stress on all systems.”

Only one teacher interviewed was satisfied with resources and space.

**Government Initiatives/Requirements**

Valerie thought that the issue with assessment requirements was the time taken to meet them. “Teachers are tired and can’t spend quality time [with students.]” She was also concerned that teacher release time might add to, rather than alleviate, teacher stress if teachers needed to prepare for a relieving teacher. A multi-level reliever would probably be necessary, but it was difficult to find relievers in the town, particularly as teachers who had taken redundancy could not work in this capacity for a year. Tara thought that teacher release time was a welcome concept but “the big issue is that it will be under-resourced in terms of people. Taking a curriculum area off would help.”

“As a school, we need to do less and to do it better. In the primary sector, teachers feel frustrated because they can’t do everything well…There is no way you can do everything in a day. There is always something major impacting on teaching and learning…All schools need to start looking at how crowded it is…” Valerie shared the concerns of other principals in this respect.

Other teachers at School E also expressed this view: “I don’t subscribe [to the ERO view] that if it’s not written down it doesn’t happen.” “In a busy classroom, many incidents don’t get annotated, directions can change.” This teacher also felt that the curriculum was too crowded. “The Ministry should look closely at the curriculum and reduce it.” “The curriculum is getting broader rather than tightening up…I don’t believe that any school could be covering what we’re supposed to cover in a year.”

With regard to changes in Ministry requirements, Cecily wanted “fewer new things to do. I’d rather focus on more things like reading and writing and Maths. The PE initiative is good, but in my head I’m thinking “Oh my God! When will I fit it in?
What will I drop? They want us to do more, but we’re spending less time on children in the classroom.”

“A lot of hours are spent keeping records that no-one looks at. It’s a waste of weekend hours.” Lucy did not find extensive recording of student data to be productive, but thought that portfolios “show good progression, they’re a really good tool.” She also thought that changes to procedures at the school were making the paperwork “more authentic.” Cecily agreed with this view: “are the [increased assessing requirements] making me a better teacher? I’m assessing more but it’s not necessarily making me any better, [we] don’t always use the information. Who’s it being done for? I’m not sure. You mightn’t revisit it…The new reporting system will help.”

Administrative and Other Support

The school had one administrative assistant/secretary. Most teachers did not have any extra support and carry out work such as photocopying themselves. Additional general clerical support would be useful. Tara left all her paperwork until the end of the day, and “struggles with it.” More support would reduce her workload. She also suggested the employment of people for duty sessions as a means of reducing teacher workload. Lucy thought a support worker could “write letters, do sports notices, transfer data, get resources set up” and also that “a decent system of WEB collegial support would help.” Again, lack of funding for support staff such as teacher aides because of the school’s high Decile ranking was raised as an issue.

Cecily would appreciate someone to help with photocopying, displays, making resources, putting things away.

“Most of the teachers are lucky to have five or ten minutes for lunch. They’re always busy in their classrooms. Most of them are here after school, weekends and holidays, getting things in order.” Teacher aide Sarah worked across the school at various levels. She could only spend a short period of time in each class and thought that an aide in each class could help with reading, typing up children’s stories and making resources. “If an aide is assisting teachers, they have more time for working 1:1 with children and doing what they’re so good at: teaching, rather than paperwork…They
could use help with organising things, especially Art and PE. The more junior the classroom, the more assistance is needed.” Sarah was employed from 9.00 am until 3.00 pm, but usually began at 8.30 am and was often at the school until 4.00 pm.

The Board of Trustees Chairperson thought that two more teacher aides would be “hugely beneficial to the school, but the Board cannot provide them unless funds are diverted from elsewhere.”

**Professional Community**

A collegiate atmosphere was being established at the school, with teachers visiting each other’s classrooms and providing feedback. Staff recognise the need for “a good collegial support system, where people jump on board to help…it reduces the workload if people share more, work as a team to develop units.”

“We enjoy finding out more things, but I doubt if the [meetings themselves] have improved the quality of teaching…Nothing was in place, so there’s been a huge amount of catch-up…There are strong personalities, everyone has different ideas and voices them strongly. There have just been so many changes in the last three years, and they’re having trouble keeping up.” This teacher thought that the wide range of views and the need for overall ‘catch-up’ lengthened meeting times, but that the syndicate meetings in particular were very useful. Another teacher commented that the workload was higher at the school because of the meetings, but that the professional development involved had been absolutely necessary.

Cecily was looking forward to the new collegially developed reporting system: “It will help, you’re not just writing comments for the sake of it.” The collegial activities that had been introduced would alleviate workload and increase professional learning.

**ICT**

The Board of Trustees had funded laptops for teachers, and teachers commented that this had assisted them in their work. Prior to this principal’s appointment, there had been no professional development in this area. They are now “pretty positive, although some still have a fear of computers. More professional development and
more computers would help.”

The assistant principal felt that ICT had been “more of a hindrance…we don’t have time to sit down and practise.” Funding for ICT resources, such as extra computers or an interactive whiteboard, was raised as an issue. Cecily had found the school’s ICT professional development very helpful. She wanted to teach more ICT in the classroom but “there are six laptops for twenty-five kids.”

Additional Comments and/or Summary

Community expectations of this school were very high. The principal described parents as “hugely demanding” of staff. There were “constant comparisons with other children.” Parents “expect School E to be in the top three schools in the sector and to be the best at all times.” Some parents resented paying “fees” as well as taxes. Expectations were higher since the school donation was raised. “If a child is not doing well, you’ll fix it.” This was causing stress for both teachers and management. The feeling, whether misplaced or not, that the community was not supportive of teachers appeared to be having a negative effect on some teachers’ enjoyment of their profession.

Decile based funding was an issue for this school. “Decile funding is a nonsense but it affects funding” was a comment from one teacher. The Board of Trustees chairperson also commented that lack of flexibility in funding “compounds to make our lives more difficult.”

This school had dedicated and committed administration and teachers. Behaviour management was not an issue and the Decile ranking was high, yet teachers and administration appeared to be working beyond a sustainable level. The factors that had contributed to this situation appeared to be the stress caused by possible school closures, the fact that a great deal of “catch-up” work needed to be done and the level of funding. Additionally, there seemed to be stress factors relating to community expectations and support. Interestingly, however, one teacher referred only to “a pocket of parents.” Clearly the school was valued in its community, as is evident in parents renting houses in the area so that their children could attend it. As effective
systems are put into place, and as teacher practice become increasingly collegial, teacher workload should become more manageable.

At this school, the Board of Trustees chairperson had the following advice/comments for the Ministry:

Reduce class sizes, they are much larger than we’d like – this would have an immediate impact. We need much more flexibility/control over how we finance the school, we would be better off if we were completely bulk funded. The operations grant as it stands is not enough. We are constantly told to do things, but there is no funding. Decile linked funding seriously disadvantages us. For example, we are funded for $2 per child for vandalism. Our parents dip into their pockets in all sorts of different ways and they’re sick of it. The zone is philosophically a sore point. [The Ministry] looks at the catchment area as a statistical example of the roll. This area has been ‘gentrified’ over the last ten years, but there is a large number of single parent families and low cost housing near the school. Parents also rent here to get in.

**SCHOOL F**

**School profile**

School F is a Decile 5 full primary school in a small provincial town. At the time of interviews it had about 330 students. The school has thirteen full-time teachers in addition to the Principal and Deputy Principal. It also employs three part-time teachers, four full-time equivalent teacher aides and has an administrative staff of two.

In 1999, the school had a major building renovation project which provided a new and modern teaching environment. The senior management team consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and a senior teacher. A further fixed-term position of responsibility was created in 2003 with the allocation of responsibility units. The school operates in three syndicates, each led by a member of the senior management team.
As well as delivering the curriculum to students from new entrants to Year 8, the school offers a number of other learning opportunities to the School F Community. These include a pre-school program for four-year-olds, adult night classes an after-school learning academy, special learning opportunities in music, Japanese and enrichment, and a primary enterprise program.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

**Principal:** ‘Josephine’

**Assistant Principal, Syndicate Leader, Curriculum Leader:** ‘Roy’

**Senior School Teacher, Curriculum Leader:** ‘Betty’

**Middle School teacher:** ‘Alison’

**Junior School Teacher:** ‘Caroline’

**Teacher Aide:** ‘Elizabeth’

**Administration Manager:** ‘Joanne’

**Board of Trustees chair:** ‘Freya’

**Vision**

The Principal, Chair of the Board and teachers all expressed a similar vision for the school, which was the provision of a rich learning environment. There was a strong emphasis on a positive school climate, and strict behaviour management policies and guidelines that seem to be adopted by all teachers. Community participation in the school was valued and encouraged.

The principal had a clear expectation that school staff would be involved in a range of extra curricular and community activities. The wide range of extra activities offered in and through the school was evidence of the vision in action. The teachers interviewed strongly supported the school's commitment to education beyond the classroom, although some acknowledged it did add to their workload and to their stress at busy
times of year.

**School composition, behaviour management and pastoral care**

As a Decile 5 school, School F was made up of students from across the socio-economic spectrum. All staff interviewed reported that student behaviour was generally very good, supported by the high behavioural standards promoted at school and enforced through a clear disciplinary process. Three years ago a new deputy principal introduced a seven step graduated disciplinary process with clear sanctions, balanced by incentives and rewards for good behaviour. The staff found this very effective and said it had brought about a noticeable improvement in student behaviour.

Keeping students busy was another element of the approach to pastoral care and behaviour management. The school purchased a wide range of sports and other play equipment for the students to use at interval and lunch time. Playground behaviour was closely monitored and a supervised 'time out' room was used to manage any incidents of bad behaviour.

Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) were based at School F and provided valued support to teachers.

Teachers agreed that managing student behaviour is an important feature of their work. Alison described it as: “Constant. It's low-grade, but constant.”

**Perceptions of workload**

Teachers reported working hard but finding the job satisfying. One stated:

> I work hard. I do a lot of work, but for the most part I get the rewards.

> It's full-on, but I do get satisfaction from providing new and creative activities.

Roy, who has been teaching for many years, commented:

> I think the workload has probably quadrupled in the time I've been
teaching. I can't do things I used to enjoy. For instance, I used to trawl through craft books looking for ideas of things to do with the children, I used to spend much more time making more interesting and imaginative displays for the wall. I'm a bit resentful about it, it was a valuable part of what I did – research for wider variety.

Betty stated:

It's good, and I like it. If I didn't love it I wouldn't be doing it, but the extra stuff can sometimes overwhelm you and the classroom work suffers – you wing it because you haven't had a chance to plan.

Freya, the Board Chair, identified Ministry emphasis on teachers using a wider range of assessment tools to establish students' progress and achievement as a major workload issue for teachers. They had to learn new and different ways of assessment. Teachers themselves stated that the current practice of school-wide assessment in March, June and November added considerably to their workload, and some questioned whether it was entirely necessary.

Teachers felt at times that the extra-curricular and community involvement expectations threatened to push their workload over the edge. Although they all thought it was important for the school to be fully involved in the community, this was an area of activity that teachers believed could be 'dropped', if necessary, without any detraction from the quality of their teaching. However, teachers still acknowledged that those activities were important in building relationships and offering a rich learning environment to students.

The principal was clear that he expected teachers to be on site until 4.30 or 5.00 pm unless they had a reason to be somewhere else.

**Workload management**

Teachers described a range of techniques they used for managing their workload. Many of them centred around being very organised, having a routine, establishing and keeping to a clear hierarchy of priorities. Importantly, several teachers mentioned the
need to accept that the job will never be done to their complete satisfaction, and that there will always be other things they could do to be a better teacher.

Joint planning and, in some cases shared delivery of some aspects of the program were also found to be very helpful in keeping the workload manageable. Team planning was actively encouraged in the school, and in the senior school some team teaching had also been introduced.

The principal and Board Chair were very aware of the pressures on teachers and in particular of the extra pressure created by the expectation of involvement in co-curricular activities. Teachers also believed workload pressures were well understood by the school and that efforts were made to reduce their workload.

Teachers found the provision of a release day to write reports very helpful, and indicated that the principal was very supportive if teachers felt overburdened. Teachers were less enthusiastic about the number of meetings they had to attend, but most accepted that was probably unavoidable with the principal's consultative management style – a style that they appreciated.

Teachers were being supported to upskill in ICT and to make full use of the computerised student management and assessment software. The principal was convinced that effective use of the software saved teachers time in recording and analysing student achievement information.

In response to being asked what the Ministry of Education could do to further support teachers and reduce their workload, the principal and two teachers mentioned the enormous increase in the material they had to read, and how helpful it would be if all documents the Ministry wanted teachers to read could include a concise summary. Roy made this comment:

All of these things are drawn up by people who live and breathe that particular issue.....They all think theirs is the most important thing we have to do. They need to realise how much teachers have to do.

All of those interviewed acknowledged that the school was well resourced. The PTA
fundraises very actively and the Board of Trustees was generous with curriculum budgets. There was general agreement that school funds were well-managed and wisely spent. Most teachers had no personal workspace other than the desk in their classroom, and while a few classrooms were large and versatile spaces, teachers considered other classrooms too small for the number of students they accommodated.

**Planning, assessing, marking and record keeping**

Team planning was a strong feature of all syndicates in the school. Team teaching was also becoming more prominent in some syndicates. This meant, for example, that when studying New Zealand history, teachers will develop different aspects of the unit (e.g. Treaty of Waitangi) and would teach it to each class in turn. This had also happened in the arts, with one teacher specialising in each of singing, dancing, drama and music and the students moving between teachers.

Two teachers, who had both been in the profession some time, questioned the extent of the assessment required. Whole school testing took place in March, June and November at this school, and they were unconvinced of the value of such constant testing to either the students or to the teacher.

Teachers acknowledged a change in practice over recent years, which had seen the inclusion of more formative assessment (feedback) in the classroom program, with a tendency to replace the summative assessment (marking) previously undertaken.

The Board Chair felt that better professional development to upskill teachers in new forms of assessment would make the biggest difference to reducing the pressure of teacher workload.

**Curriculum, professional leadership, teaching and learning**

Teachers at School F were generally in favour of the new curriculum. One teacher, who had been teaching throughout the introduction of the current curriculum, said it was disappointing and created a lot of extra work for teachers when many of the supporting documents did not come out until some time after each curriculum was
introduced.

The principal also mentioned the breadth of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework and the huge demands that placed on teachers. With the curriculum stocktake well underway, Roy made a plea that the Ministry resist wholesale change that, in his view, would put teachers under intolerable pressure.

Professional leadership was provided by the principal and each of the syndicate leaders. The principal commented:

As principal I am still the leader, but I am no longer necessarily the expert. I spend 50% of my time in the office…the experts are the practitioners who do it every day.

The three syndicates operated as professional communities for those who were part of them. Staff found their colleagues very supportive and always willing to share ideas of good practice. Syndicate leaders were given two hours a week release time in recognition of this responsibility. The principal acknowledged that the time was insufficient for the work required. Within each syndicate teachers took responsibility for areas of the curriculum; these teachers then met across syndicates to form curriculum committees.

The principal expressed a strong commitment to professional development. Most commonly, professional development involved sending teachers on courses to meet development needs they had identified, although some whole school professional development was provided through staff meetings. Teachers perceived the school management to be very responsive to requests made for professional development.

**Paperwork and ICT**

The amount of paperwork – both material to be read, and the recording teachers had to do – was a recurring theme of the interviews at School F.

Teachers were challenged by the constant influx of material to be read and absorbed. A senior school teacher who was also the sports co-ordinator made the point that the
inflow of paper had increased in the years in which she had been teaching:

In my cubby-hole today for example are several brochures about PD opportunities, lists of sports teams that need to be contacted, reports to parents, reports to college to go with our Yr 8s, timetable changes and some curriculum stuff. You have to really make decisions about what you are going to read.

Teachers identified a range of paperwork that they had to complete. This included: the preparation of long-term plans, work plans and schemes; recording student assessment information, particularly after school-wide testing; and the paperwork that accompanied professional development in new assessment techniques.

School F had had a strong emphasis on upskilling teachers in the use of ICT. The principal described the school as “about the middle of the pack” when it came to teacher confidence in using ICT in classrooms and for managing teacher workload. Every teacher had a laptop, but some teachers were still developing their proficiency with ICT and could become discouraged by hardware or network problems.

**Support staff**

School F did not use its administrative staff to provide direct support to teachers. Teachers all had laptops and access to printers, and any non-teaching tasks they need to do – such as photocopying or preparing and producing notes for parents – they either did themselves or asked a teacher aide to do.

The school employed eight teacher aides to assist teachers with a range of tasks. In 2005, an average of one-hundred and three teacher aide hours a week was paid for out school funds, in addition to other hours of support for identified students funded directly from the Ministry. The school used teacher aides to assist identified individuals and to support classroom teachers in whatever ways the teacher found most useful.

Each syndicate had a teacher aide from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm daily, and teachers differed in how they liked to use this support. Some asked the teacher aide to
withdraw small groups of students for individualised attention under the guidance of the teacher; others asked the teacher aide to do straightforward assessment tasks such as running records or school entry assessments. Teacher aides also assisted in the preparation and organisation of resources.

One experienced teacher aide who had been at School F for over ten years had Limited Authority to Teach, and ran a program similar to a reading recovery program. This teacher aide, who had her own room to work from, had Friday afternoons as non-contact time to prepare material for the week ahead.

The School F Board allocated money to professional development for support staff, and teacher aides were encouraged to undertake the Teacher Aide Certificate through their local university. Support staff had monthly meetings in school time. They were also welcome (although their attendance was not required) at staff meetings.

**Summary**

School F played a strong and active role in the local community. As well as being a full primary school it offered a pre-school program, after-school program and a community education program. There was an expectation that teachers would actively contribute to the school beyond their work in the classroom.

Teachers found their jobs busy but satisfying. At times the school's commitment to co-curricular activity could leave staff feeling they had insufficient time to prepare classroom work to their satisfaction. However, for the most part they felt that they do manage both aspects of their work, and they had a strong belief that the co-curricular opportunities enhanced student engagement.

Paperwork was an issue for some teachers. The volume of material to be read, as well as the amount of recording they had to do, added to workload pressure. The principal had a strongly consultative style, which possibly added to the amount of paperwork circulated for teachers to read. At times some teachers became frustrated about the number of meetings and the number and length of documents they needed to read. However, they appreciated this consultative style of leadership.
The Board of Trustees was strongly supportive of teachers and provided generous curriculum resourcing and teacher aide support.

SCHOOL H

School profile

School H is a former mining town in a rural area. Although the mine has closed, many people are employed in the nearby freezer works, with parents working different shifts. There is also a transient population of itinerant workers, with dairy contracts finishing in the middle of each year. The area is generally low socio-economic, with many sole parent households and high unemployment during the off season. A minority of students come from farming families. School H has an enrolment of 130 students. The school is over a century old, with attractively remodelled buildings and play areas. Six classes are currently operating, with one teacher partially funded by the Board of Trustees. The school has been reclassified from Decile 2 to Decile 4, with an accompanying reduction in funding. One criterion used was the number of children per bedroom. In this older community, housing is cheap and houses are large, yet socio-economic problems remain static.

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

Principal: ‘Kate’

Chairperson of Board of Trustees: ‘Victor’

Years 3 and 4 Teacher: ‘Danielle’

Years 1, 2 and 3 Teacher: ‘Stephanie’

Years 7 and 8 Teacher: ‘Kristina’

Years 6 and 7 Teacher: ‘Emma’

Teacher Aide: ‘Annie’

Administrative Officer: ‘Patricia’
**Vision**

Staff articulated the vision of the school as being to maximise the learning of each individual and to provide for all levels of ability. The principal defined the vision as “to offer an education according to individual needs and abilities, encourage pupils to have a positive attitude about themselves and take responsibility for their own learning.”

**Behaviour management and pastoral care**

The school has clear and consistent behaviour management systems in place. One teacher commented: “Our students are generally well-behaved. The principal is proactive and we have quick contact with parents…Years ago consistency was more of an issue, but we have a schoolwide discipline plan, with the same set of rules and structures. This alleviates discipline problems.” A successful strategy was the employment of Home/School Cards, which could be requested by either teachers or parents. The child’s behaviour was recorded hourly both at home and at school, with rewards for good behaviour. This close alignment reduced stress for all concerned and had a positive effect on teaching and learning. “Behavioural management is close to dreamlike. I am teaching functionally in my room all the time.” This teacher rated time spent on behavioural issues as two out of ten. There were now twenty-four students in her class. When there were twenty-eight prior to re-organisation, she rated this issue as four out of ten, one factor being that there were more students physically closer to each other.

Stephanie, who had been teaching for thirty-two years, commented that immediate contact with parents and the strong discipline plan developed over time by staff, students and parents were effective means of enhancing teacher effectiveness. She too rated the behavioural management time issue as only two out of ten.

Another strategy that the school had successfully developed was the abolition of homework, apart from reading, spelling and tables. “Mum’s working, dad’s on nightshift, there is [now] no homework where supervision or computers are needed.” Formerly the staff were offering supervised homework sessions, but not all children
could attend and students often required further help and supervision. The new system reduced stress for all concerned, while emphasising the importance of children taking some responsibility for their learning at home.

The Board of Trustees Chairperson commented that he has never been involved in discipline matters, “never a stand down or a suspension...the school is pro-active if a child is not toeing the line...The parents can ask for a Home/School card and have a reward system. It’s a bit more work, but less work in the long run.” Student behaviour really did not seem to be an issue in this school. In fact the only example provided was “defiant ice-skaters” on frozen puddles.

One teacher’s comment was: “As a previous relieving teacher, it was always interesting to me to be in the so-called ‘best’ schools, and view the behaviour from those students, compared to the smaller schools that were seen to be ‘disadvantaged’ for one reason or another.”

**Perceptions of workload**

“A lot of teachers have a personal ethos and philosophy where you like to have everything done and you just can’t.” Danielle described her workload as “ongoing, never finished, always something else that should be being done...there is an ongoing feeling of guilt, where I know there are other things I should have done and just don’t have the time or energy.” Danielle has been teaching for over twenty years and is now “doing more than I ever did...Continual change is the worst thing at the moment.”

Stephanie described her workload as “heavy but of my own making. If you’re [a good teacher] you’re a perfectionist. I owe it to the children [to be prepared.] I don’t ever want to be seen as an older teacher who just comes in and leaves [at 5.00 pm.]” Like several other clearly dedicated and hardworking teachers in this study, Stephanie wanted to take responsibility for lack of time: “Sometimes [my workload] is not manageable, but maybe I’m not good at ways of managing time...My husband has a part-time job and is able to take other jobs off me, which makes my workload more manageable.” Nevertheless, Stephanie’s professional workload meant that she
dropped her hobbies, clubs and fitness regimen.

“My workload is full on, it’s a six day a week job, I’m never finished, never feel satisfied, I feel I’m underachieving all the time…I’m always a teacher, I want a life.” For this teacher work/life balance was an unresolved area. Emma described her workload as “totally full on, hectic…It can be mind-blowing getting your head around things…No matter how hard you try there’s always something else to do. It’s hard to make time out for work/life balance…At times I feel that the workload is having a negative effect on my health. Even when you try to relax, things pop into your head that you could be doing for school, or adding to a unit of work.” Emma also cited one source of “unwritten” stress: “You are accountable for educating a child. Of course this hangs over your head, you hope they have grasped the fundamentals by the time they move through to the next class.”

Further teacher comments included: “Seven curriculum areas to be covered is very demanding….Teach all curriculum areas, teach to individual children and their needs and goals Help them with individual needs if they are not achieving, track their progress, cater for gifted and talented…. Does the Ministry really know what our job’s all about? Do they really know what’s going on and how we are going to fit everything in? It would be 7.00 am to 9.00 pm if you let it.”

“I feel the workload just keeps on increasing. There seems to be so much paperwork, and it only seems to be increasing…At times, the workload seems reasonable and then other weeks or terms it seems to hit pretty hard….I have never thought that teaching was nine to three job, but to be at school early in the morning, as well as staying late, and then having work taken home in the boot of a car to complete over the weekend seems to me unreasonable…Everyone always says we have a lot of holidays, but then how much of that time is spent at school updating student records, organising new class groups, planning and finding resources etc.”

The principal’s view was that teacher workload was becoming “more and more complex”, but that “motivated dedicated teachers will never complete work/marketing/preparation in all curriculum areas to levels they would like.” She
commented that some teachers did, however, manage their workload better than others: “Some are more adaptable to change and think through how to work smarter and not harder.” Examples included conferencing students and marking books on a roster basis.

Principal and staff had discussed the number of assessments being completed and reported to the Board. “With everything else, it just seemed to be getting heavier and heavier, so we modified the assessments so that some first assessments are not reported but the ones at the end of the year are etc.” Emma also commented that Kate “keeps an eye on how long we stay behind at school [so that teachers are not there for too many hours].”

Teacher aide Annie was formerly a volunteer. She now worked mainly in one room and helped with individual student needs. “The teachers just haven’t got the time to sit with everybody.” Annie described teachers’ workload as “incredible…I wouldn’t like to manage it. I can go home and sit in a chair – they’ve still got to keep going.” She observed teachers working in class, and commented that sometimes the amount of paperwork seemed “ridiculous…they’re doing six things one month and five the next.” She thought it would make a real difference to teacher workload if paperwork could be reduced. Her own workload she found manageable. “I support Danielle [in class], if you see something needs doing you just do it. I love my job, I really do.”

Administrative officer Patricia found her workload generally manageable. She described teachers’ workload as “pretty heavy…I wouldn’t like to be a teacher today, it’s changed since I came in 1982. There is far more paperwork, all sorts of things, every subject every day, marking, collating, graphing, it all takes time.” Patricia wanted to tell the Ministry: “Ease up and don’t move so fast, pull back and give them some breathing space. Ease up on the requirements of reporting.”

Teachers in general felt that the small size of the school reduced their workload, as so much was achieved during their lunch and interval breaks. One pointed out that she knew many schools had three afternoon meetings per week, whereas they have only one, mainly for professional development. “Our meetings are very structured, with
Resources and environment

Class size was an issue, although the principal had a philosophy of maintaining small classes and the Board of Trustees partially funded a teacher. Reorganisation of classes midyear had meant that the senior class, for instance, had thirty students. Another class now had twenty-eight students. “The whole class dynamic changed with four extra students…It’s absolutely easier if it’s a smaller class” was one comment. The school wanted to maintain a ceiling of 20 for junior classes and 25 for senior classes, but this had not been possible.

General resources at the school were described by staff as very good.

Government initiatives/requirements

 Teachers in this as in other schools generally supported the changes in pedagogy “Inquiry based learning is not so teacher directed, they’re taking more ownership for goals and learning. It’s a beneficial initiative - if they’re interested, behaviour problems diminish, and there is more ownership as they move up the school.” What concerned teachers, however, was the pace of change.

If the school followed the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle) track “enormous data entry” was required. “The Ministry is pushing it, but I wonder if it just presents us with information we already know from our everyday teaching…Things are dropped out of nowhere by the Ministry…For the last two years we have been spending all our energy on new initiatives, we just get the hang of it and it’s something new…We don’t have time to consolidate and build in…there’s always something that has to be put on the backburner because you just don’t have the focus.”

“There never seems to be a year when teachers have time to consolidate their teaching.” In the principal’s view, government initiatives had had “a huge impact on teachers’ workload.” She saw a real need for Ministry initiatives to be co-ordinated at all levels. One frustration was that support materials were not always released
simultaneously with the initiative and that schools worked independently on various aspects of the contracts. “We need to be on contracts to keep the school up to date. It’s a huge learning curve…Later the MoE will come out with a template that would have prevented you from re-inventing the wheel.” The Ministry could help in this respect: “If there is a change in thinking, bring out everything [including the support material] at the same time…sometimes it is put out after hours have been wasted by teachers [developing something similar.]” Teachers felt that unnecessary duplication of work was another addition to workload. With regard to initiatives, “we need to be told how to do things, not left to discover it for ourselves. The Ministry should be telling us in advance and showing us ways to do it…Schools could still allow for individual situations.”

The principal felt that the pace of change is definitely adding to workload. “A new curriculum document every year adds to workload. Here, we try to streamline workloads but if you’re a good teacher you want to keep up and then it’s overload…. Paperwork is making teachers more accountable, not necessarily teach better. Teachers are spreading time over a wider range of things…We need to allow teachers time to reflect on programs…Inquiry learning will be the best thing that’s ever happened to teaching and learning, [but] people are obsessed with objectives…Slow down on the changes and paperwork. On the one hand it’s prescriptive and on the other hand we’re expected to be producing thinkers…Slow down the pace of new initiatives. What you’ve developed is really important but we need time to consolidate and reflect…Give us a chance to know what it’s about before it becomes policy, it’s so hard to keep your focus…The major change I’d like the Ministry to make is to give us time to consolidate.” This was a recurring theme at this and other schools.

The principal summed up the general support for the curriculum initiatives but also the concern at lack or time for effective assimilation of change: “At present I feel the Inquiry Learning and ICT development will lead to better teaching and learning, as will Literacy and Numeracy initiatives based on skills but Principals and staff need time to implement and then consolidate change – better teaching and learning will take place when this is allowed to happen…Please allow teachers time to learn new

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skills, implement and practise these before throwing another new initiative at them.”

**Admin and other support**

The Board of Trustees spent half of its grant to provide teacher aides to help with teacher workload, a position much appreciated by staff. The teacher aides in this school were part of the school team.

Danielle had a teacher aide in her room at the moment, “a hangover from when I had twenty-eight in the class and several Independent Learning Programs.” The program was “manageable at the moment and I am achieving a heck of a lot more than I would on my own.” While the aide assisted with tasks such as photocopying and putting resources away during whole class teaching sessions, Danielle liked her to spend most of her time working with the students. The aide marked spelling tests and helped with individual writing conferences. As most of Danielle’s assessment is formative, she needs to do this herself, but thinks an aide would be very helpful with data entry if the school goes down the asTTle track. Stephanie described her morning teacher aide as “almost another teacher.”

Several staff members at this school, including the administrative officer, indicated that support in the form of an ICT technician would reduce teacher workload. One teacher commented: “If access to a paid technician one day a week were available, it would save teachers hours…Teachers stress out when programs don’t work.” Another comment was that simply having someone to assist in organising student files would reduce workload. “A technician would be very helpful for checking and deleting files. ICT is brilliant, but the network doesn’t work all the time, which is very stressful. Someone to troubleshoot and to spend two to three hours a week in the classroom would be a great support.”

**Professional community**

“We’re extremely lucky – we have a really on board principal. Professionally it’s great, and we feel supported.” Teachers at this school felt very much part of a professional community. “We are a team, all focussed on the same thing. We discuss
problems and issues over lunch and morning tea. We nut it out between us, everyone is aware of what’s happening…We work as a team largely but are allowed to pursue our individual goals. There is a lot of good debate at meetings and lunchtimes. We are good resolvers of difficulties. We talk about units, we have consensus and review. When we go to staff meetings, we’re focussed, we know the week before what it’s about, our meetings are worthwhile. Kate is very organised and we have very good procedures.”

Professional readings were prepared before staff meetings, with staff members taking it in turn to lead the discussion. Professional development had a whole school focus, with teachers going out of the school on an individual basis not usually being viewed as valuable.

ICT was the focus of much professional development. “Our meetings are really good, we have fun at them all.” The concept of “fun” was one raised at another school also, where the principal described the need for “fun and flippancy.” Certainly “fun”, in conjunction with leadership support, seems to contribute to team spirit and collegiality and general perception of workload. At both schools where these comments were made, teachers clearly felt valued and supported by the school leadership. A comment from one teacher at School H was “Kate is very inclusive. Our ideas are really valued. Kate is really straight. What you see is what you get.”

“We are a professional team, a close-knit staff. There is a lot of light-hearted joking, you can always ask for help. Kate’s door is always open, she’s always there to show you how to improve or to say something’s great. We share unit work, especially ICT, at staff meetings. Danielle will share shortcuts she’s learned. People will come and ask for opinions in areas of strength. I’ve been in other staffrooms where it isn’t like that. Here you’re one of the fold, it’s such a nice environment to be in. We are very well supported here.”

“We work as teams for certain topics or events…We work as a whole school on many occasions as we’re not big enough to have syndicates…Often discussions in the staffroom centre around teaching and learning. Most staff meetings centre around
professional development.”

An additional and notable strength of this school is the positive relationship between the staff and the Board of Trustees. The Board Chairperson commented: “We work as a team, teachers are valued and supported.” The principal agreed: “The Board are extremely supportive. A lot of schools have contentious issues between Boards and staff that would increase teachers’ workload…if [our Board] didn’t have the philosophy that we need all the teacher aides, teacher stress would be up horrendously. I know heaps of schools who would only get one teacher aide and we’ve got three.”

**ICT**

One teacher commented that one problem with ICT time requirements was “unforeseen things”, an example being “struggling for two hours with password problems.” Danielle felt, however that “in the long run it’s helping teachers, giving teachers skills and upskilling children…Charts of progression will help teachers but there is a lot of spadework that has to be done regarding changing methodology in teaching and learning.”

In general, however, teachers found ICT very helpful. “The laptop has helped enormously, it’s just fantastic.”

**Additional comments and/or summary**

Several staff members found the ERO to be “an ongoing problem.” “Planning doesn’t improve. In describing what’s already happened, we’re covering ourselves to show we’ve been doing our jobs.” One staff member would like to ensure that “everything we have to provide actually has an impact in the classroom and if it doesn’t it’s not worth doing.” She also commented that the ERO is not always “in sync” with the Ministry. “For example, a school might be on track in a contract, but new documents will supersede what’s happening.” The ERO “come along every three years and ask for things that we were unaware had to be in place…A list from the MoE would help. Most paperwork is caused by running around not knowing…there should be no
surprises with an ERO visit.” “There should be lists and documentation of exactly what is needed as a baseline in schools...the ERO shouldn’t be asking for extra things.” Another recommendation was that the ERO perspective be national rather than provincial. “We should all be dancing to the same tune.” “We want to know what to do and to know if we’re doing it well. We don’t want a watchdog.”

This staff also saw the lack of leeway in number of class groups provided as a major concern. In this small rural town of many itinerant workers, enrolment numbers can change in an unpredictable way at different times of the year. This was particularly the case midyear, when dairy contracts finish and share farmers move around. Some families move out of the area or there may be a sudden influx of students, as has been the case at this school for the last two years. It was likely but not certain this year that another classroom would need to be opened. This was a disruptive and time-consuming process. “It’s so frustrating...six months planning work was wasted...A little more leeway is needed, a term’s discretion here or there.” These midyear demographic changes were described as a general issue in rural areas, and particularly in dairy areas. The scenario of being unable to open up an extra class because the school is a few students short, and then needing to do so midyear, clearly created a large extra workload for teachers.

The principal described this issue as “a real biggie, it’s ludicrous and makes a horrendous workload...Some children are on their third teacher this year and two teachers have only six children they’ve had all year...it makes a horrendous workload. Enough is enough, we need to have a leeway of up to ten kids.”

One teacher at the school found some of the Ministry materials such as the “Figure It Out” books to be “a brilliant smorgasbord” but would appreciate training in how best to use them. A suggestion was that two day workshops be offered during term breaks for this kind of professional development:

I would go to a course if it were well run and not too costly. I’m totally stuffed after school. One day in isolation can be quite stimulating, but it’s not enough. You cram everything into six hours. A good two day course in
the holidays would be more effective. There are ten weeks in the year when we could do some professional development. Make it optional, when the pressure is off and you’re in the frame of mind to listen.

Positive factors working to reduce workload in the school were collegial planning and sharing, both formal and informal, productive formal meetings and tightly organised procedures and structures. Documentation was also highly organised, clear and specific. There were minimal behavioural problems and a real sense of shared pride in the school and its accomplishments: “Despite what people may think about this area, it’s not like that. I’ve loved it here.”

**SCHOOL J**

**School profile**

School J is a Decile 5, previously Decile 3, school. It is situated in a lower socio-economic suburb that is now becoming fashionable in a large city. It is a co-educational school that caters for new entrants up to Year 6. The school comprises five-hundred and forty students from approximately thirty-five national backgrounds. There is a very positive air throughout the school. Respect and trust between staff and leadership is well deserved and this carries through to the student population. Classrooms are well resourced and display student expression and achievement. There is a strong sense of partnership and joy in student learning throughout the school.

**The following people were interviewed during the school visit:**

*Deputy Principal*: ‘Michael’

*Board of Trustees (BOT)*: ‘Frank’

*School Secretary*: ‘Abby’

*Teacher Aide*: ‘Maddie’

*Junior syndicate lead teacher*: ‘Ben’

*Junior syndicate teacher*: ‘Gwen’

*Junior syndicate teacher*: ‘Greg’
Vision

All staff members interviewed were able to articulate the school vision. Life long learning and promoting excellence in a safe environment were the aspects most voiced by them. The ethnic breakdown of the school was in the minds of all staff and obvious emphasis has been placed on promoting a learning community that celebrates the multi-cultural nature of the school. Senior staff were conscious of their role in promoting the vision of the school through their example. The focus on “pursuit of excellence” for each child is part of the ethos of the school in general and is specifically addressed in the two developing talents classes, one for 3/4’s and one for 5/6’s.

School J also provides a Tongan emphasis class. The Deputy Principal stated that the staff are passionate about child achievement and that their striving for excellence is founded in realistic expectations. The BOT member was enthusiastic about the community involvement in the direction of the school and the sense of belonging felt by the community. She felt that the structure the senior management have put in place is conducive to working together to achieve the vision of the school.

Behaviour management and pastoral care

As a whole, the people interviewed commented about the disruptive behaviour of the past, some saying “ten years ago”. It was a general feeling that the behaviour problems of the past were in the past. All staff felt that the systems in place to address
issues were ones that would reach a satisfactory outcome. It was stated that current behaviour problems were with only two percent of the student population. One of the strategies teachers use is to spend time talking to all members of their class about home, belonging and achievement. On average ten to twenty percent of teacher time is spent in behaviour management and pastoral care. This, however, is not all in the negative as teachers saw reinforcing good work and good behaviour as an important way of maintaining harmony within the classroom. It was stated that little bullying takes place in the school. The “Chance Program”, where students are given warnings concerning anti-social behaviour and time to alter their behaviour, is in place and is seen to be working. All staff felt sufficiently supported by senior management and the systems in place. The school had assigned one of the AP’s to Special Needs, which included behaviour problems, and the staff expressed their confidence in this AP and her ability to find appropriate solutions. The school has the support of two Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) officers and this seemed sufficient to the teachers.

**Perceptions of workload**

Staff members felt that the management team was responsive to their views and needs. Recent changes to reporting methods had lessened the written workload by replacing lengthy written reports with face to face parent teacher interviews. Staff meetings have become focused on professional development and management issues were covered electronically. Senior teachers have been allocated one day per fortnight as a teacher release day thus enabling them to carry out whole school curriculum and other duties, such as appraisals.

The deputy principal shared the view that professional development is one of the keys to school improvement. The up-skilling of staff enables them to function more easily and efficiently. Although teachers “try to do too much”, in that there are not enough hours in the school day to complete the task satisfactorily she believes by prioritising and having good routines they can function satisfactorily in their roles. Staff informed me that they only have to approach management with a workload issue and they will receive appropriate support. The onus is on the individual staff members to make the
approach, this goes hand in glove with the autonomous way in which teachers work in this school. Teachers are self-directed and all staff members are encouraged to take up ‘across the school’ responsibilities so they can participate in the culture of the school.

The workload is seen by teachers to be: “challenging, changeable, never ending, heavy, full on, long, tiring, mountainous, demanding and sometimes home misses out”. One teacher says she does more than she should but likes it that way, she becomes frustrated “if it isn’t right, the way I want it.”

**Managing work**

All teachers felt that they managed their workload and were in charge of their responsibilities. They were answerable to the principal and hence the Ministry but the person in charge of their appraisal was generally the one they answered to. The stress of the day to day work is bearable but at the pressure times eg. Assessment and Reporting the load became too much. Staff commented on the high number of curriculum documents. The annual professional development programme plans for two staff meeting times per term. These meetings are allocated to data entry regarding student achievement.

Many start early (before 7.30) stay until 5.30 or 6.00 pm and work at home after dinner, which they may need to prepare. Several stated that they must do their planning for the following week on Friday after school and they “don’t go home until it is done”. The unexpected can upset and unbalance a finely tuned routine and this will increase the stress on a teacher. Detailed planning for some is critical. For teachers new to the job it is essential and time consuming. A contributing factor to teacher stress is whether they have a family or not. The demands of young children alter they way their parents work. Many stated that their personal and professional pride are what drive them to work harder and longer. They come across as very dedicated to their students in particular and to all the students in the school. Several stated that when necessary their own family members miss out as they need to work after school at night and on weekends. There are feelings of guilt associated with this. Some teachers feel that the joy of teaching has been pressurized out of the classroom.
The goals for the class and each individual student are too demanding, yet they strive to achieve them, trying to do the best for each child. The BOT representative made the point that in this school teachers have pathways for expressing stress.

**Resources and environment**

All teachers stated that the school was well resourced. The teachers felt that the school budgets well. Whole school planning dictates what resources need to be purchased. Curriculum leaders are responsible for ordering for their subject area.

Team leaders had an office with a computer and printer, which is shared with team members. Each classroom had a computer. Not all teachers had their own withdrawal space; their desks are in the classroom. There are nine aides in the school supporting designated children under direction from the classroom teachers. There is one Special Needs teacher and 5 Administrative staff. In general there seemed to be adequate teaching spaces across the school. Recently the school has been changed from a Decile 3 to a Decile 5 school which means it has had approximately $100,000 cut from its allocation and the school community expectation is that there will be no lessening of the service provided.

**Government initiatives/requirement**

There is a general feeling within the school that timelines for the introduction of curriculum initiatives is too short and too close to the next initiative. Many agree with the direction that the Ministry is going and do not wish to retrace steps. In fact they will attempt to take on board and deliver Government initiatives without actually assessing the implications of this change. They trust their managers.

At times the professional development which supports new curriculum is insufficient. Teachers do not have enough time to take on board the new information, trial it to their satisfaction and assimilate it into their day to day classroom practice. This is particularly pertinent for new teachers who are establishing themselves in their classroom only to find that aspects are changing faster than they can accommodate them. Some find the documents associated with change, “wordy and not user
friendly”. Examples of best practice are considered most helpful if they arrive at the appropriate time. Many feel that the Performance Management Process is beneficial to them professionally and, as a result of the way it is undertaken in the school, see it as non threatening and in fact supportive.

The Assessment and Reporting initiative has meant that schools have data that tracks student progress over six months of consistent teaching. This provides valuable information on students and areas of curriculum requiring attention. Some teachers are not aware whether initiatives are school directed or ministry directed; it is not an issue for them. One teacher stated that any assessment that is linked to funding provides greater pressure for teachers.

The BOT representative said that the impact of government initiatives was considerable and that much more had been asked of teachers as a result of the changes to assessment and reporting. She would like to see change managed even better by “minimising process problems” and ensuring that change is well prepared, well introduced and well resourced.

**Time**

The school is aware of the need for more time to complete the tasks required of today’s teachers. Systems within the school have been altered to facilitate task completion. The school has diary entry reminders for a range of tasks including assessment and reporting. There is only one staff meeting per term for “housekeeping”. The intranet system facilitates administration communication. The school is aware of Ministry directions and attempts to take them up sooner rather than later.

Generally teachers prioritise with student needs at the forefront. If there is a conflict for their time they may choose to take time from their personal life and attempt to complete all required tasks by the deadline.

**Administration and other support**

Classroom teachers stated that they were supported by teacher aides and student
teachers in the classroom and received support on request from office staff for non-teaching tasks. Some teachers do not make requests to the office staff.

In 2004 some teachers had in-classroom support from parents who repaired resources, made teaching aides, put up wall displays, returned books to the library and heard children read. Some aides assist teachers by photocopying material. The school secretary supports the teacher responsible for the library by managing the computers in the library. Senior management take on tasks for teachers with respect to reporting to the Ministry but this is not necessarily seen by teachers as their work, it is “hidden” support.

**Leadership, support, and teaching and learning**

The first tier of management within the school includes the Principal, the Deputy Principal and the Assistant Principal. The staff see this team as extremely supportive operating an open door policy that responds positively to teacher needs. The Deputy Principal is responsible for management of the professional development requirements of staff and staff mentoring. The Assistant Principal manages the areas of “special needs” student learning and behaviour and general student management programmes.

The second tier of management within the school includes the syndicate leaders and senior teachers with curriculum responsibility. These teachers teach a class, as well as provide support for their colleagues in either the junior, middle or senior areas of the school. The school provides these teachers with one day per fortnight out of the classroom to enable them to attend to their extra duties. This suggests that the school sees classroom teaching as the core business of the school and a full time job. One syndicate leader used school excursions and camps to illustrate the changing nature of teacher responsibility. The Ministry has put in place regulations and associated guidelines to ensure the safety of all involved, and these are detailed and time consuming to implement.

The development of teaching and learning has been facilitated by the appraisal system that is operated by these school leaders. Classroom teachers are observed teaching,
and feel that any comments forthcoming will be constructive and herald suggestions for improvement. There is an enthusiastic atmosphere in this school.

**Professional community**

All staff in this school work in teams many have their school level as their major team but belong to other teams as well, for example, a curriculum team.

Working in teams is the preferred method although all staff say they are in charge of their classroom and enjoy the personal responsibility aspect of their work. The Deputy Principal stated that the school runs successfully due largely to all teams functioning well. Teachers recognize the need for professional development and see the links the school makes with whole school directions and individual teacher direction and needs. The collaborative planning that takes place at the beginning of the year and regularly during terms lays a foundation for regular professional dialogue. Despite having an appraiser staff feel free to discuss their teaching and learning with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal.

**ICT**

Many commented on the use of the computer system and saw it as an essential tool for planning, recording and communicating. Teachers who can touch type are at a distinct advantage.

The school is linked via an intranet and all teachers have access to the internet via the computer in their classroom. All classrooms have one computer. There are eighteen computers in the laboratory and six in the library, which has a computer operated system. Many teaches have access to the internet at home and can electronically transfer work done at home to school. The teachers at this school see ICT as an essential tool for communication across the school, “an absolute must.” All long term planning is now on computer and the cut and paste facility is a labour saving process when compared with writing plans out as was the way in the past. A number of teachers wish they could touch type so they could perform their computer tasks faster. Many believe that Ministry required data entry could be performed much more
efficiently by a clerical assistant, under their direction. There has been some frustration with the printing out of student reports when the system failed to perform the task satisfactorily. This has now been rectified.

A number of teachers stated that one computer in the classroom was not enough and that to be able to rotate a group of students onto computers in the classroom would greatly enhance their learning and their computer knowledge and skills. Not all students have a computer in their homes for their use.

Other teacher comments included:

“I believe that our teachers focus on quality not quantity.”

“I like team planning.”

“I would like to achieve a work-load family balance.”

“I would like to achieve a better balance between home and work life.”

“Now we are better at risk-taking, attempting new things.”

“I have a ridiculous amount of work which affects my health. I am tired and stressed. I eat for comfort.”

“When preparing reports I feel like my work life balance is on a roller coaster.”

“Fundraising takes hours of work away from core business.”

“I need more release time, one day per week and access to a clerical assistant.”

“One computer in the classroom is not enough.”

“Assessment takes a lot of your teaching time.”

“Education needs more money, teacher release is a good idea.”
SCHOOL K

School profile

This Decile 7 school is situated in a large regional town and has an enrolment of over 600 students. The problem of truancy has been successful addressed. Funding is a major issue.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Dennis’
Deputy Principal: ‘Ellen’
Assistant Principal: ‘Jay’
Senior Teacher: ‘Rhonda’
Senior Teacher: ‘Olive’
Teacher: ‘Tesha’
Teacher: ‘Renee’
Board of Trustees (BOT): ‘Amber’
Teacher aide: ‘Jade’
Executive Officer: ‘Alexandra’

Vision

Each member of the school community interviewed was aware of and could articulate the school vision, which centres around three words – Understand, Develop, Empower. The principal, his deputy principal and assistant principal worked together to filter the vision throughout the school community, so that it permeated the entire school in a myriad of ways. The vision had been used in the establishment of key competencies, and in the expectation of teacher performance at the school. The principal stated that the vision could be directly applied to learning at the school, in
that the teaching strategies intended to move the students from shallow to deep to profound learning.

The Board of Trustees member advised that the teaching staff ensured the vision was communicated to the wider school community through school newsletters, and through the visual representations of the vision in every classroom, which was presented in ways appropriate to the year level of the students.

**Behaviour management and pastoral care**

The principal was very happy with the behaviour management strategies that had been established over the last four years. He stated that there was ‘extreme’ behaviour, but with consistent and effective policy and procedures the behaviour was now excellent and there was zero truancy in the school. The school had a policy of early communication with parents, and there was also a behaviour tracking system on the school computer network. The deputy principal seemed to manage the behaviour strategy and stated that there were several steps in dealing with behaviour problems, the last resort being a suspension. The teachers stated that they felt supported with behaviour management. However, one did say more help from RTLB (Resource Teacher for Learning and Behaviour) would be helpful.

The deputy principal stated that she spent a lot of her time dealing with pastoral care issues; however, this was the community expectation of all schools nowadays.

**Perceptions of workload**

The school management stated that it monitored teachers and if their work load was becoming too great, time release was given. The principal had made a conscious decision to have fewer school meetings, and the meetings that were held focus on professional development. The principal believed that the ‘teachers work hard by choice’. He stated that there was no problem with staff absenteeism in the school, that the teachers were self motivated, worked late most evenings and were frequently at school over the weekend.

The teachers felt their workload was heavy. However they were not overly concerned.
One experienced teacher believed the workload is ‘a lot more than what it used to be’. One younger teacher said that teaching gave her a ‘chaotic lifestyle, but I enjoy it’. Some words the teachers used to describe their workload are, frantic, never ending, full on, stressful, fun.

**Managing work**

All the teachers stated that they managed their own workload. However, one senior teacher noted that the principal is the overall manager of the teacher workload, and that the school had developed strategies that assisted teachers. These strategies meant that there were not so many Achievement Objectives (AO), because the school has decided what its most important objectives were. Another teacher commented that the workload was ‘made easier if (the teacher) worked to guidelines laid down by the principal’. All teachers noted the importance of time management and prioritising tasks.

The principal, assistant principal and deputy principal all noted that the teachers work in teams, and the expectation is that work is shared. The senior leadership team (principal, assistant principal and deputy principal) spend time doing class release when teacher loads get too high, e.g. high testing time.

The assistant principal has been allocated up to two days each week to relieve the teachers who need to work one to one with students to complete School Entry Assessment (SEA) and 6 Year NETTS. These tasks require up to an hour per student.

The school appeared to foster a very collegiate approach, and all teachers noted that the team work and team discussions were a source of professional information and support. All teachers noted that they worked at home in the evenings and usually on weekends. Two of them stated that, ‘I love my job’, and one that she was ‘generally happy with (her) workload’.

**Resources and environment**

The teachers all felt that the school was well resourced with regards to facilities and equipment. All teachers had a laptop and computers are available in computer
laboratories. There is also at least one computer in each classroom. One teacher noted that there was a good staff library, and that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) had assisted with funds for this. Another teacher stated that her classroom was physically very small for the number of students (31). Classroom teachers do not have personal workspace, their desks were in their classrooms. All class sizes are between 29 and 31 students. This did not seem to be a problem for the teachers; however one noted that 25 would be a better number.

The teacher aide advised that she had no personal workspace, and because there was no ‘budget’ for teacher aides she tended to pay for her own needs, e.g. glue sticks, photocopies.

The principal was less satisfied than the teachers with resources, stating that the classrooms were physically too small for the older students, and that some were poorly designed. In the past this school has worked on open plan rooms, with large open areas holding several classes at once. After parental complaints, these spaces have been divided into individual classrooms. The older teachers at the school noted that the open classroom space did not always work well.

The principal stated that another local school, five minutes away received an extra $600,000 per year in funding, because of the decile ratings. The principal felt this was unfair, and resulted in the school having to raise considerable sums of money each year to support itself. The target for 2005 – 2006 is $65,000.

**Government initiatives/requirements**

The senior leadership team prepare an assessment timetable for teachers, and regular notice is given as to when assessment is due. No teachers seemed stressed by government initiatives or assessment, and even the executive officer, who has been at the school for twenty-five years, noted that her work is ‘made easier if (she) works to the guidelines laid down by the principal and BOT’. The school uses an intranet system. This intranet is used by teachers to forward assessment results and reports to senior management, who collate them and forward required information to the Ministry. One teacher noted that ‘not too much paperwork was required by the
school’ and that she felt trusted. The school has three formal testing times, and the results were seen to be of assistance to teachers in that they ‘need to know where the children are at’.

Teachers had no concerns with regard to staff appraisals, and the general feeling towards appraisals was positive. One teacher stated that it was an opportunity to become ‘aware of what you (as a teacher) were doing and how that was assisting children’.

The deputy principal felt that ‘standardised testing was difficult and wasted teachers time’, and that ‘formative assessment was better’.

**Time**

The teachers generally did not feel they had enough time to do all they wanted to. However, one teacher noted that her time management had ‘improved with experience’. Tasks were prioritised with regard to the ‘benefit to students’. There was no sense that meetings attended were wasting time, and all teachers stated that time spent in meetings contributed to the quality of their teaching. The principal advised that a conscious decision was made to ensure that meetings had a very strong professional development component, and the number and frequency of meetings is kept to a minimum.

**Administration and other support**

One teacher stated that she did not have access to administrative support. The other teachers, and members of the school community believed that good administrative support was available principally from teacher aides. The Assistant Principal also cited remote access via computer to the school as administrative support provided. One teacher noted that administrative support was available, but that she never used it, saying that teachers ‘don’t like asking’.

Interestingly no teachers mentioned the administrative support provided by the Assistant Principal and Deputy Principal in completing record keeping requirements.
Leadership and teaching

The BOT member described the principal as the prime motivator in the school. The principal stated that there were ‘definite delineation points’ in the school leadership, which involved senior teachers as Team Leaders as well as the principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal.

The senior teachers lead curriculum areas, the Deputy Principal is responsible for Maori language and is also the Literacy Leader in the school. The Assistant Principal is responsible for ‘special needs, timetabling and the nitty gritty’ and the principal is responsible for the gifted and talented program.

The teams meet fortnightly. The Assistant Principal stated that the team leaders are given ninety minutes release time per fortnight to be spent on curriculum issues, however one teacher stated that she led the Dance area and the Maths Curriculum Team and received no time release. Another teacher noted that although teams met fortnightly there is a large amount of ‘informal meeting’ where curriculum issues are discussed. All teachers stated that they worked in teams and that this was preferred to working individually.

Support from the school leadership team

All teachers at all levels said they felt professionally supported by the principal and school leadership. They felt this support was expressed in the approachability of the senior leadership team, and the support and procedures in place for student behaviour management. Several teachers said that the principal was always available to speak to about ‘any issue’, and if a teacher has a goal that s/he wishes to pursue the senior leadership ‘will help’. One teacher stated that on the day of the visit the principal had completed a letter of support to accompany her application for Master’s funding.

Professional community

All teachers and members of the school community stated that teachers work in
teams. The teachers felt that these teams worked well and were supportive, and working in teams was preferred to working individually. The teams meet formally once a week for one to two hours. However, teachers stated that there is a lot of informal meeting and discussion before and after school and at recess and lunchtime.

All teachers felt that the school had a very positive attitude to professional development. Staff meetings were used as opportunities for professional development and teachers themselves were encouraged to set their own professional development goals when completing their appraisals. Six-hundred dollars per year was allocated to each teacher for professional development, and the individual teachers had input as to where the funds should be directed.

One teacher noted that the staff were “encouraged to professionally grow”, and said that there was a lot of “professional dialogue” between the principal and staff.

*ICT*

The principal stated that laptop computers were available to all teachers, and each classroom had one to two computers. There was also an ICT suite with sixteen computers, and one Year 4 class has twelve computers. One teacher stated that the school needed more computers in the classroom.

All teachers stated that they used their laptops constantly for “internal email”, “school resources”, “planning” and “record keeping”. Computers are totally integrated into the school communication system.

*Closing comments*

One of the more experienced teachers stated that she had “learnt early that she needed a balance - her job was not her life.” A young teacher wondered how she could continue to do the job if she had her own children, and another noted that her husband was a school principal so could understand her time commitment.

The principal stated that most teachers are at school by 7.30 am and leave around 5.00 pm, and, as stated previously, there was no absenteeism amongst staff. He believed
that the teachers were totally committed to their work.

Teachers stated that the time release being introduced in term 4 would be very helpful.

The principal believed “equitability of funding” would be the change he would most like to see implemented. The school has an ongoing and necessary amount of fundraising it must do each year. The assistant principal also stated that fundraising takes a lot of extra curricular time. The BOT member stated that funding for the school was an issue. Last year the school financed reading recovery training, which meant $50,000 had to be raised by the school itself.

The teachers were less concerned about funding, but noted that smaller class sizes would be desirable, not just for logistical reasons, but to allow more depth in discussion. This was difficult with large numbers. There was a suggestion that more dialogue across the school could be helpful.

**SCHOOL Q**

_School profile_

School Q, a Decile 1 school, with an enrolment of 300 students, is situated in a rural area. The school is split into a junior syndicate and a senior syndicate for management purposes. Parents are increasingly consulted about student learning and have the option for their children to be educated in a bilingual Māori educational context.

_The following people were interviewed during the school visit:_

_Principal:_ ‘Reagan’

_Assistant Principal:_ ‘Cordelia’

_School Administrator:_ ‘Natasha’

_Teacher Aide:_ ‘Coral’

_Junior syndicate teacher:_ ‘Sandra’

_Junior syndicate teacher:_ ‘Jill’
Senior syndicate lead teacher: ‘Beryl’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Hilary’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Debbie’

Senior syndicate teacher: ‘Geraldine’

Vision

The members of the school community interviewed said that their vision was for their students to become independent learners pursuing excellence in a safe, happy environment. They wanted them to be proud, responsible for themselves and prepared for a future where they will be able to take on leadership roles.

Teachers emphasised that they wanted to encourage high aspirations in all of their students.

Behaviour management and pastoral care

All staff interviewed agreed that student behaviour in the school had improved dramatically over the last several years. Some teachers said that in the past the behaviour of a small number of students disrupted their classes and made it difficult to teach. With a new consistency in the management of behavioural problems the culture throughout the school had improved, thus diminishing unacceptable behaviour across the board.

Some students had very difficult home situations. Teachers of these students monitored them daily, hoping to diffuse any situations earlier rather than later. Each teacher was responsible for setting the tone in their class and in the first instance was required to make a reasonable attempt to solve behaviour problems. If teachers were unable to deal with the situation then they would call on their syndicate leader for assistance and when necessary the deputy principal or principal would be asked to intervene. At the start of the year teachers worked with their classes to establish rules for working in the school. This reinforced the practice of the previous year and set the
tone with their teacher for the coming year.

The deputy principal described the school as like an ark - the plan being that all on board would stay on board and every endeavour would be made to keep students at the school. It was not seen as an option for the Board of Trustees (BOT) to have the child removed from the school. This policy could impact heavily on the teacher directly responsible for the student and relied on appropriate support for all parties. Teachers discuss the management of student behaviour regularly at syndicate meetings. There was a collective responsibility for all students in a syndicate. The school had a social worker attached to the school to assist in this area of student need.

One teacher said it took her ten minutes of every lesson to deal with pastoral care and behaviour issues. She estimated that she would lose an hour a day of her teaching time. Another teacher commented that she did not have the sorts of behaviour problems that she had in the past. Extreme behaviour today might be that one boy might push another boy or that children might run in the classroom on a wet day.

**Perceptions of workload**

All those interviewed believed that the teaching role is getting more and more demanding. Teachers felt the pressure of the quantity of work across the curriculum areas. The changes to the curriculum and the skills required to teach the current curriculum had pointed out the shortfall in the ability of some “experienced” teachers, and this had put extra pressure on them.

Teachers described their situation as: demanding, never ending, heavy, terrifying, unreasonable, overloading, on going, time consuming, stressful, busy, frustrating, and challenging both physically and mentally. Several said that they were exhausted at the end of the day and especially at the end of the term. Some said they woke up in the night worrying about their work.

Other comments included:

“I am on top of my workload more days than not.”
“I used to stay later but now I’m more experienced and don’t need to.”

“There is an expectation in this profession that you will cope.”

“I have learnt how to balance home and work.”

“I always feel guilty about the work/family life balance.”

“I feel guilty about being sick.”

The senior management team was conscious of teachers’ workloads and provided en masse time release so that syndicates could do their term planning together. Teachers were given choices as to the areas of work outside the classroom they would take responsibility for and were supported and encouraged to inspire others with their efforts. The perception at the school was that the curriculum was overloaded and to address this they had placed emphasis on Literacy, Numeracy, Arts, Sports and PE in general and placed a specific focus on Science and Technology.

The principal believed that the changes to staff had improved the quality of teaching within the school. She believed that teachers work so hard because they are dedicated to improving the life chances of every child.

Managing work

The management team was conscious of the need for non-contact time and smaller class numbers if teachers are to function at their optimum level. It has made a conscious decision to decrease workload and behaviour problems in the future by ensuring that the number of students in the reception class remains at fifteen. The next class (a year one class) was maintained at fifteen also. There was a further Year 1 class and its numbers were a little higher.

Students with disability may have had a teacher aide allocated to them for a certain number of hours per day. The hours may be decreased as the student progresses and this lessening of in room support impacted on teacher workload.

All teachers were appraised and supported by a more senior member of staff.
Syndicates planned together, thus ensuring a consistency of curriculum delivery. Several teachers said that they have yet to plan the detail efficiently as a team. Individual teachers are allowed to plan in detail outside of the team. At times the Deputy Principal will plan a curriculum unit for a teacher group, saving them from doing it.

Teachers managed their work by prioritising and making daily and weekly lists.

One teacher writes comments about individual student’s progress on her program planner alongside what she is teaching for the day. She transcribes these notes later into her student records and finds these jottings assist her in future planning.

Another teacher marks each area of the curriculum every two days. She marks student work as they rotate in small groups through activities and records in detail at the same time.

One teacher commented ironically, “I have developed systems to enable me to do my classroom work and extra curricular work - I stay late and come here on Saturday.” Another commented: “I’m always anxious that I will forget something, that I won’t meet that deadline.”

**Resources and environment**

Both the senior management and the teachers feel that the school is well resourced. The comment was made that “we ask for what we want and we seem to get it.”

The school has taken advantage of the Ministry’s laptop program. All teachers feel that they have enough personal room in their classroom to function properly. They are pleased with the recent upgrades and the general look of the spaces across the school.

One teacher made the comment that the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning program that has been installed on the network is a very good resource.

**Government initiatives/requirements**

All teachers felt that the Ministry was making schools better teaching and learning
environments for children. The teachers are better skilled, better resourced and feel supported by the way the school runs the performance management process. The senior management team believes that the curriculum is overloaded and that teachers have more paperwork as a result of Government initiatives. One commented that there are too many Government Priorities, there should only be two (Numeracy and Literacy). All teachers believe that the government requirements have increased their workload. Some are concerned that they are meeting the needs of the curriculum and not the needs of the children - that depth and quality of learning may be losing to quantity. They felt that the recent directive with respect to PE will only increase teacher stress, despite the fact that PE and Sport are areas of focus across the school.

The classroom teachers believe that their students are doing better than in the past and that Government initiatives are in part responsible for this.

The Numeracy Initiative is highly praised by teachers in this school. It requires more work on the part of the teacher but the rewards are manifested in student advancement.

It was stated that it is important for Government initiatives to be fully resourced when presented to teachers or the introduction into the classroom may stall.

One teacher was full of praise for the Teacher Aide Trainee Program that was providing a trainee for her classroom.

**Time**

Many teachers start work at school between 7.00 and 7.30 am and leave at about 6.00 pm. There are those who run a sports program for students on Saturday morning for ninety minutes and then work for four hours or more at school in their classrooms.

Teachers at this school work thirty-four hours per week on average outside the classroom and this suggests that their working week is nearly sixty hours.

Some teachers short of time make decisions as to whether something is important to them or not and that might mean it doesn’t get done.
Several teachers said the last thing that gets done is the marking. Some left the collating of student work until the end of term rather than doing it as it arises.

Staff meetings are valued and generally focus on school wide issues, while syndicate meetings focus on teaching and learning and student behaviour. Staff meetings in the school are kept to one hour per week.

**Administration and other support**

The school office staff will follow up student absence by making contact with the parents. They order supplies of stationery and maintain stock on hand. They will retype letters and do photocopying for teachers. They will provide a lunch for a student on a request from a teacher.

Teachers would use a clerical assistant if one was provided and thought this support would be time saving for them. All teachers interviewed said they needed more teacher aide assistance to support them with children who have learning difficulties. They could use this type of assistance on a daily basis.

The teachers make use of the Resource Teaching Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) officer based in the school.

**Leadership, support, and teaching and learning**

All staff recognise and value the support they receive from the Principal and the Deputy Principal. They suggested that the behaviour management system wouldn’t work without the sound support provided by the Deputy Principal. The senior management team looks creatively at ways to support classroom teachers to perform their duties and maintain their health. The recent Ministry offer of two days’ time release each term opens up opportunities for better and different working situations throughout the year. Possibilities like job sharing and specialist teachers providing time release are limited in a small rural community. Teachers who take on curriculum responsibilities receive one and a half hours of time release per week. The Deputy Principal takes remedial reading groups during the week and releases the ICT officer from his classroom one afternoon per fortnight. To lessen the load for teachers the
Deputy Principal spends three days in the holidays preparing the student progress reports for the Ministry from teachers’ assessment folders. The assessment and reporting practices in the school have been streamlined, focussing teacher effort on student progress and improvement, ensuring that student results are closely monitored and deleting what was deemed non-essential material used to report to parents.

**Professional community**

Professional development is coordinated across the school with targets being set by the management team from written inputs from teachers. Staff value the professional development sessions but some teachers say there is not enough time to take on board what the professional development is offering before the next professional development comes along. The school provides voluntary professional development days during school vacation periods and these are well attended.

**ICT**

The school is linked by an intranet and all classrooms have access to the internet. All teachers have laptops. The school uses the computer system for term planning but not yet for assessment and reporting. Rather than send the school down an untried path with the assessment and reporting computerised package the staff have decided to monitor how various systems on offer perform in other government primary schools. A selection will be made soon.

Students use computers in the classrooms. Teachers believe they would use computers in their classroom on rotation in Numeracy and Literacy activities if classrooms had several more computers.

The possibility of using the computer laboratory in the local college has just arisen and is looked upon favourably by staff.

The classroom teacher in charge of ICT in the school works on average thirteen hours a week in this area.

The school has been able to gain the services of an ICT technician one afternoon a
week to fix any problems and make repairs.

In conclusion

This school staff is committed to the community it serves. One teacher commented: “I’ve grown up in the community and I want to give back to it.” Another said, “I love [this] school.” Teachers at this school know that some aspects of their job will be harder than at schools in larger towns. However, they are prepared to work very long hours displaying a level of dedication that is often to the detriment of their health and personal lives.

SCHOOL S

School profile

School S is situated in an older urban area of a regional town. The school comprises a series of attractive timber buildings and an interesting adventure playground and sports area for the children. The school is currently classified as Decile 4. There is a wide socio-economic mix, with some very low income families and many sole parent households. A number of children attend the school from outside the immediate area, which has contributed to the changed decile ranking. About 200 students are enrolled at the school. Student teachers, teacher aides and volunteers work alongside teaching staff.

The following persons were interviewed at this school:

Principal: ‘Bill’

Receptionist and administrative officer: ‘Wendy’

New Entrants: ‘Judith’

Junior Syndicate Leader, Years 2 and 3: ‘Angela’

Years 4 and 5: ‘Cameron’

Deputy Principal, Years 5 and 6: ‘Ross’

Teacher Aide: ‘Alison’
Member of Board of Trustees, volunteer worker: ‘Ella’

There were also informal meetings with a Reading Recovery teacher, a social worker and a police officer conducting a school program.

Vision

The vision of this school was described by all interviewed staff as enhancing teaching and learning. Other descriptive comments included “developing every child to potential…creating a safe environment.” The school vision is “ever evolving, offering kids the best opportunities to equip them for the world of today…The new pedagogy has meant a huge shift in teaching practice, a whole philosophical change from the teacher on stage to facilitator....We’re taking our children from being Fax machines to learning what, when and how.” “There is a strong school culture, we are a caring community who look after all school types, with a strong focus on thinking skills.”

Board of Trustees member Ella described the school vision as “very innovative…The Board is very conscious of the needs of the community and picks up on all the children’s needs. It saw the need for literacy, some children had hardly any oral language either… four or five years down the track we can see them at or above their level.”

Behaviour management and pastoral care

Pastoral care is a major and established part of the provision of this school. The Principal commented that some children have “significant behavioural needs” and that the recent unusual and innovative appointment of a school social worker recognises the needs of the school in this respect. Many families in the area are heavily dependent on outside agencies and staff clearly welcomed the additional support that this worker would be able to provide.

There are very clear systems for behaviour management within the school, with strategies constantly being reviewed. The Principal observed that “strong collegial support is necessary” and that expectations also need to be conveyed to parents through mechanisms such as Newsletters and 1:1 meetings. “The internal systems
need to be tight.” Behaviour management “affects quality teaching and learning”, and there is a whole school emphasis on having secure strategies in place and on upskilling teachers in this area. “Some strategies take teacher time, it’s evolving - those behaviour patterns do have impact.” This issue also “impacts on the type of person we employ - someone who understands that children don’t pop out at zero in the condition they arrive at school, teachers who are receptive and [can offer] sympathy, support and nurturing.” It is also clearly recognised that there is “a fine line in this philosophy, you can go too far in supporting a child and can hurt others in the classroom.”

New Entrants teacher Judith came from “an extremely privileged school to a school with huge social problems.” Only four out of twenty children in her class have two parents at home. “We’re picking up pieces…there are not sufficient resources in personnel or time…some teachers have incredibly difficult children.” Nevertheless, Judith ranked time spent on behavioural management as only two out of ten. One of the strategies for providing pastoral care, establishing effective behaviour management and enhancing learning opportunities is extensive note-taking and record-keeping for each child. The needs of a child could be for academic extension, remedial work, behavioural management or provision of a safe environment.

Teachers also record incidents on a T-drive on the school intranet, with comments being “clinical, very brief, non-judgmental.” This can provide a clear pattern of timing and consistency of behaviour. The Principal described this system as “a worthwhile strategy for the needs of this school” and one that teachers feel is “owned by the school.” All strategies and their outcomes are documented, a process that the Principal described as “a huge workload for administration and staff.” The school has, however, “chosen to do this and it has helped enormously. We have a clear track of historical data and can look with confidence at what has happened.”

A sense of teacher ownership of behavioural management and pastoral care systems was confirmed during teacher interviews. Cameron described the systems in place as being “very well monitored.” Any child with particular needs is identified and appropriate individual strategies put in place. Teachers are “well-supported” in this
respect. In his class, he would need to spend only about ten minutes a day on
behaviour management. He commented that the writing up of notes on children took
time but was necessary.

Ross described the school’s “buddy system”, whereby one teacher can ring another
for assistance as very effective. Angela recently spent a year at a Decile 10 school
with fewer behaviour management problems, but she finds the systems in place at
School S work well: “There is a similar approach throughout the school…It’s a good
system.”

It is clear that the systems in place, together with the philosophy and leadership of the
school, have a major effect on the capacity of teachers to function effectively. One
teacher commented: “We have the people who are there for the kids. Bill has an
incredible philosophy, It’s like a community. We have volunteers with intellectual
issues who are proud of their association with this place. We have a very good
reputation and talented staff.”

Perceptions of workload

“Every weekend there are teachers at the school.”

The Principal described teachers’ workload as “excessive.” However, he also
commented that “a lot is self-imposed by the expectations they put on themselves.”
As an example he provided the work involved in mid-year reports. “They do it
because they believe it is best for the children…Another strategy, another mechanism
less teacher dominated would be easier, but the philosophy of teachers and the system
requires extra work.”

Teachers at the school also involve themselves heavily and voluntarily in extra-
curricular activities such as competitions, Town Hall performances and camps. Bill
commented that community expectations are not always clearly defined, as might be
the case in a Decile 10 school. “In a lower decile school, there might sometimes be
greater appreciation, but not verbalised.” The high esteem in which parents hold the
school is one outcome of the voluntary work done by teachers and was evident in the
very positive results of the parental survey.

Different strategies at this school help to reduce both workload and perceptions of workload. Some strategies are collegial. The Junior and Senior Syndicates plan collectively. “Teachers are not isolated, they are part of a team.” A further strategy is “very tight organisation, there is minimal knee-jerking stuff going on.” The Principal believes that this level of organisation is “a supportive strategy that in many ways assists teacher ability to cope with workload - not much unexpected is happening…Organisational systems are quite pivotal When people are bewildered or have to continually change, that’s when they get [annoyed].” Worries from the Friday meeting are summarised and appear in the following week’s notes. “It’s work for the Principal but an investment for creating an environment where people are secure in what’s happening. A further Principal comment was that “we utilise each other’s skills in a team environment.”

“The week is very tightly planned, conflicts in the diary are resolved at 8.15 am on Monday.” In addition to the Monday meetings, a full staff meeting is held on Friday afternoons. For the second meeting, the administration does not provide an advance agenda; instead staff write items on a whiteboard during the week. “At the review on Friday, any worries are discussed.” Staff consider how the week has gone and how it might be improved next week. The Friday meeting is also “an opportunity for laughter, stupidity and fun, it’s a really good buffer - we know each other very well.”

Deputy Principal Ross observed that the workload is “too full at different times of the year.” Report writing takes about one hour per child in total. At report writing time, this is an additional twenty-seven hours work. Because of his role as an ICT facilitator, he cannot do school-related tasks between 3 and 5 pm. His work/life balance “fluctuates.” He needs to do most school related tasks later in the evening. Again, the team approach at the school helps, with the staff basketball team itself being “a great release.”

Judith’s children have left home and she “can now spend more time at school. You never get past it, evolving and revisiting issues.” She finds that paperwork adds to
workload. “They keep adding on to the curriculum, not taking off, but the new plan for five areas will make things easier.” Judith commented that the ERO “continues to document and to scribe, all of these things are for them, it makes no difference to teaching or learning.” She estimates that half of all her paperwork is to satisfy the ERO, and would like to spend more time on “hands-on activities.”

Two members of this staff are former classroom teachers who have changed career direction. Alison has become a teacher aide and Poppy has become a Reading Recovery teacher working at two schools. Their comments regarding comparative workloads provided an interesting perspective on current classroom teacher workload. Alison worked previously as a trained teacher for twenty years, including some work as a relieving teacher across the region. She also worked for some time in educational publications. The adjectives she chose to describe current primary teacher workload were “enormous” and “soul-destroying.” “There is a huge amount of paperwork, testing, evaluation, meetings, lots more demand than twenty years ago…I would find it impossible. Teachers seem to manage to fit in home and work but I don’t know how.” On reflection, Alison provided the following partial explanation: “They seem to have other outlets like sport, they try to create a balance. It’s a fantastic team. There is terrific collegial and leadership support. When you’re observing, you can see they’re there for each other. They’re very flexible. They support each other with inevitable problems, you don’t have to do things on your own.” Alison really enjoys her current position – “It’s 1:1, you don’t have the workload, you’re working alongside [teachers], keeping the child going, trying to match the curriculum.” With one special needs child, “the job can be stressful, but with ongoing work you can learn to manage.”

Reading Recovery teacher Poppy returned to full-time primary teaching after working part-time in secondary schools for a number of years…she had been “looking forward to working with five-year-olds again.” When she returned to the primary classroom, she was “shocked at the workload.” Her husband is also a teacher and she decided that there was “not room for two [classroom] teachers in the same family. She now works in two different schools and “does not have most of the out of class
expectations….There is a huge difference, I don’t know how regular teachers balance work and life.”

Adults in supporting roles are in general impressed by the ability of teachers at this school to manage their workload. One teacher aide commented that teachers “do a wonderful job with the workload they have to get through.”

A teacher who had been on leave at a Decile 10 school with few behavioural problems missed the tight day by day organisational structure at School S. “It was day by day. I found it hard. [Tight organisation] is a great stress reducer.”

Sometimes teachers who were clearly working long hours wanted to “own” this problem as well - “You can’t do anything new or creative during the day. You’re on call from 8.20 am until 3.00 pm, you have to do resources and planning outside school hours.” With regard to workload, one teacher, who was formerly a farmer, commented that most jobs have workload. “I would like to maybe have a whole weekend...but it’s on me to manage my own time...I take longer than others to type.”

The team approach at this school is an important factor in reducing teacher workload both in substance and in perception, as is its remarkably tight and delineated organisational structure.

**Resources and environment**

Cameron finds his classroom a little small, but is pleased there are plans for extending. “It’s very hard for the Board of Trustees.” Judith agreed: “We need more space, we’re tripping over each other.” The Board of Trustees member commented that there is not enough space and that while the Board is planning an extra room, “[space] is always a problem.” While a comment was made that more ICT resources would be helpful, teachers were generally satisfied with resources apart from the issue of space, including workspace. The site is clearly stretched in this respect.

Several teachers commented that smaller class sizes would help both in respect of space in classrooms and in terms or teacher effectiveness. “It’s self-evident that lower
numbers would help.”

**Government initiatives/requirements**

Cameron finds the initiative of providing teachers with laptops “very beneficial, supporting teachers, the cluster initiative should be lauded...we can develop skills and practise outside hours. We model the use for kids, as they see us applying skills.” He also finds the Te Kite Ipurangi (TKI) site an excellent initiative and would like “more of the same...These are some great initiatives.” His advice to the Ministry is to “just keep going!” He would also like some more professional development “to help you know what’s available and how to use it.”

Judith commented that while meetings at the school (and associated requirements) are productive, there are “unnecessary requirements, generally from the MoE. The MoE people all expect their program to be implemented, and it’s not feasible to sustain [this].”

The concept of giving teachers release time was viewed favourably, although there were some concerns about how it would operate and its effects on class stability. The Principal views this time as “a very good start to give recognition that teachers need time to plan, prepare and reflect.” He also cited teacher sabbatical leave as “a great initiative”, and three year contracts as an excellent initiative for teachers to sustain and consolidate systems in schools. The ICT contract has also led to improvements in identifying outcomes. “A lot has been generated by individual teachers that I’m intensely proud of.”

The Board of Trustees member appreciates the information input about student achievement: “We can physically see what’s happening, what’s working and what’s not working, are we dealing with these problems as a Board?...When Bill first started, it would take a couple of years to see the benefits.”

While the Ministry requires progress to be monitored, “we make our own judgment calls on what’s important. If a document is not used then it’s dropped...Historically, some schools have gone quite wild on ‘collating and collecting.’ We’ve been quite
ruthless in our interpretation of this and have really cut it right down to ensure that anything that is collected can be used for a number of purposes.” The Principal’s position is that the data must be for a number of purposes and that formative assessment is the main part of assessment:

We believe in reporting and planning because if focussed we’re more likely to get there…Compliance issues are utilised within the current school system as much as practicable, not to make extra work. An example of that could be the portfolio system where some schools – this might not be the case now – collected huge amounts of children’s work under the umbrella of wishing to monitor children’s progress, or demonstrate children’s progress and that was pure summative stuff. Our attitude is that your summative reporting has to be a very small percentage of your overall assessment regime…Your main assessment regime timewise should be in formative stuff and in the way you’re getting feedback from children. That, in itself, tends, to reduce the workload of teachers, not recording data for the sake of recording data.

I’m very conscious that the Ministry is imposing a significant number of administration compliance issues on us. The reporting and planning are a case in point. We believe in the reporting and planning concept because we believe that if one is focussed on a particular outcome and the strategies and processes that we wish to establish to reach that outcome, then we’re more likely to get there. So again, although it’s a compliance issue and one has to do it, it’s being utilised within the current school systems, it’s not an add-on. The main component is to make sure that as much as practicable we’re not adding to the workload of teachers.

Administrative and other support

The administrative officer at this school views helping and supporting teachers as an integral part of her role, and would like to be able to provide further assistance. She photocopies for staff on a daily basis, types meeting and other reports as needed, and
enters data for teachers. In addition to her duties as receptionist and a wide variety of office related tasks, such as ordering of supplies and accounting, she assists the Principal as needed, but stressed that “he doesn’t double the workload too much.” Wendy also organises busses, assists with camp organisation, helps with preparing resources when she has time, and follows up absences. Other tasks include first aid duties, managing the canteen and stationery shop as small businesses and acting in many instances as a “first provider” of the pastoral care that is so clearly part of this school’s approach.

“Teachers do need some assistance,” commented Wendy. She thinks it would be very advantageous if there could be another person “on deck at all times” to increase assistance of the type she provides, but “funding doesn’t allow us to have such a person.” Wendy described her own workload as “manageable”, despite “continuous interruptions.” She “wouldn’t change anything” apart, perhaps, from preparing morning teas, which “draws her away from the office.” Wendy’s willingness to work as part of this school team on so many fronts is indicative of the general school atmosphere.

Cameron commented that it would be useful to have some extra help with “tracking things...making games...filing...but you’d still need to supervise.” Ross thought that a resources person would help. “We never say no to volunteers.” More teacher aides or support persons for individual children would also help: “A lot of our time is taken up with kids on either end of the fringe, who need individual help...With too many groups, the class becomes unmanageable.”

New Entrants teacher Judith has a teacher aide to assist her and finds that she always has tasks for her. Her program is “very structured, individual children are targeted.” In this school, there are “a lot of children with huge social needs.” If the children are all working together as a group, the teacher aide will set up displays or prepare photocopying or laminating. One teacher aide assigned to a special needs child commented that she had not worked in a school where she had seen so many aides and volunteers. Nevertheless she thinks that more teacher release time and more
support for clerical tasks would assist classroom teachers.

Teachers felt generally that an aide for teachers in the classroom would be helpful for 1:1 work and administration, and for photocopying and similar tasks.

**Professional community**

In spite of all the social difficulties at this school there is a strong sense of collegiality and sharing of ideas and strategies in the interests of effective teaching and learning. “I love teaching” was one comment at the end of an explanation of the school’s particular challenges. Teachers feel strongly supported by the leadership of the school.

The Principal and school leadership are also clearly connected to teaching and learning in the school. “Everyone is encouraged to do professional development and to go into new areas.” Teacher Aide Ella commented that teachers are doing ICT professional development throughout the school. The Principal has encouraged her to do professional development in ICT and she has also completed a behavioural management course.

Alison commented that the teacher aides have great rapport with teachers. “In some schools they’re the bottom of the heap, but not here.” As an experienced former teacher, she feels that the collegial aspects of the school assist with workload: “The whole thing is a team – it’s the most striking thing about this particular school.”

“There are no professional development requirements other than what the school generates. Any professional development has to have direct impact on the classroom and to have release time.” The Principal asks teachers to ensure they have an opportunity to practise skills acquired. All teachers are involved in professional papers at the local teachers’ training college, and two teachers are running courses there. “This is an example of the desire of teachers within the school to extend themselves and of the type of initiative people are prepared to pick up on that increases workload…the reward is seeing the impact in the classroom.”

The main purpose of the Monday afternoon meetings is for professional development.
Staff take turns in presenting professional papers and readings. “These are usually practical papers…It’s a structured program, someone seeks out a reading and we go through it as a staff… You know exactly where you are and where you’re going.”

Syndicate meetings reduce workloads for this staff. One teacher described them as “time-consuming but effective” in that three or four programs can be planned at once.

“A strength of this school is the collegial bit.” Cameron finds co-authoring of units at syndicate meetings very helpful and productive. Another teacher commented: “We plan and manage together, send for resources together. Syndicate meetings are driven by need...The syndicate definitely saves work.” “Team meetings are for planning, thinking skills, classroom level stuff.”

There is a strong ethos of mutual support and valuing in this school. Teachers feel strongly supported by their peers and the school leadership. The Principal encourages clear communication and open debate, including questioning and criticism. “People work at their best when they are not only valued but also relaxed, in an environment where they can express a frustration. There is nothing wrong with negativity. A relationship where the Principal is also open to criticism and review allows people to work better.”

**ICT**

“Technology has made a great difference to the motivation of children and definitely to staff, with access to resources already done.” For Ross, as the ICT facilitator, it also means considerable time is spent assisting staff with technical difficulties. The overwhelming view of staff at this school is that ICT has assisted them in their teaching and helped them to become more effective. “It supports the collegial approach.”

One of the teacher aides commented that ICT has “stretched the workload for teachers” but that “it shows their dedication, bringing their new skills and sharing them…It helps to identify needy kids, there’s lots of positive feedback.” Another commented that “there’s more and more ICT happening and enhancing children’s
learning – it’s a whole new area in already busy days. It reduces workload in some ways, but there are all sorts of things to check out.”

Angela described the ICT contract as “one of the best contracts ever…People who were formerly scared of computers [are now using] inquiry learning and changed pedagogy.”

Additional comments

The strong team spirit is a major positive force in this school. When asked to describe her workload, one teacher chose the adjectives “hectic, stressful, rewarding! I love what I do even if it’s 110% of my time. We are a team, we look after each other and plan in syndicate groups. People are honest and good communicators. A lot comes from the leadership. He’s a fantastic leader, there’s good communication everything is tightly held together. It’s a big stress reducer. You can rely on Bill.”

Judith’s advice to the Ministry is to “review the curriculum to make it more manageable and realistic…We have to embrace new technologies and new teaching styles. For that to happen we have to drop off some other things. There are too many balls up in the air.” She also felt strongly that the standard of teacher trainees needs to be higher.”[The training colleges] are spitting them out ill-equipped. The MoE needs to “take some responsibility for the training institutions…to lift the bar on who gets in and why.” A second teacher also expressed concerns on this issue. “Support for beginning teachers is a big demand…Training colleges [should produce] more confident and skilled teachers.”

“We’re very lucky, this is an exceptional school, there’s a really good community feel about it. Everyone talks to everyone else.” The Board of Trustees member commented that many parents are involved in fund-raising and areas like road patrol. “Bill doesn’t tell the parents, he suggests ways for them to help.”

In summary, the aspects of this school that lead to effective teaching and learning are its tight organisation and structures, its whole school behaviour management systems, its strong collegiality, its inclusiveness and its supportive leadership.
SCHOOL V

School profile

School V is a Decile 7 rural school with an enrolment of about 100 students and a teaching Principal. There is a wide socio-economic range. While many farming families have financial assets, parents need to work hard and may not always be there at mealtimes. Most students are bussed to school daily and live in surrounding farms or a nearby regional town. The nearest rural village is 10 kilometres away. There are strong home/school links and strong links with the local community and community activities. Some children come from outside the community because of the school offerings and teaching program.

The following persons were interviewed:

Principal: ‘James’
Years 1/2: ‘Gina’
Years 3/4: ‘Kay’
Years 5/6: ‘Alice’
Years 7/8: ‘Molly’

Administrative assistant, part-time aide & former member of Board of Trustees:
‘Maree’

Vision

The school has a clearly articulated vision revolving around the concept of “learning stars.” All staff referred to this vision and described it during interviews. “We work to the learning stars, we are creating a vision…we are meeting community and local expectations and providing quality care…Our learning stars are used even in rewarding the children.” The Principal described the school vision as being “teacher related.” Former Board of Trustees member Maree noted that there had been “a
positive evolution of the school vision – we have good management, we’re lucky.”

**Behavioural Management and Pastoral Care**

Behaviour management at the school is “not an issue. The children are motivated, use initiative and are responsive. They know it’s a team and that the community is behind the school.” One younger teacher who had also taught at a large urban school commented on the “huge contrast” in this respect, with perhaps 10% as opposed to 80% of teacher time needing to be spent on behaviour management. “The kids are a lot better behaved and on task. We can extend the kids, go deeper into subjects.” Another comment was: “We are very fortunate not to have behavioural problems, so we can attend to individual needs.”

“The time in class is the best part of it.” Alice described her Year 3/4 group as “a dream class, behaviour management is not an issue…the teaching part is the fun part.”

**Perceptions of Workload**

Gina was more concerned about other people’s workload than her own. She commented that she can devote more time to her job because “it’s just me and my dog”, but that it is “very difficult for people with family commitments and/or other interests such as sport…Each one is a case on their own.” Gina thought that “prioritising is the hardest part…If you gave me more time I’d fill it.” With regard to work/life balance, Gina commented: “I know I haven’t got balance in the eyes of others.” She said that if teachers’ lives were divided into “work, self and family”, her life would mostly be in the “work” basket. However, “so much of my self is also wrapped up in that basket. I love the job. Different situations [eg schools] have kept it alive.” Gina’s perceptions of her workload were interesting, given that even after thirty years of teaching, she shows no signs of “burn-out.”

“At times you feel you have too much to do – that’s a teacher.” Kay thought that she has a good work/life balance. She is able to participate in activities such as sport. With regard to time, Alice commented that “you never feel like you’ve got it done…there’s always that pressure because you haven’t done enough, you’re thinking
about it…I’m waking up at night making up lists of things, just juggling.” At
lunchtime “you don’t sit and have lunch, there are so many things to think about and
do…Extra things like preparation for Art fall into lunchtime, you’re lucky to have a
cup of tea.” She described her workload as “extreme, a bit crazy, there has been a
huge amount of change in the last few years. To maintain her work/life balance, Alice
has recently chosen not to come to school in the weekends. Alice’s workload may be
more onerous because she has recently returned to the classroom after a seven year
break. “When I left it was just before the new curriculum documents, I’ve had to learn
all new things, each year there’s another thing.” Nevertheless Alice has seen “other
teachers in other schools – it’s more finicky and they’re more stressed, going through
steps. All that effort is taking away teaching energy from working with children. It’s
not making as much difference as a happy teacher. Who’s all the paperwork for in the
end? Does it really benefit the children?” This year Alice has decided to be “more
relaxed, spontaneous and to use the ‘teaching moments.’ As a profession we’ve lost
confidence in ourselves because of goal-setting etc. In some schools they’re always
looking for something to send in.” Interestingly, Alice did not find this to be a major
problem in her own school, although clearly all Ministry requirements were being
met.

Molly, who shares a class with the Principal (three weeks as a block each term)
described the workload as “heavy, busy, you think of so many things all the time, it
encroaches on all free time, I wouldn’t do it if I had a family at home. If I finished at
4.40 or 5 it’d be OK, but I have to work at home too. It’s not a healthy balance.”

Maree’s observation of teacher workload at the school was: “They put in a lot of time
outside the classroom. The stuff they have to do when they’re not standing up
teaching seems more. There is a lot behind the scenes that parents don’t realise.
They’re a really good bunch, they’ll give the extra time.”

The Principal at this school commented that it is easy in a school for time to be
whittled away and wasted, giving the time between three and three-forty as an
example. “[In teaching] bosses are not walking around…” He also thinks that there
“needs to be a different approach to the non-contact time in the twelve week
“holiday” block – three two week term breaks and six weeks at the end of the year. The terminology used- “holidays – gives the client base the wrong impression.” Many of this Principal’s staff are at the school for three days or one week during term breaks. These times could also be partly used for formal professional development.

**Resources and Environment**

Teachers were very satisfied with the level of resources and individual workspaces and classroom space at the school. Gina, who has taught at a range of schools, described School V’s resources as “wonderful.” Alice commented that “we have resources not because of the government but because of James’s hard work and commitment to fund-raising.”

**Government Initiatives/Requirements**

“Non-class contact time will make a difference, I hope, as long as it’s managed well and teachers can communicate with their relievers. There’s going to have to be some shared teaching.” Gina thinks it will work well “as long as nothing is put on us that is going to take that time by giving us something else to do.” Alice commented that “it will help as long as it’s free and you have space, if it’s not gobbled up.” The Principal sees this initiative as very worthwhile and hopes that it can be used for planning. “It will be an opportunity for teachers to see other teachers in action and to have informal collegial networks.’

Kay thinks that initiatives such as the Early Numeracy Project involve extra paperwork but are “really helpful”, especially the exemplars and writing samples that have been developed. “The initiative directs teaching and learning – it’s not a waste of time.” She does, however, find changes and increases in Ministry requirements “kind of frustrating…Renaming and reworking things add to work. You’re just getting used to [a system], then you have to fit into the new terminology.” She speculated that it might be better if all schools were using the same templates but “that takes away creativity.” Alice thinks that reporting data to the School Board is useful but that some other recording is “writing down just for the Ministry…there is always a new bandwagon and they’re not necessarily great ideas….sometimes it’s] re-inventing the
Molly raised the matter of an overcrowded school day. “Every facet of the day has to have a program. We’re so geared into assessment, proving they’re learning and justifying our existence. We gather evidence, we collate, we produce. It takes time (but not as much as in other schools).” She thinks that change in large quantities generates the most work: “Within education everything gets turned on its head.”

“If we could focus on fewer things it would help.” The Principal thinks that there needs to be a reduction of coverage, “We need to choose areas, not attempt to do it all, there is a lot of pressure to cover everything. We’re interested in achievement, not to cover so much but to do it in depth…What is needed is a simplification of the curriculum. Every school in New Zealand creates its own little ecosystem. How does changing the charter improve what happens? Everyone has targets. We do pedantic things sometimes.” He thinks the Ministry contracts are “time-consuming but valuable. Professional development is improving.”

**Administrative and other Support**

School V employs a part-time administrative assistant, Maree, from 8.30 am to 1.00 pm each day. After that, “the teachers take care of things.” This means that they would attend to first aid, check the answering machine and, in the case of the teaching Principal, “be around for parents.” Maree attends to administrative matters such as organising finances, opening mail, selling stationery, writing letters and following up absentees. “If they want something done, I’ll do it. I’ll buy something in town or stay on if necessary.” Maree thinks that teaching staff “could always do with extra help for things like photocopying.” Teachers do their own data entry – “they keep in touch.” However, Maree has also noted the extensive extra work that this creates: “Sometimes I think we’re getting lost in that kind of thing. All that other stuff…we need to focus on children”

Teachers generally did not want to be relieved of tasks like entering student data into the computer. “It wouldn’t be beneficial for someone else to do it. You learn as you’re entering data, the different nuances of what they’re doing. You can compare kids as
you’re entering things.”

Molly felt that “putting away resources is a really good thing some-one else could do.” Alice has found that having a teacher aide has helped in the classroom and that “some-one to put resources away and tidy up etc would be great.” She also thought that some-one who was not a teacher could possibly also help with tasks like meeting Health and Safety requirements “[all of which] takes you away from the classroom.”

Principal James thinks that support in the form of a technician for ICT would be very useful. Increased funding would allow the school to get closer to its ICT vision in particular. “Dodgy computers” are a recurring problem that cannot be solved with the operations grant.

Teachers at School V have a larger than usual amount of out of class supervisory duties because of the school bus schedule. One commented that if she could divest herself of any duties it would be the bus duty, but that supervising students at this time was necessary for safety and discipline reasons. Another commented that because of the extended bus schedule “the silent time is not there. The kids are here from 7.40 am until 4.15 pm. Some-one has to be there for them, and the kids will be in and out of classrooms anyway.”

Professional Community

The school is organised into a junior and a senior group. The Principal estimates that professional interaction would be three quarters informal and one quarter formal.

“We work together in the staffroom, help each other with resources and planning…Our meetings help contribute to quality and are co-operative and collegial…Working as a team with the Principal “makes the job easier, there’s so much support, you can ask anyone at any time.” Teachers clearly feel that they are part of a professional learning community.

Kay, who has been teaching just over two years, commented: “The support makes it a lot easier, there’s lots of help at [School V]. We share, have templates, discuss data, there is a lot of professional dialogue on where we need to go…Our meetings are
useful, productive and focussed. A strength of the school is that we teach to what kids need.” Kay is also able to access the PD she needs and to gear it to her individual needs. Alice commented that “there is a good feeling at [School V], there is support, good lines of communication, a really good team.” The Principal commented that assessment procedures were developed “from the ground up”, giving staff a sense of ownership.

For Gina, assistance in acquiring computer skills has been “the biggest thing.” An extensive part of Gina’s other professional development is self-directed; she reads extensively in the area of boys’ education and has used strategies based on multiple learning styles. “It worked!” This has proved very useful in her class this year, which has seventeen boys and four girls. She is able to access any professional development she wants and finds it very helpful to keep up with the research.

One reason that the staff are able to access adequate professional development is that the Principal takes an extra .2 or .3 teaching role over the allowance for a school of this size, thereby making it possible to release staff. In the current term each member of staff had had two or three days out of the school for professional development. “Teachers are getting out a lot more.” This Principal is firmly committed to professional development as a means of improving outcomes.

“James is very open to ideas and we get on board to support them. There is quality learning for all.” Molly’s view is shared by her colleagues. While teachers at this school have general concerns about workload and question the necessity of some Ministry requirements, there is a clear sense of pride in what they are achieving as a staff, and frequent qualifications of any general concerns in that that things were described as “better” in their school.

**ICT**

Staff feel that ICT has helped them to streamline many of their activities. Gina came from a school where a clerical assistant (funded by the Board of Trustees) entered all data and prepared graphs. “This saved hours, but then I didn’t gain the computer skills because some-one else was doing it.” She estimates that the several hours per week
that she is now spending on data entry is balanced by the skills she is gaining.” I can see the potential. In the short term it’s taking time, but it’s a learning curve…We have a shared network, an intranet, our own spaces and sites for teachers and students.”

Kay has set up a program with a classroom in England that is proving worth the work involved in setting it up. Alice thinks the ICT initiative has been “great” and that working in the cluster is helpful and productive. Molly too finds ICT helps her work in the classroom.

Additional Comments and/or Summary

An issue of interest in this school is the role of the teaching principal. James is teaching .7, leaving .3 for his particular duties as Principal. He is teaching more this year and more than would normally be the case because one teacher is being trained in Reading Recovery and he believed it was for the benefit of the school for him to take this class rather than employ another teacher for this period. He is then able to “bank” more time for staff professional development and to allow staff time off during reporting periods. He sees his workload as high but manageable – “it’s more difficult than normal, but important and valuable – I’m stretched but not negatively.” He said that he “enjoys the tumult, re-acting to circumstances and events in the daily run.” The researcher in this case study was told by one staff member: “Take James’s [office] chair – he never gets to sit in it!” He works between forty and sixty hours each week, and during term breaks and part of the long vacation. He does not believe that term breaks or the entire long vacation should be regarded as “off time.” James would like his work/life balance to be “ultimately a bit better…But I don’t miss out on anything essential. Saturday is absolutely family day.”

James has arranged for his .3 time release to be in a block, with another teacher taking his class for three weeks each term. This is an unusual arrangement that is working very effectively. Both teachers can complete full units of work, and teaching style is consistent for each block. The other teacher commented: “The kids are enthusiastic and there are no complaints from parents…It alters subtly the classroom program and takes a little longer to get through the curriculum…We have to be so aware of
individual students’ needs, we can’t just pick up a unit”

James would like to see an increase in the “trust factor” between the Ministry and its teachers. He thinks that the current situation is “a good example of a low trust model. If schools had more leash, they could make significant improvements among themselves.” He thinks that compliance issues need to be dealt with as quickly as possible so that maintenance can be built and that there is too much assessment in the “low trust model.”

With regard to change, James thinks that the pace of change in the 90’s was “way too fast” and likes the idea of a “slimmed down curriculum…It’s what you actually do that counts.”

As Principal, James would appreciate additional support for performance management – “maybe a ‘critical friend’ to honestly assist. The person would be an interested guide/mentor designated to provide collegial assistance. You could use them or not. Principals are meant to talk among themselves, but Principals in New Zealand can become very isolated. This could pick up on stressed out people. In the past there were friendly guides, rural advisors who provided curriculum assistance, but with cutbacks this support is not as available. In a time of rapid change, support didn’t go hand in hand.”

SCHOOL X

School profile

This school is a Decile 8 Intermediate school with an enrolment of 550 students. It is situated in a large provincial town.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Oliver’

Deputy Principal: ‘Donna’

Senior Teacher: ‘Tina’

Teacher: ‘Patsy’
Vision

All members stated that there was a school vision, which had been developed and worked upon since last year. This ties in with the appointment of the present principal, who has been at the school for eighteen months. Support for students comes from Pastoral Care and Staff, and from parents and outside agencies. The teachers advised that the school vision had been developed by a team, and professional development sessions were used as opportunities to co-ordinate the implementation of this vision. The teachers quoted the words ‘rights, respect, responsibility.’ The Board of Trustees (BOT) quoted the words ‘caring, sharing, daring.’

Behaviour management and pastoral care

The principal stated that student behaviour varies from ‘superb to challenging’. He said that the student management policy was continually under review. However, clear guidelines were in place. The Deputy Principal agreed that the school had a good behaviour management policy, and now employed a full-time pastoral care person, rather than for one hour a day as in the past. The Deputy Principal believed that generally there were more emotional and social problems than behavioural ones. The teachers felt supported with behaviour management and stated that the school had good systems in place. They felt that the specialist RTLB staff were useful.

Perceptions of workload

The principal stated that teacher workloads are high. He felt that students were being over-assessed, and was trying to reduce this. He stated that the community has high expectations of teachers and that the curriculum itself was very crowded. The Board of Trustees (BOT) member stated that teachers were expected to do many things that were not about teaching. She stated that teachers needed to be well organised and
noted the need for stress management workshops for teachers. The Deputy Principal, who has some thirty years experience, stated that the work was manageable, and every day was a challenge. The teachers stated that the workload was sometimes ‘overwhelming’, there was no end to it, and there was always something else to do. The teachers stated that neglecting to find a life balance could be a real problem, and that teachers taught for the ‘love’ of teaching. They also used the following words to describe their jobs: ‘important’, ‘overwhelming’ and ‘rewarding’.

**Managing work**

The teachers advised that they managed their own workload, and one stated that she tries to give herself one night off per week, and weekends. They felt that the work had an impact on their health. There was a consensus that by the end of term teachers were very tired and it was not unusual for some to be sick during the holidays.

The principal felt that the ministry should stop ‘directing’ schools and trust the schools to do their job. He felt that the ministry had become too large and centralised.

The BOT member felt that teacher workload would be greatly improved if class sizes were reduced.

**Resources and environment**

The principal believed the school to be very well resourced. He stated that most classrooms were in good condition, with a limited number requiring an upgrade. The school has one hundred computers and two computer labs.

The BOT member noted that the original school board managed the school funds very well, so the school was now in a good financial position.

The DP stated that the school community raises some $20,000 per year which helps to keep the school well resourced, and helps in covering costs of things such as sports equipment and uniforms.

The teachers felt the school was well resourced with books, equipment, technology and the classrooms themselves were good. They also noted the assistance of
teacher aides. The teacher aides were especially important for ESL and special needs students. However, the teacher aide stated that she had no designated work space, which was frustrating.

**Government initiatives/requirements**

The BOT member stated that paperwork for the ministry and government initiatives and assessment were a part of everyday work, and that the requirement to record also provided a method of monitoring. She stated that the school board had asked teachers to report on numeracy for individual classrooms, and that this process is informative, helpful, and no different from the Ministry requests.

The principal stated that the impact of government curriculum and assessment requirements was open to interpretation and application. He believed that with assessment there were issues of time and management. He did not believe that the ministry requirements had led to better teaching and learning in schools, rather stating that it was the school itself that made the difference. He added that the requirements generated a lot of paperwork, and one of the current school goals is to have a one point data entry system, whereby the information is entered onto a system once and then accessed for various reporting.

The teachers stated that the principal deals with paperwork for them, however the senior teachers were investigating how the end of year assessment would be collected and filed. The teachers felt that some data, e.g. STAR reading test, could be entered by an assistant.

**Time**

The teachers felt they needed more time to complete the required tasks, up to four to five hours weekly. One teacher emailed me the week after the interview to state that the teachers at that school actually have an extra two and a half hours of contact time a week; this is because they start school at 8.30 am each morning. The school has its own recording studio, and each morning students run a breakfast program from 8.30 am until 9.00 am. This is watched by all students in their classrooms.
**Administration and other support**

The teachers have access to administrative support, but seem not to use it. This could be because there is ready access to computers. The teacher aide did note that she has been requested to do photocopying, which she feels is not part of her position description.

The teachers and the Deputy Principal noted that teaching staff worked in teams and these teams offer an important level of support. The principal suggested that ‘floating staff’ would assist in giving support to teachers.

**Leadership and teaching**

The arrival of a new principal eighteen months ago has meant that the school has taken time to review what its goals are and how those goals are to be achieved. There was a general positive feeling about the new direction of the school, and the management style of the principal. When asked if he does any ‘duty’, his response was that he was always on duty.

The Deputy Principal stated that the senior management team work well together and meet regularly. The teachers themselves are part of curriculum teams and stated that they have their own classes, but work as teams. The teams meet weekly. There are also weekly staff meetings, which have been used for professional development to ensure the implementation of the school vision.

**Support from the school leadership team**

The teachers stated that they felt professionally supported by the principal and school leadership team. The principal believes there is support and agreement between the Board of Trustees (BOT), the senior management and the teachers with regard to the direction of the school. The focus is on providing an ‘excellent learning environment’, and the principal noted the need to trust teachers and schools. The teachers stated that they felt supported and trusted.
Professional community

The teachers all work in teams, and these teams relate to curriculum areas. The teachers felt that the school approach was generally very positive. The recent professional development had related to the creation and implementation of a shared school vision.

The principal, Deputy Principal and BOT member all stated the need to foster a professional and supportive community so that teachers were given every opportunity to teach well. The teachers noted that the principal has been making an effort to reduce the burden of paperwork.

ICT

The school is very technologically literate, with over 100 computers and two computer labs. The school has its own recording studio which is run by the students. This operates a morning program at 8.30 each school morning, and takes the place of a regular assembly. Each classroom has a television, and all students watch the morning program in their classrooms. On the day of the site visit, the morning program, which is produced and run by the students, featured interviews, a movie review and some drama written and performed by the students.

The studio operates on a rotational basis with each class doing a week of programs.

All staff interviewed stated that they used computers daily, and that the school had its own intranet.

Closing questions

The principal stated that he usually works an eleven or twelve hour day, and the Deputy Principal stated that she is at work by 7.30 am each morning and rarely leaves before 5.30 pm.

The Deputy Principal also noted that fundraising is an important part of her job, and co-ordinating the raising of $20,000 takes a good deal of time. She is assisted by
members of the Parent Teacher Association.

One teacher suggested having people who could do ‘duty’ at schools, thus relieving teachers of that job. It was also suggested that not coaching sports teams would remove pressure from teachers, as that can take up to 2 hours after school, and also time on weekends.

It was also noted that acknowledgement of service, such as Long Service Leave after ten years would be an encouragement for teachers, and provide a much needed sabbatical.

SCHOOL Y

School profile

School Y is a special setting school that provides educational programs and specialist services. This core Decile 3 school caters for one hundred and forty students ranging from Years 1 to 15. Core school classes are spread across seven school sites, and include five base school classes and a specialist language unit. Through service agreements with the Ministry of Education, this school provides specialist pre-school education, technical resources and services, an itinerant teacher service and residential accommodation for students.

The following people were interviewed during the school visit:

Principal: ‘Felix’

Deputy principal: ‘Leo’

Assistant principal: ‘Sonya’

Junior syndicate teacher: ‘Petra’

Junior syndicate senior teacher: ‘Ingrid’

Middle/senior syndicate teacher: ‘Carl’

Middle/senior syndicate teacher: ‘Anthony’
Vision

The members of this school community who were interviewed stated that the vision of the school was to see all students become independent learners in the pursuit of excellence. The Principal, the DP and the AP through their example strive to ensure that this school provides world-class teaching and learning situations for all its students.

All teachers work to maximise the potential in each student, to create independent learners and to raise the standing of each student at school and at home. The staff has high expectations of students and aspires for them all to contribute to society. Many see the need for emotional security backed up with social skills to enable them to function in a mainstream environment. They want them to gain competence in language and to be independent adults with equal access to jobs in the future. The vision shared by the staff is communicated to the wider community formally through the School Charter and the Strategic Plan, and informally via newsletters.

Behaviour management and pastoral care

Current behaviour management strategies are under review this year with possible improvements in mind. Several teachers stated that they were looking forward to this review. All teachers said that they were supported in this area by the principal and senior staff.

Effective and efficient communication with students is of paramount importance in this establishment. It is essential that personnel who come in contact with students understand the extra complications associated with their learning and have the skills
necessary to function on a high level. If they do not have these skills and understanding there will be difficulty working with and managing the students.

Some teachers believe that constant contact with adults who will intervene in behaviour situations creates its own problems. The adults tend to “fix” the situation for a range of reasons and this may cause students to rely on this intervention rather than learning to solve the situation themselves. One teacher expressed the view that their behaviour is typical for all students, with hitting, teasing and complaining being common in all students. The current structure of the school sees students commence in a particular grade level and quite possibly progress through the levels with the same students each year. Ongoing problems among students may be always lying under the surface. In a regular school the students would be put in separate classes. In this satellite classroom situation, support for the teacher may be from a senior teacher from the regular school they are attached to. It is quite possible that despite how well meaning this person is, his or her communication skills may not be seen as warranting of respect by the student/s being addressed. An appropriate authority figure may not be able to provide support for several days and a different solution will be required by then. A further complication is that communication student to student may not be accurate. The intended receiver may not understand the meaning of the communication.

There are several factors that affect these students beyond their disabilities and make their circumstances different from that of a regular student. Some travel considerable distances daily between home and school. Their school is not in their neighbourhood, their classmates have difficulty coming over to play, they are isolated. The way they are treated and spoken to at school may be different from that at home, one does not necessarily reinforce the other. The communication system at school may also be different to that at home. When they arrive at school the “baggage” they have brought with them –sometimes tiredness or hunger - may need to be dealt with before work can start. Teachers believe that sometimes up to forty percent of their teaching time may be taken up with behaviour management and pastoral care. A normal day might entail twenty percent. At times teaching the curriculum may need to be suspended and a focus on health and well being is put in place to bring the students back on task.
At times like these, the teacher may feel that the core business of teaching and learning is not getting done and this is a major concern for them.

**Perceptions of workload**

The Deputy Principal believes that the workload on teachers is ‘unreasonable’. Student learning needs are high. He encourages teachers to pace themselves throughout the term and the year. Beginning teachers in this field struggle to reach teaching and learning expectations. The senior management team provides an overview of deadlines to assist teachers to plan ahead.

Most teachers describe their workload as heavy. Some say it can be overwhelming, and they have trouble sleeping. There is: planning, supervision of aides, assessment, portfolios, special files, liaison with various therapists, curriculum development, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), to name a few. All of these impinge on teaching and learning and “there is little time for fun”. However, teachers also said that their work was challenging, rewarding and fulfilling. A few comments include - “I love the work, not the amount”, “I love my job” and “I really admire the teachers here, they are very highly motivated and very good teachers.”

Due to their location, some staff feel lonely, they feel the geographical isolation from their manager school.

Several of the teachers interviewed questioned the way they reported to parents and felt the quantity was not warranted. They were not sure that parents read all they provided. They felt that the Ministry’s attitude of “prove it” increased the paperwork, which took their efforts and attention from teaching and learning. All agree that some of the paperwork is repetitive, time consuming and unnecessary.

**Managing work**

All classroom teachers say they manage their work. They appreciate the term overview with deadlines, as it assists them to prioritise, it encourages them to do a little each week. Some team-teach at appropriate times via selected activities so as to release one other. Some say they aim to do their planning and marking after school
but often have interruptions or are exhausted. One teacher told me that when she has too much work she is aware that she is tired in the classroom and “grumpy” with the students - “I work hard at the teaching and learning for the students and the rest is to meet deadlines.” When the load is too much and they are not coping they may take short cuts in the classroom, i.e. not change displays so often and rely on experience to wing it rather than planning out fully.

Teachers stated that they need time release if they are to meet deadlines without negatively affecting their home life and or their health. “The only way I can stay on top is to plan and prepare one week in advance.” They believe that release time for IEPs is essential. One teacher said that she would come up with great ideas for teaching something to her students but often found that she did not have time to do the necessary preparation and was forced to make do with a lesser option. Teacher aides are an asset when they are fully trained in classroom work and communication skills; it is a frustration to have them in the room when they are not.

**Resources and environment**

Most teachers believe the school to be well resourced, although there are problems with resources in a school that has several off campus classrooms. Once again the issue of travel comes into play. Teachers in these satellite classrooms must plan well ahead if they are to select and gather material resources from the central school. In a full timetable they will either make a special trip after school or ask their supervisor to gather the resources and deliver them when they visit. Some classrooms and teacher workstations are well appointed and resourced, others are old classrooms and are not up to the same standard. Some classrooms are too small. A clerical assistant would provide useful support to each teacher as in a regular school. Teachers are required to make and adapt resources to suit the special needs of their students and felt that it would be beneficial if there was a training course for teacher aides for this special area.

**Government initiatives/requirements**

These teachers have all the usual requirements of planning, assessment, evaluation
and reporting associated with classroom teaching in New Zealand government schools. In addition, they have the responsibility to develop a National Curriculum for their area of special education. The personnel at this school feel that the Ministry demands a lot. Since the revamp of the curriculum in 1992 there has been “too much in the curriculum for teachers to teach, too much to get through.” It is hoped that the revision of the curriculum will reduce the quantity and refocus on core curriculum to make it more manageable. It is felt that the Ministry has become more articulate about what it wants teachers to do and has provided professional development and support materials to facilitate this change. It is widely felt across the school that Ministry requirements will not be achieved if release time from the classroom is not provided. Several teachers made the comment that the Ministry initiative in Numeracy is “fantastic.”

**Time**

The statistics on time spent working outside of teaching time suggests that these teachers are working more than a fifty hour working week. The teachers expressed the need for more time to complete all required tasks. They felt their major task was to teach their students and that time spent on tasks not directly affecting improvement in student learning and well being was time lost. Tasks outside the classroom should be directly linked with time release. It is their sense of professional responsibility and dedication that sees them taking on such heavy workloads. They felt that most meetings add to the quality of their teaching, particularly those that were focused on PD.

Several teachers have weeks where they will have meetings on three nights after school. They will need to be prepared for the next day and this may mean staying later to do that.

**Administration and other support**

The office administration provides support on request, for example, by making phone calls and organising trips. They also provide useful support in areas such as mobility,
Well-trained teacher aides provide excellent administrative support in and around the classroom although their primary function is to work with the students.

The school has a counsellor who will come into the classroom, observe student behaviour and provide directions for the future.

**Leadership, support, and teaching and learning**

All teachers said that they felt professionally supported by the principal and the leadership team. Staff felt free to approach the principal group with requests for assistance or suggestions for improvement. They were confident that they would be listened to and that positive results would be forthcoming. They valued the appraisal system and the quality of the feedback they received. The teachers in the satellite units relied on the leadership team members to maintain regular communication. Teachers have leadership roles in the various Key Learning Areas (KLAs).

In general those interviewed felt that senior management had streamlined operations to minimise time wastage.

**Professional community**

Professional development is embedded in whole school and individual teacher improvement. Professional development is targeted to train for specific needs and is part of the quality system operating across the school. It leads to up-skilling to meet desired student outcomes. Teachers on the same site plan together in teams. New teachers to the school can expect to receive professional development appropriate to their needs.

**ICT**

The school is computerised and linked through the internet and intranet. Computers are essential for planning, teacher to teacher communication via email, gathering resources and reporting. All teachers use computers to support their daily teaching and learning. The school uses CDs very effectively for storing information.
Teachers like to use digital cameras and video cameras to add quality to classroom experiences. Many teachers have their own computer and can access work at home.

**Summary**

Teachers in this setting are caught between parent wishes and what they see as realistic student directions. The dilemma for these teachers is what to teach each child, as they are all individual cases, made so by their background and the complexity of their disability.

What to teach is at times a politically charged debate. The setting also impacts on the individual teacher, whereas most teachers in regular schools work in a team of teachers located in close proximity, many of these teachers are isolated. This situation places further stress on already overloaded teachers. Some final comments from teachers included:

“We need a pool of skilled relievers who can take our places on a regular basis.”

“My students achieve, I am well prepared but at what expense?”

“My life is unbalanced; I constantly take time out of my home life.”

“If you can’t do it between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday then you’re no good at it or you have too much work!”

“Teachers at this school have a passion for their work.”

“I like the fact that I work with good people, I enjoy it here.”
SECTION THREE: THE DIARIES

Excerpts from the diaries have been selected to give a wide overall view of what teachers do during the day when they are not involved in face to face classroom teaching. Examples of a full “daily run”, including classroom teaching time, are included in Diaries Fourteen and Fifteen.

Various anomalies arise in a weekly recording of this nature. Teacher Nine, for example, did not include duty sessions, as these were apparently on a fortnightly basis, and did not include the four hours each evening writing reports in the previous week. At other schools, Teacher Nine and Ten recorded three extra hours for parent/teacher interviews during the diary week.

Diary One

Teacher one was a New Entrants teacher. She recorded many small tasks that were part of the working day even though they might be of short duration. She rarely had more than ten minutes for interval and sometimes skipped lunch altogether. New entrants are particularly demanding of time outside class, as many of her diary entries indicated:

“My boy with special needs arrived and needed a firm hand to hold him as Nan left. …A new girl arrived about 9 am - she cried as Mum left and so I had to hold her other hand….there is nothing much independent about a new entrant and so you have to have eyes in the back of your head, and you really are multi-tasking.”

“Sat with the children while they ate their lunch and reassured my new ones I wouldn’t be away too long. Managed to get a bite to eat before back on duty.”

“Got to the staffroom at 10.45 – had to walk the children back from Kiwican and then get them organised and settled with morning tea. Cup of tea was good.”
“Got to the staffroom with ten minutes to spare [at interval] as my new children were needing a bit of extra reassurance today.”

“[At lunchtime] my first half hour was taken up with playground duty, then was off to the resource room to look at reading books. Not that hungry today so had an apple on the way.”

“[After school] tied three sets of shoelaces – too tired to teach them how to tie today.”

“Children arrived early today and although they are not supposed to come inside until the first bell, I didn’t mind. After all it was so cold outside and they are the smallest in the school.”

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Teacher One spent twenty four hours on work-related tasks outside classroom teaching hours.

**Diary Two**

Teacher Two recorded his activities from Monday to Friday. Extra activities that emerged from this diary were making phonecalls about resources at breaks, helping
colleagues with sporting teams, supervising a student teacher and liaising with the Visiting Lecturer. On only one of these days did Teacher Two have a twenty minute interval break (Friday morning tea) and on no day did he have a full lunch hour. Teacher Two’s longest lunch break was about fifteen minutes. Some lunch breaks included scheduled duty time, but other lunch breaks included activities such as sitting with the children for the first ten minutes, meeting with the student teacher, meeting with specialist tutors. Teacher Two had some release time for Library and Whanau. He used this release time to meet with the National Library Co-ordinator, to type and distribute notes of whanau meetings and to organise children and programs. Teacher Two gave his days designations to summarise his week: Monday Madness, Tuesday Team Work, Wacky Wednesday, Thinking Thursday and Freaky (Maths Day) Friday. He described some of his activities outside scheduled times and duties as:

“respond to class emails...help colleague take hockey practice, discuss highlights of day with student teacher… look through new resources that have arrived…”

Teacher Two worked for twenty-four hours and fifty minutes outside classroom teaching hours.

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Diary Three

Teacher Three was also a New Entrants teacher. Again, the lack of a proper break at internal and lunchtime was evident throughout her recording of activities. During the week, she had only one interval break of the scheduled length, and this was probably because she was working with another teacher away from her own classroom when Interval commenced. She had scheduled duties during some lunchtimes, but even on days without scheduled lunchtime duties, her lunch break was never longer than about ten minutes. During lunch breaks she would often be doing tasks like “changing the task board...getting paper, glue and magazines ready to prepare poster.” Some of the “myriad non teaching related tasks” outside teaching and duty time that Teacher Four recorded during breaks include: “ordered lunch for the children…helped with missing jumpers…helped children take the lunches out of the wrappers…” At the start of most interval times she “made sure children had a snack and did not eat up their lunch.” On Tuesday, her day was particularly long (almost twelve hours) as it included a university maths paper class as part of her professional development. Tuesday concludes: “Went home dead tired after a long day.”

Teacher Three recorded her activities from Monday to Friday. Her working days varied in length between eight hours, when she left for an appointment right after school, and over twelve hours, when she had a professional development activity after school. In the recorded week she worked for about twenty-two and a half hours on work-related hours outside classroom teaching hours.
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**Diary Four**

Teacher Four expressed relief when the break came for morning tea. However, morning tea was not without other tasks or interruptions: “Morning tea – THANK GOODNESS!! A chance to get my writing organised.” There is a similar pattern at lunchtimes: “Made myself SIT DOWN and have my lunch in the staffroom and a break, but not for long as the fire alarm went off…Got a few things organised for planning meeting after school. Managed to go and have some lunch and a sit down…Lunchtime was busy getting [poems] up and displayed and then getting readers organised.” On Wednesday Teacher Four has “another late night meeting – planning, meaning that yet again I am unable to set up my class before tomorrow, which will mean another rushed morning tomorrow.” On Thursday afternoon, her entry reads:” Feel like I am coming down with something so did not stay long after school – just long enough to mark their health and maths and then I took their Grammar reviews home to mark.”
Teacher Four worked for about twenty-two hours outside classtime teaching hours between Monday and Friday in the recorded week. She left school earlier than usual on a couple of occasions because she felt she might be “coming down with something.”

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**Diary Five**

Senior Teacher Five interspersed teaching related tasks outside class hours with providing assistance and advice to other teachers and with “on the run” checking with other senior staff. At one Interval, for example, she “visited another class on the way over to the staffroom [for Interval], to uplift planning folders….met with AP to discuss PAT results during break…spoke with Principal re staffing next term” Teacher Five had only one full Interval during the recorded week. On no day did she have a lunch break longer than about fifteen minutes: “Lunchtime. First ten minutes all teachers stay in class to supervise pupils during the winter months. Lunchtime supervision in classroom. Met RTLRe pupil needs within syndicate…checked over planning as required…scoffed down my lunch.” On Wednesday, Teacher Five spent her lunchtime as follows: “First ten minutes supervising class. Took one child to
staffroom to make a sandwich as she had not lunch today. Back in room, marked maths and handwriting books. Ate my lunch on the run. Went to reading resource room and changed reading books. Rearranged books once back in classroom.” On Thursday, Teacher Five left school at 4.50 pm and noted: “Family dinner, so no work at home tonight.”

From Monday to Friday, Teacher Five worked about twenty-two hours outside classroom teaching time. She finished her week on Friday at 4.45 pm, describing it as “a good week.” Her marking and preparation was ready for Monday.

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**Diary Six**

Teacher Six’s diary provided a good example of “the myriad tasks” that teachers perform and also of the often unpredictable path of the “daily run.” Teacher Six arrived at school as prepared as possible after the term break, planning to meet with students. Her notes on the one and a half hours before class time follow:

> Arrived at school ready for the new term. Did all possible preparation during school holidays thankfully. Went straight to classroom so I could
catch up with students (first day of term 3). Made sure classroom ready for the day and returned to staff room. Managed to start photocopying some new resources before being approached by a grandparent of one my students. She effectively held an interview in the resource room re grandson’s portfolio (which she was not happy about). Enlightened her about the background behind portfolio comments. Encouraged her to attend parent/teacher interview in WK 3 to see if any progress has been made re child’s attitude to learning in class. This conversation continued until the bell went. New student and parent waiting to meet me at staff room door. Accompanied them to classroom – parent concerned about the bus her child needed to catch every afternoon – gave her as much information as possible – she decided to come early this afternoon to do a ‘test run’.

laminated new resources ready for tomorrow.

On the Tuesday of the diary week, this teacher’s notes provide an example of tasks that might occupy a primary teacher for three hours at school after class hours have ended, as do her notes for the one and a half hours she worked on school related tasks that evening:

After school, until 6 pm: Have started another student on Home/school contract, which had to be discussed with child. Had to sort out behavioural issue with another student Child collected by grandparent who explained reason behind some of current behaviour. Late for Syndicate meeting which started about 3.20 – duration approx 1 hour. Photocopied some resources discussed at meeting and delivered to other syndicate members. Prepared artwork ready for children to complete next session. Helped another teacher who needed PD with computerised roll system. Prepared some resources for current te reo Maori unit. Set up classroom for tomorrow. Discussed Cross Country programme with PE lead teacher re encouraging participation of children who do not enjoy running. Looked at new maths resources in more depth – planned to introduce them
tomorrow so that the independent task box can be incorporated into regular maths programme.

One and a half hours at home after dinner

Finish marking Maths pre-test for three students that missed part of the test yesterday (faulty photocopying). Planned geometry lessons for math groups for next few days. Completed some technology portfolio comments. Took phone call from parent re their child and change of home situation

Teacher Six usually had about ten minutes for an interval break and about twenty-five minutes for lunch. After six hours weekend work, she completed her weekly diary on Sunday with a comment on work/life balance:

The job never finishes, I still have hours of work waiting but you have to draw the line. I am hoping in the future I will be better at drawing that line for the sake of my family.

Outside classroom teaching hours, Teacher Six worked for thirty and a quarter hours.

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Diary Seven

Teacher Seven was a senior teacher and indicated that she spent a considerable proportion of her out of class hours time on record keeping and compliance issues (about eleven hours, including five weekend hours.) Teacher Seven had some time release from classroom teaching, which included visits to another site. Over the week, Teacher Seven averaged about seven minutes actual break for each twenty-five minute interval and fifteen minutes actual break for each one hour lunch break. Only forty minutes of these times were scheduled non classroom duty times. Monday’s example gives an indication of the range of different activities and tasks that teachers carry out during “break times.”

Monday morning tea:

- Spelling books for tomorrow
- Set up for reading
- Collected one set of reading books
- Dropped notice for Mary to read
- Photocopied writing sheets for reading

Teacher Seven also outlined her work-related activities during the weekend of the dairy week:

Saturday 12.00 – 5.00

- At school filing all paperwork
- Putting away readers
- Making resources for next term
Two unit plans

Organised resources needed to plan for next year

Organised filing system

Assessed children’s visual art and visual language work for the term

Updated Reading graph

Updated School Entry results

Saturday’s work seemed to fall into two categories: work of a clearly professional nature that the teacher needed to do herself, such as planning units and assessing work. A Teacher Aide or similar support person could clearly assist with some of the other tasks, such as putting away readers and making resources, but an aide would need to be both funded and available. Throughout the diaries and interviews there were indications that teachers often leave many tasks until weekends or holidays when they can “catch up.”

Teacher Seven worked for thirty hours and twenty-five minutes outside classroom teaching hours.

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Diary Eight

Teacher Eight was a beginning teacher who had one day a week of release time. Her diary week provided an excellent overview of a “daily run” for a beginning teacher in particular, including how she spent her release day:

Teacher Eight recorded the hour before classes start on Monday as follows:

Get to school and check calendar to see if any student’s birthday is today. Then turn on the computer and check to see if any important emails for the day. Have set up the room on Friday night so resources mostly. Print out plans for the week and put them in folders. I can grab them as the day progresses. Write up day’s list of things on the board so both the kids and I know what’s up. Remember that I’m talking at the meeting tonight about a lesson I took so make sure I have some examples of the kids’ work ready. A quick check of the file that I have saved the kids’ reports in as they are due in today and I spent half the weekend finishing them off. A few kids and parents start arriving at 8.30 and I am asked a few questions by both so lots of talking from here on in…hard to set up the class sometimes with this going on but I love how the parents take an active interest in what is going on…from 8.45 onwards it gets a bit crazy, the room full of kids and parents who are reading their work books and chatting to me about a hundred different things. Certainly wakes me up though!

Between 3pm and 6.30pm on Monday, Teacher Eight attends a meeting, sets up her classroom for the next day From 5.20 to 6.30pm she recorded her activities as follows:

Look through the kids’ running records that I took on Friday last week and look for patterns to inform the next learning steps for some of them. Look on internet for ideas for our topic for the next two weeks and find some good stuff. Look through some library books for ideas on how to model tomorrow’s writing lesson. Write up last week’s beginning teachers’ meeting notes. Just glad report writing is over as that was an extra four
hours per night over the last few weeks and that was tough.

From 3pm to 5pm on Wednesday, Teacher Eight carries out similar activities:

I go back and tidy my class, cleaned some of the desks (how the kids get them this dirty is beyond me), have a meeting with my tutor teacher about a lesson she observed last week (feedback was really great and useful) and we discuss how I feel about this term and my plans for next term. I then start marking the kids’ work and organising resources for tomorrow. I read through some ideas for writing plans that I borrowed from another teacher and read through tomorrow’s guided reading books. Type up some activities from those books for the students.

Release day: “…I get to drive out to Cumberfield to see how their schools work using the ‘habits of mind.’ It is an amazing experience and I am impressed with where the school is heading and what they have achieved with the students. Will definitely incorporate this into my own teaching. This starts at 7.15 and we don’t get back until 6.”

The difficulty of recording hours accurately and in full was clear in Teacher Eight’s diary. Although the Cumberfield excursion had extended for almost twelve hours, she entered this as follows:

Release day work: five hours (approximately) this is difficult though as it could be counted as teaching and planning as I am testing the children and planning their work…bit of a grey area.

Teacher Eight worked on school related activities for about thirty hours outside classroom teaching hours in the recorded week.
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**Diary Nine**

Teacher Nine was responsible for new entrants and for kindergarten/school transition. Having a teacher aide in her class for part of the time relieved her workload. “Lucky I have Isobel to work with the six pre-schoolers here this morning. What a disaster, one little one has run away three times already and my sprint is improving….Little Miss Runaway loved painting forgot to take off….Wet day so lunch inside which means even though I start duty at 12.50 I now have to stay in room with my class.”

Teacher Nine followed what emerged as a common pattern among primary teachers of leaving many tasks until the weekend or holidays. These tended to vary between “house-keeping” type tasks such as filing and tasks that teachers like to spend extended periods of uninterrupted time on, such as preparing units or planners. Teacher Nine’s weekend activities were recorded as follows:

**Saturday** 1.00 until 3ish I worked on my Multi Media Presentation at
home on my lap top.

**Sunday** 11.00 until 2.40. I came to school to achieve a long list of jobs.

Emails, Email Principal about Child concerns, enter data onto Classroom Manager, Work on movies, complete survey, make disco posters, brainstorm and search for ideas on unit about ‘boats’ for another school Danika is working with, photocopy out Maths weekly planner so I can plan Maths at home.

Very sleepy and cold. Achieve a fair heap but not all of above list. Tomorrow is another day and it will start with or without me.

N.B. This list is by no means complete or a true record of what I did or taught as there is too much to record.

Outside classroom teaching hours, Teacher Nine worked over thirty-seven hours in the recorded week from Monday to Sunday.

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Diary Ten

In addition to describing the plethora of scheduled activities, Teacher Ten described several of her lunchtimes. On one occasion, the entire lunchtime was spent in communicating with parents:

“…talked to B’s mum as B leaving suddenly to live in New Plymouth, talked to J’s mum, J has eye infection and will be off until end of term., will organise work for her. Did I eat lunch?”

On only two days did Teacher Ten have a half hour lunch break; on one occasion she walked around the block with a colleague for “fitness/stress release.” Teacher Ten also described the tasks that she had left until the weekend.

Saturday 2nd July 4:00 – 6:00 completing graph and updating ATR records, swimming assessment

Sunday 3rd July 3:00 – 6:00 Went to school, Wrote up t –drive, answered e-mails, planned weeks reading/maths, organised records for child going to another school and a child changing classes

8:30 – 10:30 writing up daily plan for the week. Typing out assembly song, writing tutors thank you cards. Looking forward to Prep market day and kite flying, and the holidays.

Teacher Ten spent over thirty-six hours outside classroom teaching hours on work-related activities in the recorded week from Monday to Sunday. Part of this time was for parent/teacher interviews.
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**Diary Eleven**

Teacher Eleven completed her diary in the week before the term break, and in the latter part of the week began to include comments like: “The children are very proud of their creations! I now have a box full of books to mark – oh well no hurry, holidays are around the corner...The children and I preview the photos taken and write some highlights down on paper. I will type them up over the holidays I guess…”

Teacher Eleven completed her weekly diary with a list of tasks for the upcoming term break:

**HOLIDAY TASKS TO DO:**

Type up the children’s market day highlights comments.

Plan the language unit for the term
Plan spelling for the term

Organise the schools athletics sports

Organise a staff meeting for Teaching Games for Understanding

Organise poems for next term

Complete all mid year report cards on the computer for all children

Tidy extra paper and file all those things that just never get filed

Photocopy all associated resources for poetry, spelling, language and homework

Mark the homework from the last week of term 2

Teacher Eleven recorded her diary from Monday to Friday of the last week of term. Outside classroom teaching hours, she spent twenty-five hours on work-related activities. Interestingly, only about fifteen minutes of this was for meeting time.

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Diary Twelve

Teacher Twelve recorded her entries for the full seven day week. All seven days were based around the life of the school. On Saturday, although she had no formal duties, she looked after an overseas assistant teacher who attended the “work social” with her and remained as a guest until the following afternoon. (These hours are not included in the table.) On Sunday afternoon, Teacher Twelve commenced school-related work such as planning and assessing students’ work. She tried to avoid leaving all the “odd jobs” to the term break. Her entry on Thursday afternoon reads:

“After school: Worked in my classroom, marking, preparing lessons etc. I want to get this term tidied up so that next week (last week of term) I will be able to do some planning for Term 3. It is at this time of the term that I am usually really tired and leave catch up jobs until the holidays but I am determined to get them done before the break. I do not want to spend my holidays catching up and tidying up odd jobs, I would rather spend the time reenergising. I will be busy over the term break planning and making resources to ‘remotivate’ and prepare myself for the new term!”

On this particular Thursday, Teacher Twelve stayed at school until 9 pm to supervise the school disco.

Teacher Twelve recorded her diary for a full week. Outside classroom teaching hours, she worked for over thirty hours. This included two evening activities at the school, when she assisted and supervised at a school fair and a school disco.
Teacher 12

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Diary Thirteen

Teacher Thirteen’s diary provides a detailed example of school-related activities other than the usual supervision, meetings, planning and classroom organisation that teachers engage in during the week. For the diary week, these included two and a half hours at a school contract in-service, and about two and a half hours spent supervising and mentoring a student teacher outside class. “Other activities also included organising for Meningococcal vaccination, entering teams in competitions, writing notes to parents, arranging sports groups and attending to the “school mice”, which had been taken home for the weekend. Teacher Thirteen’s week also included five hours of parent teacher interviews, for which school had been dismissed one hour early. On the day of the interviews, Teacher Thirteen worked from 7.50 am to 7 pm. At the twenty minute morning tea, she talked to her student teacher about a lesson observed in the morning, and during the lunch hour, she spent thirty minutes at mini-ball practice and about ten minutes organising notes for further parent teacher
interviews.

Teacher Thirteen worked for thirty three and a half hours outside classroom teaching hours in the recorded week.

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Diary Fourteen

Teacher Fourteen usually arrived at school between 7.15 and 7.30 am. In addition to preparing and organising for her day, she usually liaised with support and other staff. For the week in question, this included teacher aides, the ICT teacher and the Reading Recovery teacher. On most days she worked at school until about 5 pm. She left earlier on two afternoons, once to attend a meeting at another school and once to purchase materials for her class. She used time blocks in the evenings or weekend for weekly planning and professional reading. The times before and after class were taken up with “myriad tasks”, as indicated by Monday morning and Thursday afternoon:

MONDAY

7.30 – 9.00am
Set up computers

Photocopied poem of the week – music activity sheets for seniors, maths work sheets

Retrieve ‘spelling’ worksheets for CD and photocopied

Set up whiteboard – date, timetable etc

Put class books in library and tidied library shelves

Spoke with Teacher Aide about individual pupils and group work for maths/reading

Spoke with 2 parents as they brought children into school

Discussed a child with Reading Recovery teacher

THURSDAY

3.00pm – 5.45pm

Interview with a parent about an incident previous day ½ hour

Typed out children’s stories on computer

Tidied room

Marked and made comments in Handwriting Books

Made labels and charts for ‘Inquiry’ Topic and ‘Storm’ work

Teacher Fourteen’s entire “daily run” for Wednesday (including class teaching hours) gives an idea of the range of her activities overall and is also interesting in that it mentions maintaining and analysing of running records. Teacher Fourteen mentioned the records three times in her diary. She did this task during quiet moments of classtime, such as when a video was showing
WEDNESDAY

7.30am

Turned on computers – found missing ‘Kidpix’ icons

Prepared for maths – worksheet for 1 group – worksheet for music – seniors

Made labels for ‘Our Plan of Work’

Tidied Library shelves

Talked to Teacher Aide and Reading Recovery Teacher

9.00am

Roll, Poem of the Week and Favourites

Maths, Spelling Buddies and Handwriting

10.40am

Interval duty

11.00am

Music with Year 7 / 8

Writing - Circus / Zoo lists

Reading Activities about zoo animals using school journals (Supplied by Teacher Aide)

Completed Running Records

12.30pm

Supervised own class 15 minutes – on duty next 15 minutes
Lunch

1.30pm

Serial Story

4 children sent home sick – vomited on floor – not too much mess!

Video about zoo – able to analyse some Running Records

Children completed zoo / circus list and started publishing

Ready for home – usual reminders – jackets as well

3.00pm

Put children’s letters in envelopes to post (addressed and stamped)

Tidied room – put comments in handwriting books

4.00pm

Meeting at [nearby school] about Classroom Relievers Time

4.45pm

Evening

Made list of ideas suitable for C I ‘themes’

Read updates of ICT notes - ¾ hour

Teacher Fourteen worked for twenty-six hours and forty minutes outside classtime teaching hours.
Diary Fifteen

Teacher Fifteen maintained a particularly informative and detailed diary for the first two days of her recorded week (Sunday to Saturday). The entries for Sunday and Monday provide an excellent example of the working life of a teacher, including its wide range of demands both inside and outside the classroom and the need for constant adjustment and re-adjustment during a working day. Monday’s entry also makes clear how effective a teacher aide can be in helping a teacher manage workload and in improving learning opportunities for children.

2:00-2:45

Collate the school wide results for handwriting. Work out % of children achieving different levels. Go to record it on the computer ready for BOT meeting on Wednesday and realise I haven’t got last year’s results to compare them to. Have to collect these from Principal’s office tomorrow.
7:00 – 9:00 pm

Go through homework books to check reading, spelling, and maths activities are all completed. Tick children off on class list so I can chase up missing books tomorrow.

Go to planning folder and complete the week’s plan as far as I can at this point. Make a list of things I have to do tomorrow morning.

Think about what we are doing for tomorrow’s staff meeting. We are doing staff development on the ICT contract and I am lead teacher so need to organise what we are going to cover. Want to develop a generic school plan for Inquiry learning. Staff were given photocopied examples on Friday so I don’t need to do any thing else. Time for a quick reread of ‘Inquiry Learning’ reading we are going to cover tomorrow.

Monday

7:15 – 9:00

Arrive at school. It’s absolutely freezing. The fire isn’t lit yet. Thank goodness I brought a wee heater with me. First job is to feed the goldfish, then change the date on the board. Next up, turn on all the computers and cross fingers that they all go this week. Collect up all the master copies of stuff that has to be photocopied for today. Search through folders to find appropriate maths activity for homework. Make sure I have enough copies of spelling lists for this week.

Draw up a variation of a graphic organiser for the children to use for this week’s writing.

Go downstairs and do the usual good mornings to all. Trip to the book room to collect journal stories for this week’s reading that fit in with our health theme. Go to the library and collect non fiction books on our health topic. Visit the photocopier to run off reading activities, maths measuring
activity for today, writing planning sheet, homework activities, and individual work for a small group in maths.

Teacher Aide has made me a cup of coffee. She’s a gem!!!. Talk briefly with her about maths activity for Maree and Johanne. Run back up to classroom to get a newspaper article I want to laminate. Back downstairs. Coffee’s cold. Give it a zap in the microwave, sit down for 10 minutes while the laminator warms up and I can laminate the newspaper cutting. Quick catch up of weekend gossip. Bell goes and we’re away.

9:00-10:40

Take the roll. Hear birthday news. Change the weekly monitors. Take the plants outside. Round up missing homework books. Find another copy of the homework for one child to do at playtime because their book is not here. Can’t be seen to be letting anyone away with not producing their homework as it sets a future trend. Explain this week’s homework tasks. Lay out spelling lists and reading sheets for children to collect to put in their books. Check everyone’s spelling so the words are correctly spelt.

Caitlyn (teacher’s aide) arrives at 9:30. Day sheet arrives so have to stop and fill in absences and find out who won’t be on the bus tonight. Check daily notices and share with the class.

Children get out Math’s kits (little sets of counters, digits, place value houses, and 100’s squares that we made for each child so they have hands on gear in their desk to save time) Caitlyn is working with 2 children on similar activities at their own level at the back table. They were struggling last week so I decided to get Caitlyn to work with them individually to improve their concept of place value. Caitlyn has the set of activities to work through with them while I take the rest of the class. Work through a series of hands on tasks forming numbers with digits and place value houses. Introduce tens and hundreds
of thousands. Practise crossing over the tens and hundreds when adding numbers.

Children are now introduced to a measuring unit. Caitlyn and I have to check that everyone has a ruler that is fit for the task. Have to supply rulers to those who don’t have one. Do a bit of a ‘rant’ about children needing to make sure they have all the gear they need. Quick introduction to cm and the need to start measuring from the 0 mark and then roving to help individuals on activity sheet.

Quick current events discussion on newspaper cutting about children learning to cough into tissues or ‘their arm’ if they don’t have a tissue. Add laminated cutting to our building wall display on health.

10:40-11:00 Morning Interval

11:00 – 12:30

Back to the room to find all children reading quietly. Spend 5 minutes organising Reading material, laying out activity sheets, and briefing Caitlyn on what to cover with her reading group. I take 2 groups, and Caitlyn takes one. Go through this week’s activities with whole class and introduce this week’s poem.

Read a journal story as motivation for today’s writing session. Brainstorm ideas and then hand out writing planning sheet. Explain how to use the graphic organiser and children get underway. Caitlyn and I roam to assist where needed.

Caitlyn and I check plans as they are completed and some children start their writing before the bell goes.

12:30-1:00

Wet lunch so have to stay in room while children have their lunch. Take
the time to clean out the goldfish and change the water. It was going a bit green.

1:00 – 1:25

On duty. Wet day so children all inside. A bit stressful. Have to round up children who persist in trying to play outside in the rain. Problem in one of the rooms- A complaint from children that others are saying ‘bad things’. I round up the culprit. Turns out there are three of them. Listen to the whole story and make a decision about guilt or innocence. Give all three of them lines to do about using inappropriate language, as per our discipline scheme. Have a talk to a couple of senior boys who are ‘flaring up’ and try to prevent things escalating. Bell goes!

1:25 – 2:55

Handwriting time. Organised computers for 2 children to do their handwriting as a keyboard exercise. Roaming the room giving formative assessment. Collect the books I haven’t seen and we settle down to listen to our serial story. One of the computers won’t print, didn’t save work as it was a 1 off quick activity. Have lost it all!!!!!! Have to cope with disappointed child and promise to try again tomorrow.

Children into groups and work on a Digital Camera Storyboard. Revise the task, objectives, and expectations before starting. Rove the room while groups are working. Frequent positive reinforcement and using examples of work to show children the expectations. Children have to write sentences justifying their choice of photos.

Pack up and tidy room... Remember to get children to bring plants inside, and check for rubbish outside. Choose ‘Person of the Day’ and the day is over.

3:00-5:00
Have to see the buses off before staff meeting. Check with Principal about what we are going to cover in ICT. Phone call from parent of one of the children I gave lines to at lunchtime. She wants me to justify myself= 5 minute discussion.

Begin staff meeting Discuss professional reading and then work towards developing a generic inquiry learning plan for our school. Record and display in ICT space in staffroom. Home time.

7:00-8:00

Realise I have forgotten to bring home handwriting results from last year so can’t do BOT presentation graphs. Decide to make up some classroom charts of the steps of the inquiry process as discussed in staff meeting. Use Publisher programme and design 6 charts. A bit of learning on the job as it’s a while since I used Publisher. Quite pleased with the results. Will get these up on the display wall in the classroom tomorrow.

Teacher Fifteen described recording tasks several times. She was responsible for presenting information to the Board of Trustees, and part of her after class time on Wednesday entry reads:

“…Went to write up notes for BOT meeting on the handwriting results. Have to point out comparisons between results from last year and this year and also come up with how we will improve the results in the future… [activity interrupted by unscheduled parent meeting]…. Back to the computer to finish the BOT report so I can give it to the principal for presentation. Photocopied enough for the meeting and then up to the room…”

Teacher Fifteen worked for twenty-three hours and forty-five minutes outside classroom teaching hours.
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**Diary Sixteen**

Teacher Sixteen worked for eight hours on Sunday, with the time mainly spent on planning and marking. Part of this time was spent at school and part at home, with two and a half hours spent marking homework books in the evening. She arrived at school at 7 am on Monday. From 7 am to the start of classes, she performed a variety of tasks: preparing whiteboards for different groups, photocopying, talking to parents, meeting new students.

Teacher Sixteen’s school is on two sites, so communication is an additional factor in the working week. On Monday afternoon there was a three hour meeting for senior teachers from both sites, with communication between sites being one of the issues on the agenda.

Of the five lunchtimes in the recorded week, Teacher Sixteen spends two on grounds duty, with discipline issues with one student arising on both occasions: “Lots of swearing and spitting, warnings, time-out.” For one lunchtime she is involved in sporting activities, and for another lunchtime she is travelling between sites:
“Lunchtime and today’s Student Council session was at [the other site]. 12.30 pm took children down in van and then supervised meeting. They’re getting better at staying on the subject and seeing matters through to a conclusion. No lunch today.”

For the recorded week, Teacher Sixteen worked outside classroom teaching times for thirty-six hours.

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**Diary Seventeen**

Teacher Seventeen commented at the end of her recorded week that it had been a light week, particularly compared to the week before, when there had been additional professional development activities and an evening meeting. “It’s nice having a less pressured week this week compared to last week.” Diary notes with regard to lunchbreaks were similar to those of other diaries: “gobble down lunch… eat lunch on the run…” Teacher Seventeen’s longest lunch break was on Monday – twenty minutes.

In the recorded week, Teacher Seventeen worked for twenty-three hours and thirty
five minutes outside classroom teaching hours.

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Diary Eighteen

Teacher Eighteen was a New Entrant Teacher. Her diary entries before and after classroom teaching hours give a good indication of the “daily run.”

Monday 8.00- 9.00 am

Arrived at school. Unpack books and rush to staffroom for morning briefing with staff. Discuss positives and negatives happening within the school and other events. Back to the classroom to retrieve photocopying for phonics and reading. Wait in line and catch up with other Junior staff to clarify any queries for the week. Off to pick up the reading books from upstairs and back into the classroom before too many parents gather to ask questions about times and place for their child’s injections this afternoon. Answer many queries and put parents’ mind at ease just before the bell rings.
3 – 3.45 pm

Put all chairs up on tables to please the cleaners! Gather diary and paperwork needed at Junior Syndicate meeting in Room 4. Return from meeting; check windows shut and curtains pulled across. Check laptop securely put away, haven’t got time to type up meeting notes tonight. Feed the lonely little fish, must clean out his green tank! Gather books for preparing lesson at home and other resources I need to look over for planning purposes.

Teacher Eighteen’s diary also gives an idea of the many informal meetings and consultations that can occur during a normal week:

Consultation with a Junior teacher re behaviour of a student

Meet with another Junior teacher to discuss a computer programme

Make contact with my student teacher for Term 3, to arrange a first meeting

Meet with Junior staff member to discuss taking assembly on Friday morning

Meet with Special Needs teacher to discuss funding application for a student

Meet with Principal to share a problem arising from an incident with one of the netball teams

Meet with a new voluntary helper for the library to discuss resources and requirements

Teacher Eighteen recorded seventeen hours of work-related tasks outside school hours from Monday to Friday. She referred to but did not specify time spent in the evenings and the weekend.
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**Diary Nineteen**

Teacher Nineteen also did not specify time spent in the evenings or weekends. She recorded about fourteen and a quarter hours outside classroom teaching time. Much of this time was spent on ICT related matters. She did not record planning or assessment times outside class, or time spent in the evening or weekend.
### Diaries Twenty, Twenty-one and Twenty-two

These diaries were recorded by principals or non-teaching administrators, and give an idea of the range of activities carried out by primary principals. While the work of non-teaching principals is outside the scope of this report, the diaries provide additional insight into life of primary schools. Diary Twenty-two was of direct relevance to the report as it was recorded by a sole teacher/principal.

#### Diary Twenty

No table is provided for this diary as the diarist was a full time administrator. Principal Twenty described the recorded week as “a straightforward week unlike the previous one that had Student Led Conferences which entailed two late nights.” This Principal’s day ran from about 7.30 am to 5.45pm, excluding evening and weekend work. As with teaching staff in schools, intervals and lunchbreaks were rarely non work-related. During class times she spent part of one day teaching. Other time during class hours was spent on administrative duties and organisational tasks. For the
recorded week (as noted, a particularly light week, with only the five weekdays recorded), the Principal worked on school-related tasks for about forty-four hours. Activities outside class hours such as “taking a phone call from a parent…meeting with Board of Trustees Chairperson…meeting with parent…travelling to another site”, conducting a professional development meeting were recorded. This Principal also did two and a half hours of grounds and bus duty during the week, and organised an extra-curricular activity on four days.

Diary Twenty-one

Teacher/Administrator (TA) Twenty-one recorded work-related activities from Sunday to Friday in both anecdotal and tabular form. TA Twenty-one had a one third teaching allotment. He arrived at school at about 7 am and left at about 5.15pm. During the recorded week the school conducted an Open Night, and he did not leave the school until 9.45pm. TA Twenty-one also worked at home in the evenings for several hours and during the weekend for three and a quarter hours. During class hours, TA Twenty-one was teaching for one third of the time and undertaking administrative and other tasks for the other two thirds of class hour time. These tasks included pastoral care, organisational and planning matters, and liaison and meetings with various individuals and groups.

TA Twenty-one recorded both planning and organisational tasks and a number of short duration tasks (between five and twenty minutes) that he performed outside class hours: for example, opening classrooms, checking messages, accessing information on websites, checking emails, changing student timetables, checking ramp and wheelchair safety, writing safety report. There were many five minute entries for provision of pastoral care. For the school’s half hour interval and one hour lunch break, this teacher averaged between five and ten minutes for interval and about ten minutes for lunch. Tasks that intruded on this time included: accessing forms, attending to orders, printing off documents, organising activities, finalising programs, distributing information. One lunchtime entry reads: “While munching fruit, churn out letters to parents re speech competition. Two different kinds. One for the finalists and one for the others to come and watch. Issue instructions to aides for giving out to
students. Coffee with staff while discussing who will be in the finals.”

TA Twenty-one was working for about four and a quarter hours on average on weekdays outside the hours of 9am to 3 pm. This included a school Open Night on the Thursday. Not surprisingly, Friday’s entries began with: “Open unit. Very tired today.”

TA Twenty-one worked for about thirty hours outside classroom teaching times. Most of this work was in planning and organisation, with several hours devoted to pastoral care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher 21</th>
<th>Total classroom hours and school administration during class hours</th>
<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Non-classroom duty</td>
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<td>Extra curricular activities</td>
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**Diary Twenty-two**

Principal Twenty-two was a sole teacher in a small school. Her diary provides particular insight into the special nature of this position. Principal Twenty-two recorded her activities from Monday to Friday. Friday was her “release day”, when a relieving teacher taught the children. However, she also spent some time in the
classroom on this day. The table for Principal Twenty-two recorded duties and tasks outside classroom teaching times for all five days. The nature of the sole teacher position affects various tasks such as supervision duty. A sole teacher is effectively on supervisory duty at all times while children are in the building. Teacher Twenty-two recorded bus duty but alluded to other times outside class only in passing, although she was clearly undertaking a supervisory role at those times also. She organised her day and week so that she could undertake classroom planning and organisation in extended blocks of time, usually after school hours either at the school or at home. Apart from major planning, organisation and meetings related to her roles as principal and teacher, Principal Twenty-two recorded many other tasks such as purchasing books, talking to sports representatives, reading documents, planning excursions, following up telephone calls and checking school emails. Even more so than at other schools, this teacher rarely had uninterrupted time at interval or lunch breaks. Her diary for Wednesday, outlining her “daily run” apart from class time hours for the week, gives an indication of the demands made on sole teacher/principals:

After opening up the school on Wednesday, Principal Twenty-two met the school bus:

“Bus arrived at 8.15am. Answered phones, talked to children, finished entering child who enrolled Monday into enrolment book, filing associated forms.

8.45am: parent/teacher interview


Lunch 12.30 to 1.10pm: Had lunch. Read Eduvac. Organised “stepping stones” for seniors to show juniors games learned. Got mail. Reviewed June finances (arrived today.)

2.45 to 4 pm: Boards, planning Maths for Thursday, checking emails, followed up on dance day payment, checked user friendly ICT materials,
purchased and ordered.

4 to 4.20pm: went home, lit fire, did housework stuff.

4.40 to 5pm: Wrote up [office administrator’s] notes for tomorrow of tasks to do. Rang Bill about finance query.

5 to 7 pm: Board of Trustees meeting

7 to 7.50pm: Added to [office administrator’s] notes. Chose reading books for next week. Took reading books and planner home.

7.50 to 9pm: (Popped tea in oven/on stove. Planning for reading next week Wrote up plan, organised worksheets/activities. (Did watch TV at same time.) Dinner!

From Monday to Friday, Principal Twenty-two worked for twenty-seven hours and forty minutes outside classroom teaching hours.

<table>
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<th>Total hours outside the classroom</th>
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