

# **NEWSLETTER**

**FEBRUARY 2008**

We welcome all of the families who have just commenced their association with Mount Roskill Grammar School. We look forward to meeting you and getting to know you as your son or daughter becomes involved in the life of the school.

There are many opportunities for our students to participate and compete in sporting and cultural activities. Our cultural groups are well under way with their performances for the upcoming festival, auditions for the school show have begun, and summer sports teams are in action. We encourage each student to take up at least one activity in addition to classroom learning. Involvement in co-curricular teams or groups allows students to interact with a wider range of their peers, contributes to the development of personal qualities such as persistence and responsibility to others, and most importantly is a lot of fun.



At the start of the year we welcomed 17 new teaching staff. I am delighted with the quality and experience of the teachers who have joined us. In particular we welcome our new Deputy Principal, Mr Michael Loretz. We also welcome Heads of Department Shaun Hawthorne (English), Jacqui Luxford (Food Technology), Rene Hanham (Social Studies) and Louise Ryan (Media Studies).

The examination results for 2007 are very pleasing. Our students continue to match or better national achievement levels. Detailed results are given later in this newsletter. Particularly pleasing is the large number of students achieving high quality results. This year for the first time students have been awarded NCEA endorsed with Merit or Excellence. This endorsement is achieved if 50 credits or more are gained at that grade level or better. The percentage of MRGS students gaining these endorsements is well in advance of national figures. These excellent performances are the result of great endeavour and persistence from our students, superb teaching and wonderful support from families. Well done everyone!

There are also challenges for us to meet. Nationally, achievement at Level 1 is improving faster than the achievement of MRGS students. This year we will be focusing on literacy learning in the Junior school and course design at some levels of the Senior school to address this challenge.

In December we took 39 prefects to a leadership camp run by Andy Gipps, Karen Collins and Tina Jerabeck. Our prefects are a great group who are already leading through service, example and initiative. Our 2008 Head Girl is Bethany Windsor and Head Boy is Stewart McVinnie. In recognition of the size of the Year 13 group there are four Deputy Head prefects this year. They are Lucy Horne, Zenia Jaitley, Rahul Rodricks and John Henderson.

Travel to and from the school campus is often difficult with almost 4,000 people arriving and leaving in a short space of time each day. This year we will be working with Auckland City Council to develop a new campus travel plan. In the meantime if it is practical for your child

to walk to school please encourage them to do so. If you are driving your child to school please consider a drop off point a short distance from the school to ease congestion.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child to reach the highest levels of educational excellence possible in 2008.

Sursum!

Greg Watson  
**PRINCIPAL**

## **PREFECTS**

The School Prefects appointed for 2008 are:

Head Prefects:	Stewart McVinnie and Bethany Windsor
Deputy Head Prefects:	Rahul Rodricks, John Henderson Lucy Horne, Zenia Jaitley

The School Prefects are:

Abhinav Arora	Phoenix Brooking
Gurveer Bhandari	Eve Cahill
Richard Busby	Angelique Dale
Norman Chu	Ruth Elliott
Sepeti Faleafa	Leanora Gomes
Kelvin Fung	Alma Jakupovic
Yun Gao	Alice Lee
Tony Huang	Silati Lisati
Abhinav Jain	Lerly Luo
David Kang	Disha Mysore
Zelin Ma	Eleanor Nattrass
Tutaraki Ngapoko	Anna Shen
Caleb Saunders	Sacha Smith
Geoffrey Thomson	Tatyana Soares
Ricky Tsai	Gina Taka-Ardouin
Andrew Wilson	Ashley Tao
Wenyi Yi	

## STAFF

We welcomed 17 new staff for the start of 2008 year: Michael Loretz (Deputy Principal), Louise Ryan (HOD Media Studies), Shaun Hawthorne (HOD English), Jacqui Luxford (HOD Food Technology), Sophie Wright (Assistant HOD Maths), Kim Thomas, George Taunga, Anna Hughes, Abby Harvie (PE Department), Kary Boudreau, Lara Calton (English Department), Annalisa Fiore-Meech (FOT Department), Andrew Ferguson (Technology Department), Tangiatua Faireka (Science Department) and Deborah Fisher (English/Social Sciences Departments), Rene Hanham (HOD Social Studies) & Alison Raymond (MacLean Centre).

We welcomed back from leave: Karen Bennett (HOD PE), Bill Collis (Electronics), Andy Dunbar (Social Sciences) and Joanna Rainey (Science).

Our congratulations on recent additions to their families go to: Michelle Phillips – Jessica, Jonathan Eley – Margot, Karen Collins – Maia and Clinton Buckley – Jacob.

We are delighted to learn that Warwick Bowden and his wife Jo were each awarded the Queen's Service Medal for services to Special Education in the New Years Honours List. Warwick was the Director of the MacLean Centre for many years and has been committed during his time there and afterwards in New Zealand, to improving the education and care of people with disabilities. Warwick and Jo have recently returned to continue their work in Papua New Guinea.

### Introducing Michael Loretz – Deputy Principal

Michael joins us from Massey High School where he was HOD Mathematics. Previously he taught at Whangaparaoa College and St Mary's College.

Outside of school he enjoys being with his family – six children (two girls and four boys) keep him occupied and Michael still plays Rugby (which he describes as “old mans rugby”!) He spends time at West Coast beaches and is an involved member of St Mary's church in Avondale.

Michael takes up the teaching and learning portfolio and will contribute strongly to advancing our professional practice and curriculum delivery. He is already an integrated member of our senior management team.



## NCEA RESULTS

### Top Performers in Each Year Level

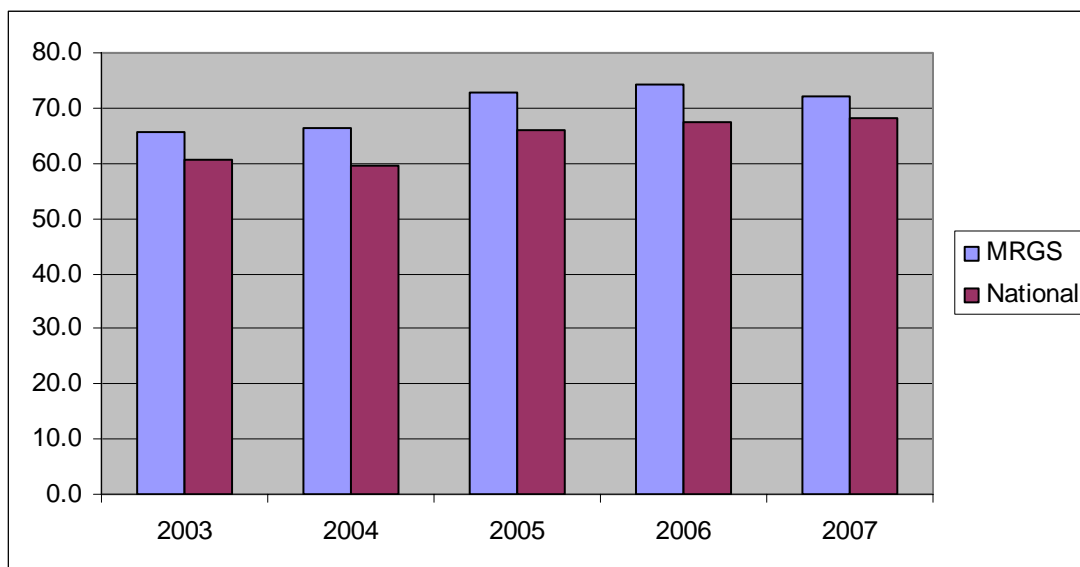
Number of Excellence Grades at or above					
Level 1 by Year 11 students		Level 2 by Year 12 students		Level 3 by Year 13 students	
Abhilash Kamineni	37	Andy Liu	34	Chuan-Zheng Lee	32
Keegan Lopez	35	Annie Lu	32	Byul Han	30
Cornelia Mu	30	Caleb Saunders	30	Yuhui Wang	24
Alwin Lim	30	Tony Huang	30	Kanimoly Sukumaran	22
Shruthi Vijayakumar	28	Bethany Windsor	28	Sophia Rodrigues	16
Kelly Zhang	28	Wenyi Yi	27	Beau Hourigan-Johnston	16
Ruokai Wang	28	Timothy Vogel	25	Anna Li	15
Michael Lin	24	John Henderson	24	Medha Ghatikesh	15
Tae Kim	24	Tatyana Soares	23	Kathleen Yin	15
Jay Rajani	23	Jenny Jiang	22	Xiao Yang Li	15
Amanda Shen	23	Jennifer Kirby	21	Happy Zue Xia	15
Abdullah Siddiqui	23	Phillip Cao	21	Alice McIntosh	15
Nishant Mambatta	22	Ashley Tao	20	Alim Guy	15
Nandita Fernandes	22	Rushi Penumarthi	20	Chris Le Sueur	14
Shantanu Padhye	21			Jonathan Li	13
Namrata Modak	21			Helen Zhu	13
Natasha Smith	20			David Chen	13
Michelle Tan	20			Jeremy D'Mello	13
Nikhil Mahashabde	20			Briar McKinlay-Sadgrove	13
Cara Rebello	20			Sarah Yen	13

## Achieving NCEA

Year Level Roll Achieving Corresponding NCEA Qualifications during that year						
	Achieving Level 1 in Year 11		Achieving Level 2 in Year 12		Achieving Level 3 in Year 13	
	MRGS	National	MRGS	National	MRGS	National
2007	60.2	61.4	63.4	64.1	55.1	52.4
2006	64.5	59.9	59.9	63.4	54.9	52.3
2005	53.9	56.2	63.3	59.9	54.2	50.5
2004	58.5	55.4	58.0	57.3	48.8	48.5
2003	56.2	52.5				

### Pass Rates in External Achievement Standards (%):

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
MRGS	65.6	66.3	72.9	74.3	72.0
National	60.8	59.4	66.1	67.3	68.2



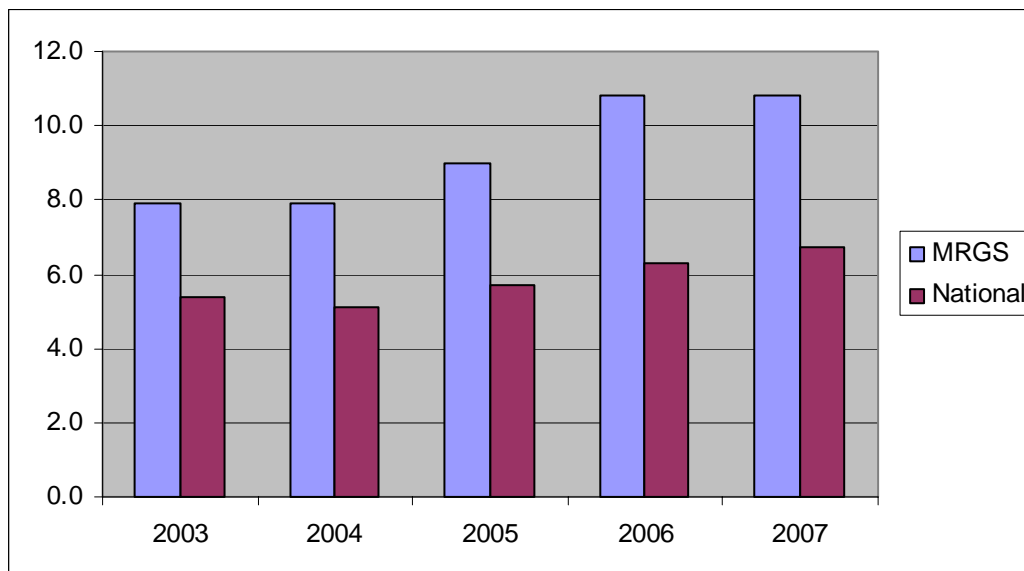
### Achieving NCEA with Excellence or Merit

2007 Certificate Endorsements for Excellence or Merit									
NCEA GAINED WITH	Level 1 Endorsements			Level 2 Endorsements			Level 3 Endorsements		
	Number	Percent (of students)		Number	Percent (of students)		Number	Percent (of students)	
		MRGS	Nat		MRGS	Nat		MRGS	Nat
Excellence	40	9.3	4.1	25	4.8	2.8	20	5.1	2.2
Merit	90	20.9	17.4	85	16.5	12.3	58	14.7	11.0
No Endorsement	129	30.0	40.2	217	42.1	50.1	142	36.0	40.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>259 (430)*</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>327 (516)*</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>220 (394)*</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>53.3</b>

\*Bracketed numbers are totals on the school roll at each level

### Excellence Rates in External Achievement Standards (%)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
MRGS	7.9	7.9	9.0	10.8	10.8
National	5.4	5.1	5.7	6.3	6.7



### Return of scripts, reviews and reconsiderations.

Students who sat external examinations last year should have received their results and had their examination scripts returned. Students should check that the markers annotations and the overall grades on the front of each paper match up and that the grades on each paper are the grades recorded on the result sheet sent to each student. If they do not then students should bring their exam scripts to Mr Lett, Deputy Principal responsible for liaison with NZQA so that this can be reviewed (and rectified). Students who believe that they have answered a question correctly which has been marked wrong should consult their subject teacher (or HOD) with a view to applying to have the paper remarked. This process costs \$20.00 which is refundable if the mark is changed.

### BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

2008 has started with the usual activities of confirming courses, issuing timetables and settling into our routines. On Friday 1 February we welcomed our new students, including over 400 in Year 9, to the School. Year 13 and our Kapa Haka group performed the welcome and then began an afternoon of orientation and familiarisation with the school. Many of our Year 13 students are involved in leading this peer support programme which continues throughout February.

Photos are being taken so that ID cards can be issued. Form Class photos will be taken on 10/11 March.

In assembly on Monday 11 February, the school was entertained by an energetic and athletic lion dance performed by members of our Chinese Support Group. This celebrated the Chinese New Year.





Another regular event at the start of each year is the Swimming Championships held on Monday 11 February. Over 40 expert competitive swimmers participated.

**Winners were:**

**JUNIOR BOYS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Caol Lee-Davies
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim Bulmer
- 3<sup>rd</sup> James Coldham

**JUNIOR GIRLS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mone Koga
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Hannah Widjaja

**INTERMEDIATE BOYS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ben Tokley
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Nick McIntosh
- 3<sup>rd</sup> = Harry Thomson
- 3<sup>rd</sup> = Daniel Verhoeven

**INTERMEDIATE GIRLS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mattie Tuialii
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Serah Tuialii
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Eva Penny

**SENIOR BOYS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Walter Zhang
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Long Liu
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Miller

**SENIOR GIRLS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Briar Elliston
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Eleanor Nattrass
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kathryn Frankcom-Burgess

Our Swimming Carnival will be held later this term. This is a chance for all students to be involved in water activities to gain points for their House through participation.

Athletics Day was held on Tuesday 12 February. Heavy showers of rain interrupted the event in the middle of the morning and again in the early afternoon. The events were a model of organisation with groups going with seniors students (peer support leaders) and teachers in House groups to various activities. Again participation is the main aim and each attempt at an activity brought at least 1 point for the participants' House. Students who showed particular skills at an event were invited to take part in the championship section of the event earning further points for their House. The photos give a small indication of the enjoyment and high level of involvement of all the students. The finals of many events will be held on Thursday 21 February.

Our congratulations to the members of the Physical Education Department and our student leaders on a most successful day.



## **PROPERTY**

Over the summer holidays a great deal of development and maintenance work has been completed around the school.

The process of strengthening the upper levels of the two original blocks (Block A & Block B – built in 1953) for prevention of damage during an earthquake has been completed. Much of the inside of the school has been repainted and the exterior has been washed and partially repainted to maintain a high standard of repair.

The appointment of two new nurses has entailed the redesign and alteration of our Student Services area. The work is largely complete with floor covering remaining to be laid. Our thanks to our electrician, builders, plumber and painters (who have been ably co-ordinated by our Property Manager, Mr David Cole) for their work.

## **PERFORMING ARTS**

This year's show is all go. 'Fame' is about the Performing Arts Academy of New York.

Auditions for the 200+ people needed to stage this production are underway. Musicians, singers, dancers, actors, painters, directors, stagehands, make-up-artists costumes, lighting and sound engineers are all essential to the success of such a show.

Showtime is 7.00pm from Monday 12 to Thursday 15 May. Tickets will be available after Easter, adults \$12.50, school students \$10.00

## **NCEA ENTRIES, FEES, EXAMS**

All Year 11, 12, 13 students will be involved in NCEA qualifications this year. Entries are made electronically from the subjects chosen by students. Fees (\$75 for most student entrants) are due to be paid early in Term 2. (More details in our next newsletter).

Exams will be held 15 November to 3 December. Please note that if you are thinking of travelling overseas the exam timetable is displayed around the school and no changes of dates or individual arrangements are possible.

## **PARENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

The school relies on parental contributions to help fund co-curricular activities and to provide extensive computer facilities. The expected contribution is \$150 for one student or \$250 for two or more until 30 March (\$160 / \$260 thereafter). We hope you will support the school by paying your contribution before Friday 28 March. The January 30 edition of the Aucklander incorrectly reported that the school receives \$1.4 million in donations. While we are very satisfied with the support from our community the amount received in donations is \$168,000. A significant part of this money was used to replace the computers in 4 computer classrooms.

The reported figure of \$1.4 million included government funding for special needs students, SPARC funding for sports, and money paid by families for school camps and materials used in subjects such as Technology.



## **JAPANESE EXCHANGE SCHEME**

Mount Roskill Grammar School has for several years had a sister school relationship with Seirinkan High School, Nagoya, Japan. This means Japanese students are hosted by families in Auckland in 2008 and our students travel to Japan in 2009. The costs involved are air fare, insurance and spending money; tuition and homestay is provided at no charge.

This scheme offers a wonderful opportunity for our students to experience another culture and for them to have a Japanese student stay here to enjoy New Zealand life and school. If you would like your son or daughter to be considered for this scheme, please ask them to see Ms Harding in the Administration Block. Meetings for parents will be held after applications have been received.

## **CAMPUS SCHOOLS WIN SIGNIFICANT FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

We called in MERGE: Maximising the Engagement of the Roskill Groups' Education.

Mount Roskill Primary, Mount Roskill Intermediate and Mount Roskill Grammar School have been granted a significant amount of money spread over the next four years to work together to promote high standards in the school system by strengthening effective classroom practice in all three schools so that students experience as little disruption as possible when they change schools and levels within schools.

This means that teachers will work together to better meet students needs, gather evidence which will help inform classroom practice and work with parents to respond more effectively to their children's needs.

Our intention is to focus on achievement needs and literacy, particularly of those students whom we see as underachieving. In spite of very pleasing results in the Benchmark Indicators last year we believe that we must continue to address this area of need.

We are also looking to improve attendance at school. The effects of non-attendance become very evident at Year 11 and are even more damaging at Year 12. Analysis shows that there is a positive correlation between achievement and attendance - by being at school students give themselves a much greater chance of success.

We look forward to keeping you up to date and involving all parents in this exciting development. Ms Kay Thomas and Mr John Wilkinson put a significant effort into the application and have worked hard with the principals and staff of all 3 campus schools to achieve success.

## **RUGBY...RUGBY...RUGBY**

Invitation to all boys (and girls) to attend Summer training. Training is held on the No.1 field. Monday / Thursday after school and Saturday mornings at 9.30am. Bring a water bottle and towel. Any questions see Mr Tuialii. Weighing In will be held on 26 and 27 of March.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is a compulsory subject at Mt Roskill Grammar from year 9 – 12 where all students have two periods per week. All students are expected to wear correct PE uniform for all lessons. Please ensure your son/daughter has their uniform clearly named in full.

We all know the benefits of exercise and eating properly, we have read it, most of us have acted on it, yet we still get many parents signing letters to get their child excused from PE. Please think about what you are doing before signing – there are many things in life we do not feel like doing but most often, once we have done them we are glad we did.

If your child is well enough to be at school then they can still take part in some of the PE lesson. The Physical Education curriculum area is often referred to as having the most valuable skills you can learn for life: teamwork, sportsmanship, peer friendships, cooperation, leadership, self esteem, self confidence, personal identity and self worth. Even though students may be fully involved in sport outside of school they can still benefit in these areas during PE.

Interpersonal skills: Respect for diversity and cultures, care and concern for others, social justice, communication skills, tolerance. These are some of qualities we want to instil in our students as well as being physically active.

Most of these benefits are not measurable but clearly lead to a more productive and healthy life style. So please, next time your son/daughter asks for a note to be excused from Physical Education, you may wish to think twice about it.

## SCHOOL LIBRARY



*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

The themes of Hosseini's debut novel are universal: family relationships, the price of betrayal, and the shocking realities of war.

In Afghanistan, young Amir enjoys the luxury of education, material comfort and a devoted playmate, Hassan, the son of his father's servant. During a kite-flying tournament, Hassan is brutalized by a gang of teenagers. As he grows up, Amir is haunted by his failure to defend his friend, until he is offered an opportunity to make things right, even if it means risking his own life. This internal struggle is the underlying theme of the novel, which spans Afghani history from the peaceful 1970s to the repressive rule of the Taliban in the late 1990s.



Hosseini's second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* will be reviewed in our next newsletter. Set in war-torn Afghanistan it is about two women, both caught in the evolving politics of their country. Both books are available at our school library.

**School Library Hours:** Monday-Thursday 8.00am-4.00pm; Friday 8.00am-3.10pm

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TERM 1		
<b>February</b>	Wednesday 27	Campus Whanau Consultation Evening
	Thursday 28	Information Evening for Parents/Caregivers of new students
<b>March</b>	Wednesday 12	NCEA Information Evening
	Wednesday 19	Junior Report Evening
	Thursday 20	Closing time 3.10pm
	Friday 21 – Tuesday 25	Easter
	Thursday 27	Senior Report Evening
<b>April</b>	Thursday 18	<b>END OF TERM 1</b> Closing time 3.10pm
<b>May</b>	Monday 5	<b>BEGINNING OF TERM 2</b>
	Wednesday 21 – Thursday 29	Senior Exams
	Friday 30	School Holiday
<b>June</b>	Monday 2	Queen's Birthday
<b>July</b>	Friday 4	<b>END OF TERM 2</b> Closing time 3.10pm
TERM DATES 2008		
<b>Term 1</b>	Monday 4 February	Thursday 18 April
<b>Term 2</b>	Monday 5 May	Friday 4 July
<b>Term 3</b>	Tuesday 22 July (Monday 21 – Teacher only day)	Friday 26 September
<b>Term 4</b>	Monday 13 October	Friday 12 December

