



RAPHAEL HOUSE  
RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL

# Raphael House 2025 Annual Report



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## Principal Summary

As another rich and vibrant year at Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School draws to a close, it is heartening to reflect on all that has been achieved together. Our mission—to spark a lifelong passion for learning through a holistic curriculum—remains at the heart of all we do. This year has been one of thoughtful review and renewal, as we have looked closely at our school initiatives to ensure that our special character as a Waldorf-Steiner school, grounded in an anthroposophical approach, continues to be strong and deeply lived.

Learning at Raphael House extends far beyond the classroom. The camps, plays, and sporting opportunities that fill our calendar are not “extras” but integral, intentional parts of our developmental curriculum—experiences that nurture courage, collaboration, creativity, and community. The achievements of our students across all areas of learning continue to make us proud, from academic success to artistic and social growth.

Our Structured Literacy approach, now in its fourth year in primary school, is establishing a strong foundation for confident, capable readers and writers. Alongside this, we have strengthened our web of learning and social supports, adding a rich array of therapies and programmes—from art, clay, LEGO, and music therapies to a lunchtime social group supporting connection and belonging, and targeted learning support for individuals and small groups. These initiatives have already made a tangible difference, and we look forward to extending them further in 2026.

As we look to the year ahead, I am reminded of Steiner’s words:

**“The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.”**

May these continue to guide our work and inspire all we do together.

## Board Summary

Thanks to the outstanding leadership of our Director, Karyn Gray, and the dedication of our wonderful teachers and staff, the school has enjoyed another very successful year. We continue to perform strongly both academically and financially, and it’s encouraging to see the school community thriving in such a positive and supportive environment.

This year, we farewell Tim Angus, our long-standing teacher representative, who is retiring after many years of dedicated service. Tim’s commitment and passion for education have left a lasting legacy, and we wish him all the very best for his well-earned retirement. We are delighted to welcome Merlin Führhop as our new teacher representative and look forward to the insights and energy he brings to the board.

We are also farewelling Andrea Wakelin, a valued parent representative who has been a pillar of the board for many years. Andrea’s steady guidance helped the school navigate challenging times, and we thank her sincerely for her commitment. Welcome to Niels Hunefeld who joins the board as a new parent representative—his perspective and enthusiasm will be a great asset to our team.

## Proprietors Trust Summary

This year continued to be one of consolidation as we maintained our focus on our core purpose of land and building improvements and our commitment to special character at Raphael House.

Championing adult education and professional development in the community remains a priority for us. Our focus on kaimahi and special character professional development this year was funding the Kolisko Conference in the Hawkes Bay. We were thrilled that so many of our kaimahi attended and that it was such an inspiring experience - with kaimahi having the opportunity to connect with other Waldorf teachers from around Aotearoa and coming away with fresh ideas to bring to Raphael House.

For adult education, we continued to support the community co-ordinator/librarian along with the Board. We are delighted to see the community space growing and opportunities for parents and caregivers to connect with each other at Raphael House.

From a building perspective, this year brought focus on reviewing the existing building spaces to make sure they're being utilized in the best way possible - with a few shifts occurring to support our ākonga and teaching staff. Highlights for the Trust include a 30 year upgrade to the Eurythmy Building with a new roof, double glazing and replacing natural gas heating with electric. A big thank you to Hutt City Council for providing 50 % funding to support this work under their carbon reduction grant. Also after 30 years Upper School Handwork found a new home in the exciting creative arts floor of the Upper School Building (if you haven't checked it out, you should) and new library space for all students to enjoy.

We have also begun planning work for a new drama studio to support the incredible art performances at Raphael House. We are excited to see this unfold over 2026.

A big thank you to all parents who continue to pay their attendance dues and Trust donations each year - without this we would not be able to continue to maintain and grow our buildings.

Working cohesively with our colleagues on the School Board and Wellington Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten Trust continues to be a focus and we wish to thank both of these groups for their continued shared vision, conversations, and collaborations with us over 2025.

Early in 2025 we farewelled Louise Baldock as our Trust Secretary following her move to the Waikato. We are now looking for a new Trustee with skills around funding and procurement, engagement and fundraising to help us achieve our vision for Raphael House.

As always we could not continue to do our jobs as Trustees without the support and ongoing work from Brett and Gita, Karyn and all the Raphael House kaimahi.

# Annual Plan Goals and Variance

## Strategic Theme: Waldorf Philosophy

We uphold the Rudolf Steiner education philosophy, in a contemporary context, recognising the spiritual, physical and emotional dimensions of education.

Goals	Outcomes
<p><i>To explore and integrate contemporary insights into brain science and executive function within our Waldorf approach to thinking, feeling, and willing. We aim to align our methods for developing students' will and appreciation for beauty with current research on effective learning and well-being, ensuring these practices meet the diverse needs of our students.</i></p> <p><i>To align our school curriculum with national SEANZ curriculum guidelines documents, strengthening the unique character of Waldorf education, while building collaborative networks with other Waldorf schools in Aotearoa.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All staff to build capability in preparing for and holding CPS conversations supported by the CPS lead team.</li><li>2. Pastoral and learning support teams to explore adding therapies to the support programmes.</li><li>3. All staff to work to elevate beauty within the school environment.</li><li>4. All staff to build an understanding of child development and thresholds and their implications for the current time and place</li></ol>

### Summary Statements, Variance and Next Steps

This work has been a key focus of the pathways team for the year. There is a three-year strategy towards embedding a range of therapies and therapeutic practices into our intervention programmes. This strategy has been evaluated at the end of each term and progress is being made as expected and outlined in the plan. A care team meets weekly, reviewing all students at risk and discussing referrals of students for extra support from teachers. There has been an extensive development and overhaul of systems and overhaul of systems within the student management system to make the referral and monitoring process easily accessible and understandable for all staff.

The curriculum development to align literacy and numeracy learning steps with the new national curriculum documents is ongoing. A curriculum team has also had an in-depth look at the national curriculum for science, history and geography, reducing the number of learner outcomes to more manageable and realistic levels. Learning steps development have been completed for science, handwork, music and handwriting and the literacy and numeracy steps are currently being revised in line with new national curriculum statements.

**Goals 1 and 2 were both achieved for 2025. Goals 3 and 4 were partially achieved and may need further focus in 2026.**



## Strategic Theme: Inclusivity

We are dedicated to understanding the individual needs of each ākonga. Our kaimahi establish strong relationships with ākonga, providing personal focus and support to nurture their diverse capabilities and develop their own identity.

Goals	Outcomes
<p><i>To deepen the integration of te ao Māori principles within our Waldorf curriculum, fostering a culturally responsive and holistic approach that honors both Māori perspectives and Waldorf educational philosophy.</i></p> <p><i>To foster collaborative teaching practices enhancing both personal growth and collective efficacy within our Waldorf educational community.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Lead staff continue with Kura Ahurea programme and bringing this back into the school environment.</li><li>2. Support PLD programmes for staff.</li><li>3. All staff continue to develop waiata, karakia and vocabulary repertoire.</li><li>4. Festivals PLD plan- to support the growth of Te Ao Māori in festivals</li><li>5. Time within weekly PLD programme for pod and team collaboration- building collective understanding of student needs and meeting them through a collaborative approach.</li><li>6. Class and child studies within pods</li><li>7. Weekly student care meetings with senior leaders and pastoral and SENCO personnel</li></ol>
Summary Statements, Variance and Next Steps	
<p>Te Wiki o Te Reo was a great success with activities planned and carried out every day across the school, with a range of teachers offering related activities every lunch break culminating in the Class 10 Te Reo students running a whole lunchtime of activities on the final day of term.</p> <p>The festivals team are working on a long term review our entire Festivals programme and align it more closely with the Maramataka calendar to bring our festivals more into an Aotearoa context.</p> <p>We continue to belong to the Kura Ahurea programme with two staff attending termly hui and bringing back local purakau to share with all staff.</p> <p>Teachers have a commitment to collaborating together to enhance their practice and there are great examples of this happening throughout the school at the moment.</p> <p>Class studies and child studies were carried out in the middle terms which always brings a great level of staff collaboration. There are some cross class collaborations developing around both structured literacy further implementation and developing an understanding of new math resources.</p> <p><b>While outcomes were achieved for 2025.</b></p>	



## Strategic Theme: Community

**We uphold the Rudolf Steiner education philosophy, in a contemporary context, recognising the spiritual, physical and emotional dimensions of education.**

Goals	Outcomes
<p><i>To harmonize the inner development practices for teachers, as envisioned by Rudolf Steiner, with contemporary expectations of professionalism, reflective practice, and student-centered teaching.</i></p> <p><i>To continue to build a strong partnership with parents through education and engagement, fostering a shared understanding of Waldorf principles and collaborative support for student growth.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Term 1 focus on the foundations of a Steiner-Waldorf approach and how this impacts the planning, teaching and understanding of students. Major focus on 3-fold process and SEANZ principles.</li><li>2. Leading into a focus on child study and its impacts on teaching and learning in Term 2 &amp; 3.</li><li>3. Term 2 and 3 will also be connecting with the fellowship principles and practices and curriculum sites leading to a review of planning templates and Main Lessons</li><li>4. Leadership review and enhance communication with a focus on special character education.</li><li>5. Develop easily accessible information around thresholds and develop and deliver parent education programmes around these and other aspects of schooling.</li><li>6. Further develop partnership hui</li><li>7. Strengthen learning posts.</li></ol>

### **Summary Statements, Variance and Next Steps**

We continue to encourage and enhance our staff capacity for reflective practices.

We continue to develop our coaching model and encourage staff to use the reflective opportunities in their Professional growth Cycle booklet.

We are continuing to grow a staff 'picture' of what being a Waldorf educator is by continual reflections and goal setting against the principles of Steiner Waldorf education

Learnings from the Kolisko conference were a dominant theme in our internal professional learning programme for the Term 2 after 25 staff attending this conference in the Term 1 holiday break. The Steiner senior leaders leadership workgroup attended by three of our senior leaders also spent some time exploring the concept of the inner life of a leader.

The threefold learning and teaching approach, and working with the 12 senses, including reflection about the consciousness of this in the planning process, was a significant focus for teachers in our professional learning in the first half of the year.

We have been adding articles to the Bush Telegraph all year unpacking various aspects of our special character. There is now a catalogue of parent resources in the community parent library. We are currently reviewing the literature we give parents during the enrolment process to further strengthen understanding of special character. The PTFA have taken the initiative to re-form a parents rep group.

**All goals except number 3 were achieved in 2025. A review of planning templates will be looked at in 2026**



The school carried out a review of special character for SEANZ in term 1. The summary of findings were:

#### Special Character Strengths

- Most curriculum practices in this review are highly embedded but there are some areas of the school without as much constancy and depth as others.
- New festival team is working well and providing ongoing professional learning and development sessions for staff.
- The balance of class cultures and meeting individual needs is an ongoing challenge especially with the significant uprise in neurodivergence amongst students.
- Collaborative Proactive Solutions as an approach to managing student behaviours is becoming embedded and fits very well with our special character.
- A Waldorf inspired structured literacy approach is well embedded in the primary years, and this is now extending into the intermediate years.
- A Te Reo specialist teacher adds depth to the Te Reo programme and the specialist teacher is not used as teacher release. Teachers are expected to stay in the class and learn alongside their students.
- The schoolwide coaching programme is effective in meeting the needs of individual teaching staff members
- Governance structured are well understood and in place and a strong positive relationship exists between the Proprietors trust and Board, as well as the local Early Childhood trust. The principal attends all three meetings each term.

#### Special Character Next Steps

- Ensuring that the induction programme for new teachers is ongoing over their first two years rather than just a burst at the start of their employment
- Parent education and development is an ongoing goal in the annual implementation plan for 2025.
- Review and update of assessment information being collected and shared in the student management system is planned as part of the integration of new curricula as they arise.
- Relevant staff learning on analysing and using data in their teaching will be provided as appropriate.
- Investigation into effective and efficient ways to coach support staff to be undertaken.

In preparation for the Education review office visit in October we completed a schooling improvement framework review

#### A summary of this review includes the following strengths:

##### Leadership

- A well-established and structured wider leadership team that meets regularly for both operational and strategic matters.
- A living Leadership Handbook ensures clarity of roles and continuity during absences.
- Strong alignment of PLD with strategic goals, creating coherence across initiatives.
- A robust coaching system, with members of the leadership team coaching multiple staff, supporting both individual growth and strategic alignment.
- Increased openness to external providers and community resources, reducing reliance on internal capacity alone.
- Leadership roles extended through Kāhui Ako and internal opportunities, developing leadership capability across staff.
- Intentional focus on teacher retention and wellbeing, with additional supports provided when needed.

##### Curriculum

- Rich and holistic Steiner curriculum meeting developmental needs at each stage.
- Main Lessons offer depth, integration, and creativity, well-aligned to both national Steiner impulses and local contexts.
- Broad experiences (farm experience, community service, EOTC, festivals) extend student learning across cognitive, social, and practical dimensions.
- Strong and coherent assessment practice at senior NCEA levels, with consistent external moderation outcomes.
- Structured Literacy embedded successfully across the school, with positive impact on all learners.
- A strong EOTC programme exists that integrates with the curriculum at each class level.
- Collaborative curriculum culture strengthened through intentional PLD and digital documentation systems.
- Increasing integration of te reo and te ao Māori, particularly in the primary school and through festivals and waiata.

##### Teaching and Learning

- Learning and teaching are deeply grounded in the Waldorf impulse of educating head, heart, and hands.
- Positive and respectful teacher–student relationships evident across the school.
- Strong systems for engaging parents and whānau in partnership with the school.
- Adaptive assessment practices that provide choice and relevance for students.
- Well-coordinated pastoral and SENCO support, complemented by the inherent strengths of the Steiner curriculum.
- Increasingly deliberate approach to learner agency and metacognition aligned with developmental stages.
- High levels of learner engagement recognised both internally and externally, particularly as students’ progress through the 12-year journey.

#### Professional capability

- A strong culture of trust, collaboration, and shared responsibility, especially in the high school where staff regularly collaborate on student achievement and wellbeing.
- Commitment to developing models in the primary school for shared responsibility, such as involving specialist teachers in class teacher placement decisions.
- Robust and intentional induction and coaching systems, supporting both new teachers and experienced staff.
- Professional learning opportunities are strategically aligned and increasingly open to incorporating contemporary educational research alongside Steiner pedagogy.
- Staff engagement in reflective practices (e.g., PGC annual booklets with reflective prompts)
- Investment in Te Reo and Te Ao Māori professional learning, with specialist teaching in the primary school and growing integration in the high school.

#### Inclusion and Wellbeing

- A clear Pathways Plan has provided a roadmap for systems change, ensuring clarity and consistency in how we support neurodivergent learners and children needing supportive welfare plans.
- Strong professional development for kaiako has lifted understanding of neurodiversity and embedded CPS strategies.
- HERO has been successfully implemented as a central tool for identification, allocation, and monitoring.
- Consistent use of restorative and preventative approaches has strengthened school culture and reduced complaints.
- Staff demonstrate a growing confidence in addressing student needs collaboratively.

#### Partnerships

- Strong partnerships through IEPs, Partnership Hui, Kaiarataki communications, parent meetings, and pastoral care.
- Collaborative decision-making for student pathways, with individualised support for students and families.
- Community connection through festivals, productions, class meetings, and social events.
- Systems innovation with the SMS providing improved transparency and accessibility.
- Cultural responsiveness, with increased visibility of te reo and te ao Māori and active involvement of Māori whānau.

#### Stewardship and Governance

- Strong continuity of Board membership across three terms, ensuring stability and institutional knowledge.
- Significant progress in repairing and strengthening relationships with the Proprietors Trust, resulting in constructive collaboration.
- Successful establishment of a MOU with a separate Early Childhood Trust that supports clear governance arrangements.
- Active and informed governance demonstrated through the development of a new vision and strategic plan.
- Consistent communication of key decisions and messaging to the school community.
- Effective use of Principal’s reports and documents to inform strategic decision-making.
- Statutory obligations are understood and met.

#### Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- Strong primary school model of te reo Māori teaching that builds student learning and teacher capability simultaneously.
- Access to local iwi-led PLD through the Kura Ahurea programme, ensuring authentic engagement with local tikanga, waiata, and pūrākau.
- Regular opportunities for kapa haka, waiata, and festivals embed Māori culture into school life.

- A developing and engaged whānau Māori rōpū providing consultation and voice.
- Visible commitment from staff to engage in reo and waiata learning as part of staff culture.
- Recognition of common ground between te ao Māori and Waldorf education, providing a strong philosophical base for bicultural practice.

#### Evaluation for Improvement

- Leaders and teachers are beginning to use evaluative evidence more deliberately to plan and monitor improvement actions. This is particularly evident in pastoral and hauora planning, the review of literacy and numeracy programmes in the primary areas and the reviews of Main lesson programmes in the high school. However, systematic cycles of evidence-driven improvement are not yet fully in place. Developing consistent use of measures and indicators and ensuring that learning from these cycles informs future planning, will help us move from responsive improvement to sustained, long-term school development.

A summary of this review includes the following next steps:

#### Leadership

- Ensure equitable representation of both primary and high school within the wider leadership team (to be addressed in the 2026 staffing plan).
- Strengthen sustainability of the coaching programme by reviewing allocations and resourcing.
- Build further capacity for staff to independently use data for teaching and learning decisions, rather than relying on leadership to drive analysis.
- Expand opportunities for whānau to be involved in school-level decision-making, not only student-focused plans.

#### Curriculum

- Strengthen numeracy focus, building on the success of Structured Literacy.
- Continue documenting curriculum electronically to ensure sustainability and coherence.
- Share curriculum expertise more widely across staff, not only through SLT but by leveraging the breadth of teacher strengths.
- Develop greater consistency of assessment practices in Classes 8–9, ensuring clarity of modes and alignment across departments.
- Deepen and extend explicit te ao Māori integration across all subjects, particularly in the high school.

#### Teaching and Learning

- Embed consistency in parent communication around Main Lessons, building stronger home–school partnership.
- Continue embedding consistency in assessment practice and adaptive teaching across all classes.
- Monitor and document learner engagement more systematically to provide evidence for the strong impressions shared by visitors and families.
- Strengthen and resource induction processes for teachers new to the school, especially those new to Steiner pedagogy.

#### Professional Capability

- Develop consistency in staff uptake of PLD and coaching opportunities across the school.
- Strategically evaluate the impact of PLD to ensure it is advancing both strategic goals and individual teacher needs.
- Build greater staff confidence and independence in data use, moving towards collaborative sense-making and classroom application.
- Support high school staff to integrate Te Reo and Te Ao Māori more confidently across their programmes.
- Create more opportunities for staff-led PLD to share the wealth of expertise within the school.

#### Inclusion and Wellbeing

- Review cycles for Pathways and HERO processes to move from yearly to termly reviews, ensuring timeliness and responsiveness.
- Continue to provide professional learning opportunities incorporating the latest research, connecting it to special character
- Continue to build depth of resources and programmes of support (e.g., MindPlus, Extra Lesson).
- Strengthen staff clarity and consistency around HERO processes for behaviour, Pathways, and CPS referrals.
- Continue systematic data analysis of HERO trends, ensuring findings are shared with staff for proactive action.

#### Partnership

- Expand parent education opportunities to build understanding of restorative and preventative practices.

- Ensure consistency of application across all areas and staff, addressing current variability.
- Refresh and review whānau engagement expectations, ensuring responsiveness to the current parent cohort's capacity.
- Strengthen parent involvement in decision-making, particularly around curriculum and school development, not just individual student pathways.
- Ensure Māori whānau engagement is sustained equitably and supported structurally, avoiding over-reliance on key individuals.
- Refine processes for parent partnership in therapeutic and wellbeing support (e.g., consent forms, streamlined communications).
- Continue to evaluate the impact of the SMS and refine its use to further empower parents as learning partners.
- Further refine the enrolment process to give parents clarity about mutual expectations between them and the school
- Develop regular processes for Board self-review and evaluation of governance performance.
- Continue to embed and strengthen the MoU between the Board and the Trusts to ensure long-term cohesion.
- Expand Board communication to include more opportunities for community voice and feedback.
- Provide ongoing professional development for trustees to deepen capability, particularly in evaluating impact of governance decisions.
- Monitor and review the new strategic plan to ensure alignment with school priorities and special character.

#### Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- Ensure consistency of practice in the high school, moving beyond individual teacher discretion to a school-wide approach.
- Collaborate with whānau Māori to define their aspirations for ākonga and how the kura can support them.
- Investigate Māori student attendance and engagement data to identify any disproportionate trends, and develop responsive strategies in partnership with whānau.
- Provide PLD for staff on culturally responsive teaching and learning practices across all year levels.
- Encourage all staff to undertake a personal journey in te reo Māori or tikanga, with school structures supporting this.
- Information and data sharing to a wider catchment of stakeholders. We currently share what we do in terms of our planning back to Kura Ahurea- what else can we be sharing?
- Whānau Māori - involvement and discussion around capturing their aspirations for their tamariki - how do we do this more regularly and take on board what is shared with us?
- Strengthen articulation of the parallels between Waldorf and te ao Māori, embedding them more explicitly in curriculum design and community communications

#### Evaluation for Improvement

- Organisationally, the conditions to support strategic improvement are being strengthened. Leadership roles, policies, and processes are increasingly aligned to support schoolwide evaluation. However, greater coherence is needed to ensure these conditions consistently drive improvement at all levels of the school. With further structure, and an intentional focus on embedding evaluation across systems, we will be well placed to move from “developing” towards “embedding” in the School Improvement Framework.

Informal feedback from the Education Review office review is included below. (The formal report is not due for release until after the writing of this annual report.)

#### Strengths:

- Achievement and equity are **very strong**, with almost all students achieving at or above expected curriculum levels.
- Leadership systems and processes are **strong, aligned, and well embedded**.
- Leaders set **clear expectations** while remaining deeply collaborative and consultative, there is a clarity around priorities.
- Teaching and learning quality is very high.
- The three-fold approach was clearly visible in classrooms.
- The PLD programme is strong and is clearly aligned with the annual plan.

- The school fosters teacher leadership opportunities and encourages staff to innovate, examine, and review their practice.
- Leaders respond actively when staff express needs.
- Te Ao Māori is being fostered authentically across the school.
- Lower school development in this area is clearly influencing the upper school, with students moving through each year with **increasing reo, knowledge, and confidence**.
- Strong commitment to Te Tiriti and local contexts was noted.
- **Inclusion and Wellbeing** is a significant strength of the school.
- Literacy and numeracy are **very effectively integrated** across all learning.
- Teaching practice observed was of **very high quality**, with:
  - Strong, respectful relationships
  - Purposeful routines
  - Explicit instruction
  - High-quality questioning
  - High-quality Main Lesson book work
- Collaboration was highlighted as being “in the DNA of the school,” visible in:
  - Teacher–teacher collaboration
  - Teacher–LSA collaboration
  - Teacher–leader collaboration
- The school was described as **highly coherent**, with everything aligning purposefully — systems, curriculum, support structures, and professional learning.
- Collaboration has significantly strengthened in recent years, with staff expressing a desire for even deeper cross-department collaboration in the high school.

**Next steps:**

1. **Curriculum**  
Continue developing a responsive curriculum aligned with the SEANZ framework and the national curriculum, ensuring learner experience is central to engagement.
2. **Attendance**  
Improve regular attendance rates for all students
3. **Teaching and Learning**  
Strengthen coaching processes using evidence-based data gathering to ensure consistency of the learner experience across classes.
4. **Evaluation for Improvement**  
Grow evaluative capability schoolwide, ensuring review cycles clearly identify what is working for each learner and why, and then plan accordingly.



## Highlights of 2025

### Festivals

Festivals are a key part of our school life. They can be celebrated in small groups, be class centred, with whanau and even with the wider community. Through the festivals we seek to celebrate that which defines our common humanity in the broadest sense; seeking to acknowledge both the earthly and cosmic elements of our human existence.

Often the anticipation which builds through preparing for a festival through practicing waiata, weaving wreaths, hearing stories, is as important as the actual festival itself.

### International Students

From stunning views and friendly people to the relaxed school vibe, our international students are loving life in New Zealand. With caring teachers, welcoming classmates, and laughter-filled days, every day feels special. This year, students from Thailand, China, Japan, Germany, and Switzerland enriched our school community—sharing their cultures, stories, and perspectives. Whether here for a few months or the whole year, they've brought new perspectives, lasting connections, and a deeper appreciation of our diverse world.

### EOTC

Classes 3-12 have been involved with a range of camps as per the school EOTC programme and these remain a highlight for students and teachers alike each year.

### Performances, Plays and Presentations.

Most classes in the primary area present a class play and class plays also happen annually at Class 10 and 12. The annual Talent Show in Term 2 showcased the range of talents we have at school. Throughout the year we have been treated to a range of excellent Eurythmy, music and performances.

In Eurythmy the aim is to “speak” and “sing” through movements and gestures that reveal to the eye what language and music sound to the ear: it is thus a “visible speech” and “visible song”. The veil of the eurythmist is designed to show the shapes that the voice makes in the air as sound travels through space. The veil draws the attention of the audience away from the individual practitioner to the effect they have on the space around them. Both these aspects give Eurythmy as an art of movement, an objective aspect which is freeing.

The Class 8 Projects beautifully reflect the heart of Steiner education — inspiring lifelong curiosity and giving students the chance to follow their individual interests and abilities. Each student begins by choosing a topic that fits into one of several pathways: learning about a subject, developing a new skill, designing or crafting something, testing an idea, or working to create change. Beyond research, writing, and presenting, these projects strengthen key life skills such as organisation, time management, breaking large tasks into achievable steps, networking, self-motivation, resilience, and creative problem-solving.

Every year, the projects are wonderfully diverse and perfectly aligned with the hands-on, holistic nature of Steiner learning. While smaller in scope than the Class 12 Projects, the Class 8 experience allows students to explore something meaningful to them and to develop habits and strategies that will serve them well in later years.

This year's projects were truly inspiring. Students proudly shared their finished creations, research, and display boards with the school community and younger students during the Class 8 Project Presentations. It was a genuine celebration of imagination, independence, and dedication. Warm thanks to all staff and whānau whose guidance and encouragement helped make these projects such a success.

With a small Class 12 we saw four determined journeys through four fascinating topics. From this year's Class 12 projects, we learned that vegetarian athletes can achieve peak performance, and that gym motivation comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. We learned about the values, culture, and attire of the Sikh faith, and how our beloved pets can help us to navigate the complex web of emotion.

We learn about these interesting topics alongside our Class 12 rangatahi as they spend the better part of a year researching and engaging in some form of practical application and discovery. They are given the opportunity to choose their topics at the end of Class 11 and are then required to produce a substantial research document, a public display, and to present a fifteen-minute public speech to a large audience.

The project displays were high tier this year and were much enjoyed by all fellow ākonga who came to visit them. That same evening, the school was bursting at the seams as whānau, kaiako, and upper school peers all gathered to hear the project speeches. Wowed by the words spoken by our Class 12 rangatahi, the room was left buzzing with inspiration and pride. All their hard work, courage and perseverance paid off wonderfully!

## **Sports**

Across the school, we have a huge range of sports being played at a personal and team level, thanks to the incredible efforts of our sports coordinator and to parents who coach and manage in these various sports.

We were required to do a sports census for sports Wellington. From our high school classes the following numbers participated in the following sports as representatives of the school:

- Athletics- 3
- Basketball-9
- Basketball 3x3-8
- Cross Country- 3
- Football (Outdoor)-17
- Futsall-16
- Hockey (outdoor)-16
- Netball-20
- Road Racing-3
- Touch-10
- Volleyball-8
- Waterpolo-1

## **Student Clubs**

A range of clubs operate at lunchtimes and/or after school to support student interests- Book club, art club and geek club are just some of these. We owe a real sense of thanks to the teachers who offer these extra activities for our students.

## **Interventions and Therapies**

In a Steiner school, we view education as a journey that develops the whole human being; thinking, feeling, and willing. Alongside extra curricula programmes to support literacy, numeracy, and other academic skills, we also place great value on therapeutic practices that support children's wellbeing, resilience, and readiness to learn. The pathways programme we include are: numeracy and literacy intervention groups and individual sessions, art therapy, footbaths, clay therapy, eurythmy, lego therapy, counselling, quiet lunch break space and Mau Te Rongo (our sensory space).

## Progress and Achievement

Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School continues to demonstrate strong levels of student progress and achievement across literacy, mathematics, writing, and senior secondary qualifications in 2025. Assessment information from across the school indicates that the majority of students are achieving at or above expected curriculum and programme levels, with targeted intervention and support in place for those requiring additional assistance.

In the Lower School literacy programme, achievement in Sunshine Reading Levels remained consistently high. By the end of the year, 100% of Class 1 students, 87% of Class 2 students, 95% of Class 3 students, and 93% of Class 4 students were achieving at the expected level. Students not yet meeting expected levels were very small in number and were supported through targeted intervention programmes and specialist learning support.

Mathematics learning steps across Classes 1–7 showed strong overall mastery of key concepts and skills. Most classes demonstrated high levels of achievement across number knowledge, strategies, geometry, measurement, algebra, and statistics. Many learning areas showed mastery rates between 90–100%. Areas identified for continued development included multiplication and division strategies, fractions, and some higher-level place value concepts in the middle classes. The school's developing structured mathematics approach, alongside intervention programmes for students with additional learning needs, continues to strengthen outcomes and consistency across classes.

Writing achievement also remained positive across the primary school. By the middle primary years, the majority of students had mastered expected writing skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar, content, language, and structure. Class 4 demonstrated 100% mastery across all assessed areas. In Classes 5–7, achievement remained consistently high, with most students achieving mastery across the majority of writing indicators. Students requiring additional support were identified early and supported through differentiated classroom programmes and intervention support.

At the senior secondary level, students undertaking the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE) achieved excellent overall results. In 2025, 96% of students achieved their qualification level, including 100% achievement at Levels 2 and 3. Across all qualification levels, 85% of students achieved at Highly Commended or Distinction level. Results reflected stable and consistent programme delivery, experienced teaching staff, and strong student engagement with learning. Māori student achievement was particularly strong, with all Māori students achieving their qualification and the majority achieving at Highly Commended or Distinction level.

Overall, the school's achievement information indicates that students are making strong progress within a holistic Waldorf-Steiner curriculum that values academic achievement alongside creativity, wellbeing, practical learning, and individual development. The school continues to strengthen targeted support systems, responsive intervention programmes, and pathways for diverse learners to ensure all students are supported to experience success.

## Attendance

Attendance remained a significant focus for Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School throughout 2025, with ongoing work to strengthen student engagement, wellbeing, and regular attendance. While attendance levels remained below the Ministry of Education target of 80% of students attending school 90% or more of the time, the year showed encouraging improvement trends, particularly by Term 4.

At the beginning of the year, Term 1 attendance showed positive gains compared with 2024, with 65% of students attending 90% or more of the time, up from 58% the previous year. Attendance at the 80% and 70% thresholds also improved, indicating stronger overall engagement across the school. However, attendance patterns became more challenging during Terms 2 and 3, with prolonged illness across both students and staff significantly affecting attendance rates. In Term 2, 45% of students attended more than 90% of the time, while in Term 3 this remained relatively stable at 46%.

Despite these challenges, schoolwide attendance showed a marked recovery in Term 4. By the end of the year, 74% of students were attending more than 90% of the time, 93% attended more than 80%, and 98% attended more than 70% of the time. This represented the strongest attendance levels across all measures for the year and reflected the impact of sustained pastoral follow-up, improved health conditions, strengthened routines, and ongoing home–school communication.

Year-to-date attendance across Terms 1–4 showed that 58% of students attended more than 90% of the time, 85% attended more than 80%, and 95% attended more than 70% of the time. While these cumulative figures remain below national expectations at the highest attendance benchmark, they also demonstrate that the vast majority of students attended school regularly throughout the year.

Attendance trends across the school highlighted stronger attendance patterns in the Primary School compared with the High School. Middle primary classes generally maintained the strongest and most consistent attendance rates throughout the year. Several senior classes experienced more variable attendance patterns, often influenced by individual student wellbeing needs, prolonged illness, and a small number of students with significant attendance challenges who were supported through pastoral and external support services.

The school maintained a strong focus on identifying and responding to students with low attendance. Students attending below 70% were closely monitored, with pastoral support, whānau engagement, and referrals to external attendance and wellbeing services initiated where appropriate. By Term 4, chronic absenteeism had reduced significantly across most year levels, with attendance concerns concentrated within a much smaller number of classes and students.

Overall, the 2025 attendance data reflects both the ongoing national challenges around school attendance and the positive impact of targeted support and pastoral systems within the Raphael House community. The significant improvement seen in Term 4 provides encouragement and momentum for continued attendance improvement work in 2026.

## **Student Voice survey summary**

As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening student engagement and continuously improving teaching and learning at our school, we undertook a piece of research designed to better understand student perspectives. The voices of students provide valuable insight into how our school is experienced day-to-day and how well it is preparing them for the future. These perspectives are essential for shaping decisions at both leadership and governance levels.

This research was conducted through structured, one-on-one interviews with a random selection of students across Classes 3–12. By gathering responses from students across the full age range (approximately 9–18 years), the aim was to hear directly from learners themselves, capture both quantitative patterns and qualitative themes, and identify differences across developmental stages.

Each selected student was asked a common set of questions exploring their ideas of good teaching and learning, their hopes and worries about the world, and their views on how their schooling is preparing them for the future. The data was then analysed to identify patterns, recurring themes, and developmental shifts in perspective.

1. What makes a good school?
2. How do you think our school might be different from other schools?
3. What makes a good teacher?
4. What makes a good learner?
5. Are you a good learner? How do you know?
6. What future would you like to live in?
7. What concerns or worries you about the world we live in?
8. How is what you are doing at school now preparing you for the future?

The following sections present the student responses to each question. Where appropriate, analysis highlights common themes across the school, as well as differences between younger and older students. Together, these findings provide a rich picture of student voice that will inform future planning, teaching practice, and whole-school development.

## Key Findings

- **What makes a good school and good teaching:** Across all ages, students value strong relationships, caring teachers, and a balanced mix of academic and practical learning. Younger students focus on immediate needs such as friendships, warmth, and fun activities, while older students highlight respect, agency, relevance, and preparation for the future.
- **What makes a good learner:** Students describe a clear developmental progression. Younger children define good learning as listening and following instructions; middle years focus on motivation, responsibility, and collaboration; senior students emphasise resilience, self-direction, and independence.
- **How our school is different:** Students consistently identify the Steiner approach, strong community relationships, and a slower, more creative pace of learning as distinctive. Younger students highlight daily experiences (play, handwork, fires, small community), while older students reflect on the philosophy, reduced exam pressure, and both the benefits and limitations of smallness.
- **Future hopes and worries:** Students across the school envision a peaceful, safe, and environmentally sustainable world. Younger children describe this concretely (no rubbish, animals safe), middle years balance personal dreams with global awareness, and older students articulate more complex, systemic concerns around politics, technology, climate, and social justice. Worries mirror this developmental pattern, shifting from immediate fears (wars, rubbish, safety) to broader social justice concerns (inequality, poverty) and finally to systemic anxieties (AI, politics, climate crisis).
- **School preparation for the future:** Students recognise that school prepares them through core academic skills, social and life skills, independence, and opportunities for self-discovery. While many appreciate these foundations, some (especially in the senior school) question the relevance of parts of the curriculum and call for more practical life preparation.

## Overall Developmental Picture

The student voice highlights a clear developmental trajectory:

- **Younger students (Classes 3–6):** Focus on concrete, immediate experiences — fairness, safety, friends, fun, and caring teachers.
- **Middle years (Classes 7–9):** Begin balancing personal needs with social justice, responsibility, and motivation.
- **Senior students (Classes 10–12):** Articulate abstract, systemic perspectives, valuing respect, individuality, and preparation for life beyond school.

## Conclusion

Students of all ages describe their school as a caring community with a distinctive approach to learning. Their voices show a strong desire for balance: between academic and practical learning, freedom and structure, individuality and community. Their reflections offer both affirmation of what is working well and direction for how the school can evolve to meet the needs of students as they grow, ensuring they are well-prepared for an uncertain but hope-filled future.

### Possible Next Steps from this survey:

Strengthen relationship-based teaching	Rationale: Students consistently identified caring, respectful teachers as the most important factor for a good school.
Balance academic, creative, and practical learning	Rationale: Students value hands-on, real-world learning alongside strong academics.
Amplify student agency and leadership	Rationale: Older students in particular want more independence, responsibility, and authentic voice in school life.
Prepare students for the future while holding Steiner special character	Rationale: Students worry about technology, environment, inequality, and whether school equips them for life beyond.

## Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- Section 127(1)(d) of the Education and Training Act 2020 defines how schools must give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by:
  - working to ensure that its plans, policies, and local curriculum reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori; and
  - taking all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori; and
  - achieving equitable outcomes for Māori students.

To give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 2025 we have:

*Nā tō rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.*

*With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive.*

In te ao Māori, kai is much more than just food - it is a living expression of whakapapa, connecting us spiritually, culturally, and socially to each other and to te taiao (the nature world).

The joy was overflowing as our whanau Maori roopu came together and celebrated generosity, honoured our connection to the past, embraced the present, and looked ahead to the future, with warm hearts and full puku.

They express feeling an immense pride in growing and celebrating our Māoritanga within our kura, and we look forward to continuing to nurture our culture and reo, so that understanding and connection may deepen and flourish among us all.

*Whiria te tāngata.*

*Weave the people together.*

## Employment Policy

The Rapahel House Rudolf Steiner School is committed to meeting requirements under s597 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of employment policy in accordance with the laws and regulations of New Zealand. As stewards of Rudolf Steiner education, we recognize the importance of fostering a harmonious and supportive work environment for all members of our school community.

Our commitment to compliance with employment policy is guided by the following principles:

**Non-Discrimination:** Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by New Zealand law in our employment practices. We are dedicated to providing equal opportunities for all individuals.

**Employment Contracts:** All staff members at Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School are provided with clear and comprehensive employment contracts, including annual performance agreements that outline their rights, responsibilities, and terms of employment in accordance with New Zealand employment law. These contracts are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure compliance and transparency.

**Health and Safety:** The safety and well-being of our staff members are paramount. We maintain a safe and healthy work environment by adhering to relevant health and safety regulations, providing necessary training and resources, and fostering a culture of awareness and responsibility.

Fair Remuneration: We believe in providing fair and equitable remuneration to our staff members. Salaries and benefits are determined based on factors such as qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities, in accordance with applicable legal requirements and industry standards.

Workplace Policies and Procedures: Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School has established clear policies and procedures governing various aspects of employment, including recruitment, performance management, grievance resolution, and disciplinary action. These policies are communicated to all staff members and are consistently applied throughout the organization.

Compliance Monitoring: Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School conducts regular monitoring and review processes to ensure ongoing compliance with employment laws and regulations. Any instances of non-compliance are addressed promptly, and corrective actions are taken as necessary.

Through our adherence to these principles and practices, Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School demonstrates its dedication to maintaining a positive and inclusive work environment where all staff members can thrive and contribute to the holistic education of our students.

To provide good and safe working conditions we have:

- Supported staff with issues causing potential burnout including emotional support and financial support in the way of extra release or in class support and external counselling sessions through EAP.
- Responded immediately to hazards raised through the risk procedures.
- Provided regular coaching of all teaching staff.
- Provided catering for all staff development sessions.

## Professional Learning 2025

28 staff attended the Kolisko Conference in Hastings for the first four days of the term 1 holiday break. This was a large investment that was very highly appreciated by our staff, who all report gaining a lot from the conference. Some reflections from staff included the following:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend the Kolisko conference 2025. It was a time of reconnecting, as well as being fed, nourished and inspired.

I found that the anthroposophy was delivered in a digestible, practical and applicable way. The stories told by keynote speaker and anthroposophical doctor, Adam Blanning, were thought provoking and topical. I especially appreciated the simple suggestions on how to assist our young people and the reverence with which eurythmy was held by Adam and woven throughout the conference.

The Kolisko Conference beautifully blended spiritual and medical science offering great insights for today's challenging world. The uplifting atmosphere, great food and collaborative workshops inspired hope and reaffirmed the relevance of anthroposophy in both individual growth and collective well-being.

The Kolisko Conference 2025 was a deeply enriching experience, made even more meaningful by the board's commitment to prioritising funding to ensure accessibility for all. E mihi ana koutou.

This inclusive approach allowed a diverse range of Steiner educators and practitioners to gather, fostering a strong sense of collegiality and shared purpose. The keynote speakers—Adam Blanning, Chris Burke, and Anne de Wilde—offered profound insights that illuminated both our professional and personal journeys. Adam's exploration of the 12 senses provided valuable tools for observing and understanding the unfolding experiences of our students. Yet, Chris and Anne's presentation also invited us to turn inward, offering perspectives on the biographies and life phases we, as adults, are navigating. This balance between outward observation and inner reflection was truly *mīharo*—a reminder that while we dedicate ourselves to the growth of our tamariki, we too are on a path of development, deserving of care, insight, and renewal.

The conference was thoughtfully planned out with a three-fold, even fourfold experience had by nearly all. Sessions following keynote speakers saw many of us engaging in practical sessions where we could take stuff back into our own practices

## Equal Employment Opportunities Policy

- Raphael House Rudolf Steiner school operates a EEO Policy
- This policy is available for all staff through School docs.
- The policy includes the following training to raise awareness of issues that may impact EEO.
- Compliance with the requirements of the EEO policy is held by the principal.
- The EEO policy provides for regular reporting on compliance.
- The EEO policy has set priorities and objectives.

Through our EEO Programme, Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School reaffirms its commitment to creating a workplace where all staff members are valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

## Closing

### Board Members

Kyle Gibson	Presiding Member, Parent Representative
Andrea Wakelin	Parent Representative until September
Karen Thrumble	Parent Representative
Matthias Vest	Parent Representative
Christine Nicholls	Proprietors Representative
Janet Molloy	Proprietors Representative
Karyn Gray	Principal
Tim Angus	Staff Representative Until September
Ivo Vest	Student Representative
Niels Hunefeld	Parent Representative from October
Merlin Fuhrhop	Staff Representative from October

### Staff Members

Amelia Minogue	0.6	Teaching Staff (High School English, Drama), HOD, Wider Leadership team
Angelique Jury		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher)
Barry Pringle		Teaching Staff (High School Science) HOD
Brett Whincup		Property Manager
Bridget Coghlan		Learning Support Assistant
Chaucey Ellis		Payroll Officer
Claire Folster		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher)
Dorothea Pienaar	0.6	Teaching Staff (Primary School Teacher-Music)
Emily Blyth	0.5	Teaching Staff (SENCO)
Fiona Rawdon		Learning Support Assistant
Gabrielle Edmonds		Teaching Staff (High School Art), HOD
Geoff Heath		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher), Wider Leadership team
Gita Pillai		Executive Officer
Grant Rossiter		Teaching Staff, Deputy Principal, Wider Leadership Team
Holly Pullan		Learning Support Assistant
Irene Cheung		Teaching Staff, Deputy Principal, Wider Leadership team
Irja Haefliger	0.8	Teaching Staff (High School German Internationals), Wider Leadership team
Jenn Causer		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher)
Karen Gault	0.6	Teaching Staff (Primary School Teacher-Te Reo)
Kathleen Russell		Receptionist

Katie Brakenridge		Teaching Staff (Primary School Teacher-Handwork, Literacy Support)
Katie Rustleund	0.8	Teaching Staff (High School English, Drama), HOD, Wider Leadership team
Karyn Gray		Teaching Staff, Principal
Line Schlebusch		Learning Support Assistant
Louise Galpin	0.8	Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher)
Lyn Vigrass		Librarian
Marcelly Ribeiro		Receptionist
Mario Gude		Teaching Staff (High School Woodwork PE), Pastoral, Wider Leadership team
Megan Grant	0.8	Teaching Staff (High School English)
Merlin Fuhrhop		Teaching Staff (High School Math, Science,)
Nancy Fulford	0.4	Teaching Staff (Across school Drama)
Nina Gude	0.6	Teaching Staff (Across School Eurythmy)
Purdy Biddle		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher)
Sarah Grandison	0.8	Teaching Staff (High School handwork), HOD
Sharon Patete		Learning Support Assistant
Simon Burrow		LAT- Woodwork, Art, OC; Learning Support Assistant
Sue Pegler	0.4	Teaching Staff (High School Eurythmy)
Tanya Zanetti		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher)
Ragini Vandrey		Sports Coordinator
Rose McIlhone		Teaching Staff (Primary School Class Teacher), Term 1 only
Tim Angus	0.8	Teaching Staff (High School Math, Science), HOD
Vanya Kress-Howell	0.6	Teaching Staff (High School Music), Pastoral

## In Closing

Raphael House closes 2025 as a thriving, collaborative kura where our Waldorf special character and mission—to spark a lifelong passion for learning through a holistic curriculum—are clearly alive in daily practice. We strengthened learning foundations through Structured Literacy, broadened therapeutic supports, deepened te ao Māori integration, and celebrated the whole curriculum journey through festivals, EOTC, performances, and student projects. With gratitude for the dedication of our community—and mindful of the next steps identified—we look forward to 2026 with confidence, imagination, and a shared commitment to every ākonga's growth.

