



The big wheel spins and good behaviour turns out a reward for the whole school

by Alice Te Puni

POSITIVE Behaviour for Learning is a fun life lesson at Te Hapara School.

The education initiative was introduced to schools throughout the country in 2009 to improve behaviour, increase educational engagement and achievement, and decrease long-term costs of difficult behaviour continuing into adulthood.

Deputy principal Jo Arnold said Positive Behaviour for Learning underpinned the school's values of honesty, respect, perseverance, aroha and responsibility.

Te Hapara has run the programme for two years.

"When we address the behaviour of children, it helps families, schools and our communities as well.

"We are seeing a positive difference as our children gain a better understanding about appropriate school behaviour and what is expected of them."

At Te Hapara, the names of children who have shown good behaviour are written down on a piece of paper and placed into a special box.

One piece of paper is drawn from the box and that student spins a lucky prize wheel at assembly.

Last Friday Manaia Tuari spun up a sports afternoon for the school. Other spin-the-wheel rewards include a picnic in the park, disco, movie afternoon and pyjama day.

Minister of Education Hekia Parata said preliminary reporting showed the majority of children involved in the programme were showing sustained improvements in behaviour.

The \$63.6 million investment announced in Budget 2013 meant funding for Positive Behaviour for Learning

would rise to \$145.3 million over four years — a 78 percent increase. The Government had already committed \$81.7m, she said.

"An extra 200 primary and intermediate schools will be able to access the Positive Behaviour for Learning school-wide programme over the next four years.

"It will also be available to all secondary schools by 2016.

"The funding will also ensure that the Positive Behaviour for Learning Incredible Years Parent and Teacher programmes will continue to be available for parents, teachers, and communities."

The NZEI representative on the MoE's Education Sector Reference Group, Rikki Sheterline, says the Positive Behaviour for Learning programme is successful because it recognises positive behaviour and provides support to address and turn around disruptive and negative behaviour.

Increased funding, however, is not a silver bullet and needs to be part of a bigger economic and social policy that puts children's needs first, he says.

"The biggest causes of disruptive behaviour and educational under-achievement are issues associated with poverty, transience, family stress and dysfunction.

"These issues have a far greater impact on learning and achievement than in-school factors, so it's important the Positive Behaviour for Learning programmes are part of a joined-up social and economic policy."



EVERYBODY IS A WINNER: Te Hapara School's lucky Positive Behaviour for Learning student Manaia Tuari spins the wheel and wins for his schoolmates a sports afternoon for the entire school.

Picture by Paul Rickard